

Governor Doug Ducey And Superintendent Kathy Hoffman Announce Closure Of Arizona Schools To Address Staffing Shortages And Prioritize Arizona Children

News Release

March 15, 2020



School Closures Will Take Effect Beginning March 16 Through March 27, 2020



PHOENIX — Governor Doug Ducey and Superintendent Kathy Hoffman today announced a statewide closure of Arizona schools from Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, March 27, 2020. Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman will work with education officials and public health officials to reassess the need for the school closures and provide further guidance through March 27, 2020.

View Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman’s open letter to Arizona families, educators, school leaders, and education community members [HERE](#).

“Over the past few weeks and in coordination with public health officials, we have been in close communication with school administrators to provide guidance and be a resource as it relates to the recent outbreak of COVID-19,” said Governor Ducey. “As more schools announce closures and education administrators express staff shortages within their schools, now is the time to act. A statewide closure is the right thing to do. While this measure will not stop the spread of COVID-19, it will bring certainty and consistency in schools across Arizona.”

“The health and safety of all our students is our top priority, and we’ve worked hard to keep our school doors open — schools provide important services and many families rely on them for nutrition, access to health care and in order to do their own jobs,” said Superintendent Hoffman. “I am in close contact with school superintendents, teachers, and parents and will continue working closely in partnership with schools to ensure that our families needs are met.”

The Governor's Office and the Department of Education are working to implement directives to minimize the impact of the closure for Arizona kids during the closure, including access to healthcare and nutritional meals, and sanitary precautions schools can take upon reopening of schools. These directives include:

- School administrators should make every effort to provide continued education learning opportunities through online resources or materials that can be sent home.
- School administrators should develop a plan to continue breakfast and lunch services for Arizona students.
- As demand rises on healthcare professionals and first responders, schools should expand child care programs currently available to ensure minimal disruption to these critical jobs as a result of the school closure.
- When school resumes, school administrators should develop and implement precautions to ensure schools are a safe learning environment, including social distancing measures, regular intervals for administrators to wash and sanitize their hands, and guidance on how to properly and frequently sanitize election equipment and common surfaces.

Additionally, Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman are committed to working together to minimize the impact of these closures. Including:

- Working to ensure that any student who receives free and reduced-price meals will continue to be able to access those meals. The State is working with USDA to allow schools to begin summer food service operations and provide boxed meals as needed.
- Educating parents on recommendations from public health officials for kids who

are not at school to remain at home to the greatest extent possible. For families for whom that’s not an option, the State is coordinating with partners in the non-profit, faith-based and education communities to make available childcare options to families who need it.

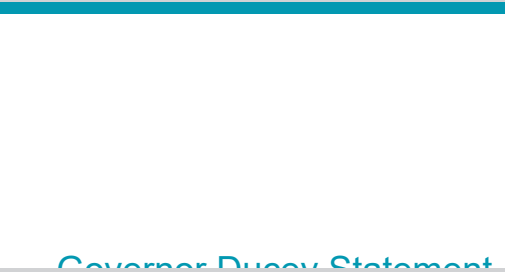
- Working together to make sure dedicated school employees don’t see any disruption to their pay, and consulting with school district and legislative partners to determine the extent of any potential makeup days.
- Engaging federal partners to secure a waiver related to the statewide testing that provides flexibility for Arizona.
- Engaging with our federal partners in the event that we need to secure a waiver related to statewide testing that provides flexibility and makes sense for Arizona.

Continued guidance will be provided to schools regularly by the Department of Education and at [azed.gov](#). Please visit [azhealth.gov/COVID19](#) for continued updates, facts and to learn about the measures you can take to remain healthy.



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