



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Policy and Government Relations

Support for Safe Educational Practices and Experiences of Tribal Nations

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) encourages public school districts and charters with staff and students affiliated with Arizona's federally recognized tribal nations to stay informed on public health orders and other COVID-related policies enacted by tribal governments. This includes accommodating health and safety protocols, guidance, and frameworks associated with tribal policies.

ADE recognizes that specific provisions of HB2898 related to *Face Coverings & COVID-19 Vaccination* could cause concern for public schools on or adjacent to tribal lands where tribal public health orders appear to differ from the legislation.

H.B. 2898 K-12 education; budget reconciliation; 2021-2022. Face Coverings & COVID-19 Vaccination 35. (Fact Sheet, page 5 found [HERE](#))

Prohibits, retroactive to July 1, 2021: a) a county, city, town, school district governing board (governing board) or charter school governing body (governing body) from requiring students or staff to use face coverings during school hours and on school property; and b) a school district or charter school from requiring a student or teacher to receive a COVID-19 vaccination or to wear a face covering for in-person instruction.

Nonetheless, state and local governing bodies are asked to respect tribal sovereignty. Therefore, tribal public health orders ought to continue to be honored for the health and safety of tribal communities, students and the general public:

- Arizona's 22 tribes are recognized as sovereign nations.
- HB2898 does not prohibit accommodations for family choice or flexibility when tribal public health orders require safety standards that can include mask-wearing. Public schools on tribal lands are encouraged to establish regular opportunities to communicate with tribes or tribal education departments to stay informed of any current or pending impacts of tribal public health orders or tribal legislation to education.

ADE's Office of Indian Education maintains updates to tribal public health orders [HERE](#). Tribes or Tribal Education Departments that wish to submit changes to any hosted information may submit updates to indianeducation@azed.gov.



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ADE offers Strategies for Safe In-Person Learning for Elementary and Secondary Schools [HERE](#) with resources and guidance from the Arizona Department of Health Services and the CDC.

ADE is committed to honoring the livelihood and safety of tribal nations and all communities across Arizona as we continue to provide equitable and safe environments where children can continue to learn and grow. Thank you for your continued support, compassion, and concern for Arizona students and families.