

Hello, Amphi Families.

I want to take a few minutes to update you on some important information about our plans for reopening Amphitheater Schools.

I'm going to talk to you today about health metrics, the hybrid model, documents coming your way, and the choices we are asking you to make.

First, I want to tell you that we are so excited to be so close to seeing children in school again and doing so safely. Getting our community's children back to school safely has always been the goal, and we know that it is what's best for children.

I know there still may be some families, however, who are concerned about the health metrics and how they impact our District. Please know that we remain committed to following the guidance of public health officials for a safe return, and we continue to consult with them on at least a weekly basis.

Just this week in fact the Arizona Department of Health Services released new metrics which show a shift from green to red in one health category for Pima County: The number of cases per 100,000 in our population.

In a meeting with local superintendents just yesterday, Dr. Francisco Garcia from the Pima County Health Department, explained the shift from green to red, attributing it to clusters of cases that have occurred mostly at the University of Arizona. While those clusters have changed the overall metrics for our county, both public health departments, that of the State and Pima County, still remain supportive of hybrid reopenings for Pima County districts, and we are informed the isolated nature of these cases does not jeopardize our current re-opening plans.

Based upon this guidance, therefore, we continue to move forward with a hybrid reopening plan for Oct. 12.

As a quick review, the hybrid model divides students into two cohorts. Cohort 1 attends in-person school on Monday and Thursday. Cohort 2 attends in-person school on Tuesday and Friday. All students who have internet access are then brought together on Wednesdays via Zoom or Google Classroom or SeeSaw for remote instruction as well.

Letters with your children's cohort assignments were put in the mail today. And in making these assignments, our schools made every effort to keep siblings together on the same days. If you find that your children are not on the same schedule, however, please contact your principal.

Along with the letter, you will also receive two other documents which the state's School Risk Retention Trust has asked us to have all parents sign.

Finally, we asked you a couple of days ago to make a decision about whether you want your children to return to school in the hybrid model or go to our full-time online K-12 school, Amphi Academy Online.

We've requested that you make that decision by noon on Tuesday, Sept. 29. This is because we need that information at that time to analyze our enrollment and staffing levels and make any necessary adjustments required to meet our students' needs. But we've already heard from a few people who would like to wait for the Pima County Health Department to update its metrics next week, which they would normally do next Thursday.

But again, Pima County Health has informed us that even if clusters like the one at the University of Arizona have shifted the county metrics in some categories, they still support opening in hybrid mode.

If, however, you feel strongly that you need to wait until the metrics are released to decide whether you wish to shift your children to Amphi Academy Online or perhaps from Amphi Academy Online to in-person learning, please let us know your choice absolutely no later than 3 p.m. Thursday.

In closing, I just want you to know that we all here at the District know that this continues to be a frustrating and difficult process for many us. As a parent myself, I too feel frustrations from time to time. I just want you to know that we are doing our best to share information with you as soon we have it. As we have navigated through the ups and downs, and right turns and left turns, one thing has remained, and will remain constant: Our dedication to make decisions which are in the best interest of children and which are supported by the guidance health experts.

Thank you very much.