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August 3, 2020

Dear EDGE Students and Support Persons:

Good morning! The intent of the letter is to inform you of a decision made by the EDGE Board of Directors, to provide you context surrounding that decision, and explain next steps.

As you are aware, EDGE is working closely with the Pima County Health Department, the Arizona Department of Education, and the Arizona State Board for Charter schools, and adhering to Executive Orders from the Governor's Office as we plan for the start of the new school year.

Monday morning EDGE's Board of Directors met to discuss school re-opening guidelines and voted unanimously to start the school year with ALL STUDENTS doing distance learning. This board action means that the hybrid learning option for in-person learning is removed as an option until further notice.

On July 21st Pima County released their recommendation that it was not safe for schools to re-open in August for in-person learning. This recommendation was based on the following county wide health data:

- COVID-19 infections being at the highest daily amounts since the pandemic began.
- Countywide transmission rate remains above 11 percent (The World Health Organization recommends that rates be below 5 percent prior to schools reopening)
- Masks were only recently mandated at the County level on June 19, 2020 and it will take six weeks to see if this mitigation strategy is working.
- Hospitalizations for COVID-19 are at a record level and in late July the ICU bed capacity was nearly exceeded and critical patients were transferred to other hospitals in the State.
- Widespread testing is only now becoming available throughout the community.
- Despite the availability of widespread testing, obtaining test results in a timely manner to allow effective contact tracing does not exist at this time.

You can read Pima County Administrator, Chuck Huckleberry's letter to school at the link: [Pima County School Superintendent's COVID-19 Back to School Process](#)

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Success for every student, every day!

Yesterday evening, Arizona State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Kathi Hoffman sent a [letter to Arizona Schools](#) in which she stated the following:

"I want to make clear that Arizona is not currently in a place to resume in-person or hybrid learning by August 17th. As school leaders, we should prepare our families and teachers for the reality that it is unlikely that any school community will be able to reopen safely for in-person learning by August 17th. "

The EDGE Board of Directors will meet again in mid-September to review Pima County's current health data to make a determination on whether in-person learning can commence or whether it is prudent to continue with distance learning as the only learning option.

Please know that this decision was not made lightly. The decision was based solely on prioritizing the health and well-being of students, their loved ones, and Edge faculty and staff. It is the belief of Edge's Board of Directors and Administration that to re-open for in-person learning in this current context in our county, would devalue the lives of the individuals we serve and quite frankly go against our core values, our mission, and our vision. Our vision is: Success for every student, every day! That idea would become irreversibly impossible if students or staff contracted the COVID virus as it would ultimately trigger the shutting down of classrooms, and potentially the whole school, which would disrupt the learning process of the entire student body.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Community Forum To Discuss Distance Learning Plan on August 5th, from 3-4PM.

- Meet with us from 3-4pm on the Zoom Video Conferencing Platform to get your questions answered by Edge Principals
- For Edge NW students and support persons use the following:

Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 786 0840 4249

Passcode: 123456

- For Edge Himmel Park students and support persons use the following:

Meeting ID: 763 9794 4179

Passcode: B5QsFv

You will be contacted personally

- You will receive a personal phone call from an Edge Administrator over the course of the next week to discuss this decision and Edge's Distance Learning Plan.
- We will start by prioritizing students who enrolled and selected the hybrid in-person learning option. Once those students are contacted we will reach out to all students who selected distance learning.
- We will identify potential obstacles for success in a distance learning model and trouble shoot solutions with you.

Resource Distribution:

- Edge will loan a Chromebook to any student who needs one
- Edge will collaborate with families to troubleshoot any issues related to internet access
- Chromebooks will be distributed on Monday, August 10th from 10AM-2PM at both campuses.
- Along with the Chromebooks, students and their support persons, will receive a Distance Learning Guide, and a Distance Learning Readiness Checklist. These documents will clarify expectations for attendance, how to access curriculum, and ensure you are ready for success on the first day of school on August 17th.
- Students will also be given a schedule of their assigned classes.

Curriculum and Instructional Support During Distance Learning

- Students will utilize online curriculum through Pearson and Gradpoint for core classes. *This is the same curriculum they would access if they were doing in-person learning.
- Students will have access to teacher instruction every day via Google Meets. *Distance learning students will be assigned the same teachers they would have if they were doing in-person learning. This will ensure a seamless transition to hybrid in-person learning when it is safe to do so.
- Students will be able to schedule one-on-one instructional video conferences.
- For some subjects, teacher created instructional videos will be created and posted.

Attendance Expectations While Distance Learning

- Students are expected to check their edgehs.org Gmail daily.
- Students are expected to work on their courses and check- in with their teacher during the scheduled time the class meets. *These times will match what the in-person schedule would be to ensure a smooth transition to the hybrid in-person learning option when it is safe to do so.
- Students will log-on to their Google Classroom at the start of each class for attendance purposes and to access daily assignments.
- Per Arizona Department of Education guidelines, distance learning students will only be considered present if they do at least one of the following: a) complete an assignment or assessment b) participate in a phone call or instructional meeting with the teacher on Google Meets c) Make progress in their online course as evident by the curriculum platform

What To Expect In Communication From Edge While Distance Learning

- Beginning next week teachers will be reaching out to students via email regarding course expectations, what to expect the first week of school, and making sure each student has the appropriate log-in and passwords to access all their curriculum
- Edge will distribute a weekly Distance Learning Newsletter to students and their support persons.
- Support Persons will have access to student progress, grades, and attendance through FamilyLink (additional information regarding accessing FamilyLink will be coming out in a subsequent email).

Despite this change to starting the year with all students in Distance Learning, we are confident that we have created systems that will support student learning. We assure you what we have in place is a significant improvement over what you may have experienced during the 4th Quarter last spring at Edge, or at a previous school. Our goal is to create partnerships with our students' support persons. We hope through connecting with you over the next week you choose to engage in that partnership and...Be You. With Us. At Edge!

Respectfully,

Dave Thatcher
Principal Edge Northwest
&
Rob Pecharich
District Principal