



July 18, 2020

Dear Honorable Governor Doug Ducey and Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman:

Over the next several weeks school districts will start the new school year and begin distance learning with the goal of eventually returning to in-person instruction. In order to successfully return to in-person instruction, students, parents, teachers, and staff must feel that it is safe. School leaders cannot determine this on their own. As such The Arizona School Administrators writes today to respectfully request objective guidance that is based on public health metrics to determine when schools can safely resume in-person instruction. We know from the experts that this virus will be with us for a year or more and we do not know what the Covid-19 epidemic will look like this fall; therefore, setting a specific date in the future for returning to campus does not seem like the best course for planning school reopening.

Epidemiological metrics and indicators that can inform this guidance may include test positivity rate, hospitalization rate, rate of new infections, etc. This allows for flexibility to deal with the likely reality that there are additional surges and downturns in Covid-19 infections and can allow for schools to open based on more local or county wide data. Additionally, establishing an objective criteria for reopening would help with the criticisms that come from the community, whether they be that schools are opening too soon or too late. Basing reopening on real-time public health data will provide school staff with more peace of mind.

We encourage identifying metrics and developing guidance immediately. We encourage this guidance to include provisions related to being physically open for free onsite learning as included in Executive Order 2020-41.

There are many challenges facing school leaders and teachers for the upcoming school year that still need to be overcome. However, most importantly the return to in-person instruction needs to occur when it is safe and therefore guidance for physically reopening and guidance for what to do when there is exposure within a school needs to be developed.

Sincerely,

Mark Joraanstad

Mark Joraanstad
Executive Director