On Monday, March 30, 2020, Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman announced an extension of statewide school closures through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. During this time, the Arizona Department of Education encourages schools to continue to provide educational opportunities to students to the best of their abilities. Our agency will continue to develop and share guidance regarding school meals, online learning, graduation requirements, and more.

On March 27, 2020, Governor Ducey signed emergency legislation that outlines requirements and expectations for schools surrounding educator and staff pay, statewide assessments (AZM2, etc.), school accountability and letter grades, and more.

Q: What are the key takeaways from the new legislation related to school closures?

A: Please review our legislative recap to see full details surrounding this bill. Key takeaways from this legislation include:

**Educator & Staff Pay**

A public school shall continue to pay all its employees, including hourly employees, for the duration of the statewide closure as long as employees: (1) commit to being available during work hours and (2) are able to perform tasks remotely. If an employee is unable to work remotely, schools shall re-assign the employee other tasks they can perform.

The legislation allows for schools to continue paying contract workers like SLPs and other therapy services. Contractors should talk with their contract company and districts to ensure continuity in pay.

**Make-Up Days**

Schools are not required to extend the number of school days or add additional instructional hours after the statewide closure ends.

**Statewide Assessments – (AZM2, MSAA, etc.)**
Statewide assessments for 2019-2020 (AZM2, MSAA, AIMS Science, AZELLA, etc.) are cancelled.

The U.S. Department of Education announced on Friday, March 20, 2020 that the federal requirement for testing is waived for all states. ADE is working on submitting a waiver accordingly.

**Accountability (A-F Grading System)**

The 2019-2020 school year will be a “hold harmless” year. For the 2019-2020 school year, a public school's letter grade will be the same as their 2018-2019 letter grade.

**Federal Accountability**

ADE will be seeking a waiver for the requirement that a State annually meaningfully differentiate all public schools and for the requirements to identify schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) based on the 2019-2020 school year. Schools currently identified as CSI and TSI will remain for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Special Education**

During the 2019-2020 school year, public schools may deviate from the statutory requirements relating to special education programs. Public schools shall attempt to ensure that each student who has a section 504 plan or who receives special education services through an individualized education program (IEP) has access to these educational opportunities. For more information on providing special education services during school closures, read our comprehensive guidance document.

Deviations from statutory requirements must align with federal IDEA guidance. FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) must be determined on an individual basis. Compensatory education may need to be provided if the circumstances do not allow the provision of FAPE to an individual student.

As this dynamic situation evolves, ADE will continue to review all flexibility allowed under state and federal law.
School Finance

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the approval of SBE, has the authority to waive any school finance requirement necessary for school finance matters related to the 2019-2020 school year only.

Q: What schools are affected by the COVID-19 school closure declaration?

The Governor’s declaration applies to all Arizona K-12, brick-and-mortar schools, including district, charter, private schools, and career and technical education districts (CTEDs) associated with a K-12 facility.

School closure is NOT a complete shutdown of school operations and instructional obligations to students. During school closures, staff are still expected to engage in work-related activities, and students and families are expected to meet the instructional requirements of their teachers and schools.

School leaders, teachers, staff and parents must work together to plan for continuity in education and critical services during this time. Specifically, during the closure, educators and community leaders are called on to:

- Continue to deliver educational opportunities to the extent possible through remote learning and independent study, which may or may not include online learning or printed materials, among other options;
- Provide school meals; and
- Arrange for supervision of students during ordinary school hours.
- Schools will continue to be funded as if they were in session and staff will continue to be paid. If these conditions are met, makeup days will not be necessary, and the Department is working with the Governor’s Office and legislative leaders to provide clarity in the law.


Q: What schools are not affected by the COVID-19 school closure declaration?

The declaration does NOT apply to:

- Online schools and drop out recovery programs that have the capacity to operate remotely. These programs/online schools should stay open and continue to offer services to students and honor contracts with school districts.
• Daycare facilities and preschools, which are encouraged to follow all guidance by the Department of Health Services (see HERE). Families are encouraged to keep children at-home whenever possible and to reserve spots in day-care and other childcare facilities for the children of first responders, healthcare workers, and other essential workers.

• Adult education programs, although ADE has recommended all these programs close their face-to-face classes from 3/16 through 3/27/2020.

• Educational programs offered in county jails and county juvenile detention centers. We advise these programs to follow protocols by the Arizona Department of Corrections and Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections.


Q: What are you doing to ensure students are fed during the COVID-19 school closures?

The Arizona Department of Education will be working with schools who intend to continue their meal service programs for children during the time schools are closed due to COVID-19. ADE has received approval from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to waive the congregate meal requirement of the meal service programs.

Click [HERE](http://bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19) to find a list of school districts and non-profit organizations that are offering meals to any individual under age 18 in your community.

Q: How does the COVID-19 school closure declaration affect school attendance at brick and mortar schools?

• The following applies to students enrolled in B&M through March 15, 2020:
  
  o Students who begin participating in online instruction during the school closure on or after March 15, 2020 (moving to an in-district AOI approved per A.R.S. § 15-808) may continue being reported at the same school or may be transferred in their Student Information System (SIS) to the in-district AOI.

  o Students who are participating in remote learning provided by the same LEA should continue being reported in the same school for regular ADM, SPED and ELL to be calculated.
Students who officially withdraw on or after March 15, 2020 and enroll in any approved AOI (per A.R.S. § 15-808) will generate ADM at the AOI which will result in shared membership days.


If a preschool program has already reached its 100th day, additional attendance reporting is not required. Educational opportunities should continue as attested by the LEA.

- Students participating in online instruction provided by an LEA (local education agency) not authorized pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-808 (Arizona Online Instruction) will be funded through the first scheduled 100 or 200 days, based on existing calendars.

For more information on how COVID-19 school closures affect school finance, please visit our School Finance Guidance for COVID-19 page.

Q: How does the COVID-19 school closure declaration affect teacher certification?

For the health and safety of our employees, ADE Certification will provide services to customers only online, by phone or by mail. Here are some options that will allow you to seek certification during this time.

To apply online, visit AzEdCert page for directions and the link to the AzEDCert Educator Portal. The following services may be completed online:

- All initial certificates (Substitute, Standard Professional, CTE, STEM, Subject Matter Expert, Emergency, etc)
- All approved areas (Content area designations added to appropriate certificates)
- All endorsements (Specialization – content and student groups – added to appropriate certificates)
- Certificate renewal

Transfers, deficiency removals, name change, and duplicate copy requests are not available through our online portal at this time. Please apply by mail to:

- Arizona Department of Education – Certification Unit
  P.O. Box 6490
  Phoenix, AZ 85005-6490
If you need to have your fingerprint clearance cards completed or renewed for teacher certification during the Stay at Home Order issued by Governor Ducey, please contact the Arizona Department of Public Safety at 602-223-2279 for assistance.

Q: How does the COVID-19 school closure declaration affect adult education?

Adult Education and High School Equivalency (HSE) Services Unit understands there is heightened concern in regard to the COVID-19 virus, and we also understand the desire and need to continue with assisting our students, HSE testing candidates, and third-party verifiers with the documents needed.

Starting Thursday March 19th and until further notice, we are only accepting Official HSE Transcript Requests and Access Code Requests via our email inbox, Adulted@azed.gov or through regular mail at:

- Arizona Department of Education – Adult Education Services
  1535 W. Jefferson, Bin 26
  Phoenix, AZ 85007

Click HERE for more information.

Q: Are electronic signatures acceptable for the purpose of completing student enrollment forms?

Yes, school districts and charter schools may accept electronic signatures to complete student enrollments forms.

Q: How does the COVID-19 statewide school closure declaration affect the enrollment of new or returning students?

While brick and mortar schools are closed, the statewide school closure declaration is not a complete shutdown of school operations and staff are still expected to engage in work-related activities during school closure.

Public schools should continue to enroll students whether it be via online services or mail-in forms. The Attorney General has issued an opinion that advises schools to implement a “continuity of operations” plan and the opinion may be found here.
Q: How will student grades and grade point averages (GPAs) be calculated as a result of statewide school closures and the transition to distance learning?

Local education agencies determine the calculation of student grades and GPAs. Please reach out to your local school district or charter school for further information on these items.