

November 20, 2020

Mission Heights' Families,

I apologize for my delay in writing this letter that I know many have been anxiously awaiting. As mentioned last week, we promised communication about our decision for remaining with our hybrid schedule or returning to remote instruction depending on what the Pinal County Benchmarks show for this week. These benchmarks have increased as we all expected. Cases per 100 are at 168, putting us in the red in this category as they should be under 100. The second benchmark of percent positivity is at 9.3%, which is still under 10% and in the yellow, but very close to being in the red. Finally, hospital visits sit at 4.5%, which keeps us in the green in that category.

Because of this data and the recommendations of Pinal County, we have chosen to remain open for Monday and Tuesday, November 23-24, of next week. That said, however, our teachers will start communicating with students on these days for the possibility of closure on Monday, November 30th. Again, communication will go out to all families next Friday, the 27th, on what we will do. **As well, we think it best to postpone our Homecoming festivities until numbers start to decrease again.** Unfortunately, because of the rise of cases that have been happening since the Halloween holiday, we are very concerned of what will happen after the Thanksgiving holiday. We want to stay open, but we also want to be safe. Please read the ADE's recommendations for ensuring to have a safe holiday, so schools can remain open [here](#):

Every day we have students and families getting tested and/or being quarantined for exposure, **and unfortunately, today (11.20.20), we were notified that an individual on our campus has tested positive for COVID-19.** We are certainly keeping this person in our thoughts for a quick recovery and return to school. We are also mindful that this creates potential exposure for those who had contact with this individual. Letters to families of our students who were significantly exposed have already been sent out and asked to remain in quarantine.

For those who did not get this letter, we encourage you to be vigilant in monitoring your child for symptoms of COVID-19. These include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. **If any of these symptoms occur, please do not send your child to school. Should your child become ill, they must be symptom-free for three consecutive days without the use of ibuprofen, aspirin, etc. before returning.** As a precaution, if symptoms are occurring, we encourage you to have your child and each member of your immediate household tested for COVID-19. You can find free COVID-19 testing sites on the Arizona Department of Health Services [website](#).

In closing, my job as leader of this school is to ensure the education of all students; this includes the academic side, absolutely. However, it also includes the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing for all, including my staff. Mission Heights will remain open as long as we can; however, with numbers rising and the amount of staff and students absent from illness, we will certainly close down for a couple of reasons:

1. **Pinal County Health Department recommends it.**
2. **We do not have the staffing to support all students safely.**

As we do stay open for now, if families are concerned for the wellbeing of their child and wish for the student to remain at home during hybrid, you may keep your child home. However, please email myself or our Student Mentor, Jocelyn Martinez (jocelyn.martinez@leonagroup.com), so we can let teachers know for attendance coding.

No matter what happens in all of this, please encourage your child to stay strong, keep grit and show motivation, heart and purpose for his or her academics. As we near the end of this quarter, students need to attend daily, turn in homework, study for tests and remain engaged. Remember, Phantoms, as I have told many of you, we can choose to be BITTER that all this is happening, a BUMMER to others around us instead of lifting them up, **OR WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE BETTER!** Fight for the good and finish strong.

Blessings and safety to all of you. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Amanda Mace

School Leader