



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Policy & Government Relations

Issued November 17, 2020

1. Some districts and charters on Tribal Nations received an Onsite Support Service Waivers that extended for a month while others have a longer approval window. How are these decisions made?

For sovereign Tribal Nations, the Onsite Support Service Waivers under EO 2020-51 are based on Tribal shelter-in-place or stay-at-home orders. Originally, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) provided one-month waivers. However, to provide more stability to Tribal Nations, ADE changed the process to align waivers with orders from Tribal Nations. Now, waivers expire when Tribal Nation orders are set to change or expire.

2. How is ADE supporting schools on or near Tribal Nations? What services are they providing for school communities that fall under tribal health orders during this crisis?

The primary role of ADE during the COVID-19 crisis is to support local education agencies (LEAs) on recovery efforts by working directly with them, education stakeholders like tribal education directors, public health officials, the Governor's office and federal partners. All of ADE's COVID-19 guidance and suggestions, including the Roadmap for Reopening, can be found here: <https://www.azed.gov/covid-19-guidance>.

Through the different federal relief funds, all public schools have had access to public COVID recovery dollars for needed support. CARES Act allocation amounts can be found on our website; some are still in the application process. Link to the allocations can be found at the top of this page: <https://www.azed.gov/cares/grant-resources>

Additionally, ADE has used its \$27M in set aside dollars to support free, virtual professional development opportunities for teachers and providers in AZ:

- [ASU Virtual Teacher Institute](#)
- [U of A Center for Recruitment and Retention of Math Teachers](#)
- We will be rolling out more programs and funding for eligible recipients regarding college access, social-emotional learning training, special education (SPED) compensatory services, and acceleration academies to support highly impacted districts with academic recovery. We will soon be launching a webpage that will include updates on these programs as they become available.



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Policy & Government Relations

3. During periods of distance learning, how is ADE working with LEAs to maximize meeting all students' needs (SPED, English language learners, preschool, career and technical education (CTE), assessments)?

ADE holds weekly meetings with our education stakeholders, including school leaders, education associations, educators, administrative staff, post-secondary partners and tribal education leaders. Through these critical conversations, ADE released the following guidance:

- [Onsite Support Service Guidance](#)
- [Early Childhood Education Guidance](#) *The Arizona Department of Education does not have any direct oversight of preschool programs or provide direct funding to these programs. Instead, preschool is organized under childcare and many preschool locations continue to stay open via licensed providers. Our guidance is focused on best practices for home and childcare providers.*
- [Special Education for COVID-19 School Year 2020-2021](#)
- [Prioritizing CTE During COVID-19](#) *Guidance from Advance CTE, our national partner*
- [Arts and Physical Education Re-entry Guidance](#)

Additional COVID-19 information can be found on the ADE COVID-19 [webpage](#).

5. During periods of distance learning, what type of technical assistance is in place for schools to employ strategies to meet students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) needs virtually?

At ADE, SPED services are supported by our Exceptional Student Services (ESS) staff who are available daily to provide technical assistance and guidance. ESS staff is in close communication with the special education directors at LEAs.

The technical assistance that each child needs during periods of distance and hybrid learning will vary. The team of educators, therapists, and staff who support students' IEPs work together to determine what each students' learning should look like based on their unique needs. Guidance for special education directors, educators and providers can be found here: <https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/special-education-guidance-for-covid-19-for-school-year-2020-2021-reentry/>

6. Are school sports permitted to start for the first full semester of school.

ADE does not oversee school sports in our state. Instead, the Arizona Interscholastic Association oversees school sports. Guidance from the Arizona Interscholastic Association regarding COVID-19 and school sports can be found here: <http://aiaonline.org/>

7. How are English Language Learner (ELL) requirements being met and what is the state's technical assistance?



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Policy & Government Relations

The ADE Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) continues to meet with stakeholders and ELL educators to support multilingual students during COVID-19. The following guidance has been released to schools and educators who serve multilingual students:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Guidance Regarding Initial Fluent English Proficient Students](#)

A hot topic for OELAS has been the administration of the 2020-2021 AZELLA Placement test. LEAs received notice that the 2020-2021 AZELLA Placement test will need to be administered to students once LEAs are able to do so in a safe and secure test environment at a physical location or official LEA building. The 2020-2021 AZELLA Placement test cannot be administered virtually.

Finally, assessing and placing kindergarten and newly enrolled students is a critical part of English language acquisition services. In October, LEAs began the process of administering the Kindergarten Placement Test (KPT) to their incoming kindergarten students and administering the AZELLA Placement Test to their newly enrolled (Grades 1-12) students. OELAS has released guidance on placing incoming kindergarten and newly enrolled students who identify as falling under an English Learning (EL) identification into EL program services at the beginning of the school year.

8. What are the requirements for preschool programs and what is the state's guidance for funding, etc?

ADE does not have any direct oversight of preschool programs or provide direct funding to these programs. For this reason, there are no specific requirements for preschool programs and ADE does not have guidance for preschool funding.

However, in collaboration with early childhood education stakeholders, ADE [released early childhood guidance and resources to ensure quality practices](#). Further, the guidance reminds LEAs that childcare, which encompasses preschool in Arizona, is an eligible use of ESSER and CARES Act funds.

9. There is great concern about student nonattendance. What is the technical assistance from the state for this increasing concern?

The dips in attendance and enrollment due to COVID-19 are concerning to ADE and our education stakeholders, particularly as it relates to average daily membership and funding for our public schools. Currently, ADE is evaluating distance learning plans from across the state to get a better sense of how LEAs are tracking student attendance in distance learning settings.



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Policy & Government Relations

The topic of student attendance and enrollment is a key focus area for the Equitable and Effective Schools Task Force, which is continuing the work of the Reopening Schools Task Force that convened in May 2020.

10. How is the state addressing assessments for students? How will it be accomplished for schools that remain online?

At this time, the US Department of Education has not issued a federal waiver for the mandated statewide assessment, known in Arizona as AZM2. Currently, ADE is working closely with federal and state stakeholders to determine how assessments will be conducted in Spring 2021 and what the timeline for the testing window will look like.

The authority to suspend the letter grade system another year lies with the Arizona State Legislature and will be a topic during the 2021 Legislative Session.

While ADE does see value in a statewide assessment to better understand where students are academically and to examine the extent of learning loss, there is also an understanding of placing undue burden on LEAs, particularly in regards to the stakes associated with AZM2 like funding and letter grades.

Existing assessment guidance and webinars can be found here:
<https://www.azed.gov/assessment>

11. Are there flexibilities for districts' in meeting CTE requirements of student hours?

Career and Technical Education Districts (CTEDs) are required to meet the number of instructional hours, however, if possible, they may do so virtually. Under Executive Order 2020-51, CTEDs should submit Distance Learning Plans to ADE describing how they will execute distance learning plans.