

ADE Pandemic Preparedness



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COVID-19 Guidance for Schools

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COVID-19 School Closures

- This situation is rapidly changing and ADE is committed to providing up-to-date and timely guidance to the field as information and answers become available
- bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19
- Please view the above webpage for the most up-to-date guidance. Our team is updating this page daily.

COVID-19 School Closures

- The Governor's declaration applies to all Arizona K-12, brick-and-mortar schools, including district, charter, private schools, and career and technical education associated with a K-12 facility from March 16 – 27, 2020.
- Preschools, Head Starts, and Daycare facilities located on K-12 campuses are encouraged to follow all guidance by the Arizona Department of Health Services but are not required to close/
- There is flexibility here because some schools may want to keep their preschools, etc. open for the children of frontline health-care workers and first-responders.

COVID-19 School Closures

- At this time, we recommend schools:
 1. Provide educational opportunities to the best of their abilities – including online instruction
 2. Provide other critical services like school meals
- School facilities can remain open for operational needs at the district or charter's discretion.

Continuity of Educator & Staff Pay

- It is our recommendation that schools continue to provide regular pay to all hourly and salary staff – including certified and classified staff, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, administrative assistants, etc.
- We do not recommend that districts and charters require staff to use sick/personal leave during mandatory COVID-19 school closures while staff are reporting to work in-person, working remotely, or remaining on-call.
- Flexibility in work assignments & location (e.g. at home)
- We are working with legislators and the Governor on necessary statutory changes
- View March 16 letter regarding educator & staff pay: bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19

School Finance, Instructional Days and Graduation

Funding Considerations

- **During mandatory school closures related to COVID-19, there is no impact to funding following the 100th day of instruction.**
- If schools have not passed their 100th day of instruction requirement, ADE is doing everything we can to be flexible and ensure school funding is not impacted.
 - Schools on a 4-day instructional week are included
- We will provide additional guidance in the coming days and weeks.

180 or 200 Days of Instruction Requirement

- Arizona law requires that LEAs provide at least 180 days of instruction or the equivalent number of minutes regardless of any approved school closure A.R.S. § 15-341.01(A); A.R.S. § 15-341(B).
- Schools are encouraged to continue to provide instruction to the best of their abilities during COVID-19 closures – including online instruction, small-groups, etc.
- ADE is working with state lawmakers, the Attorney General's office, and the Governor's office to provide flexibility around the 180 or 200 days instructional requirement.
- We are considering the implications on school accountability and the A-F grading system.
- This information is subject to change depending on the severity of this pandemic.

Graduation

- During COVID-19 closures, we encourage schools and educators to collaborate to identify creative ways to support continued learning for high school seniors and those who are scheduled to graduate in school year 2019/2020.
- Schools must consider issues of accessibility.
- In the event of long-term closures, ADE will provide guidance on the impact of closures and graduation.

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Assessments

Statewide Testing

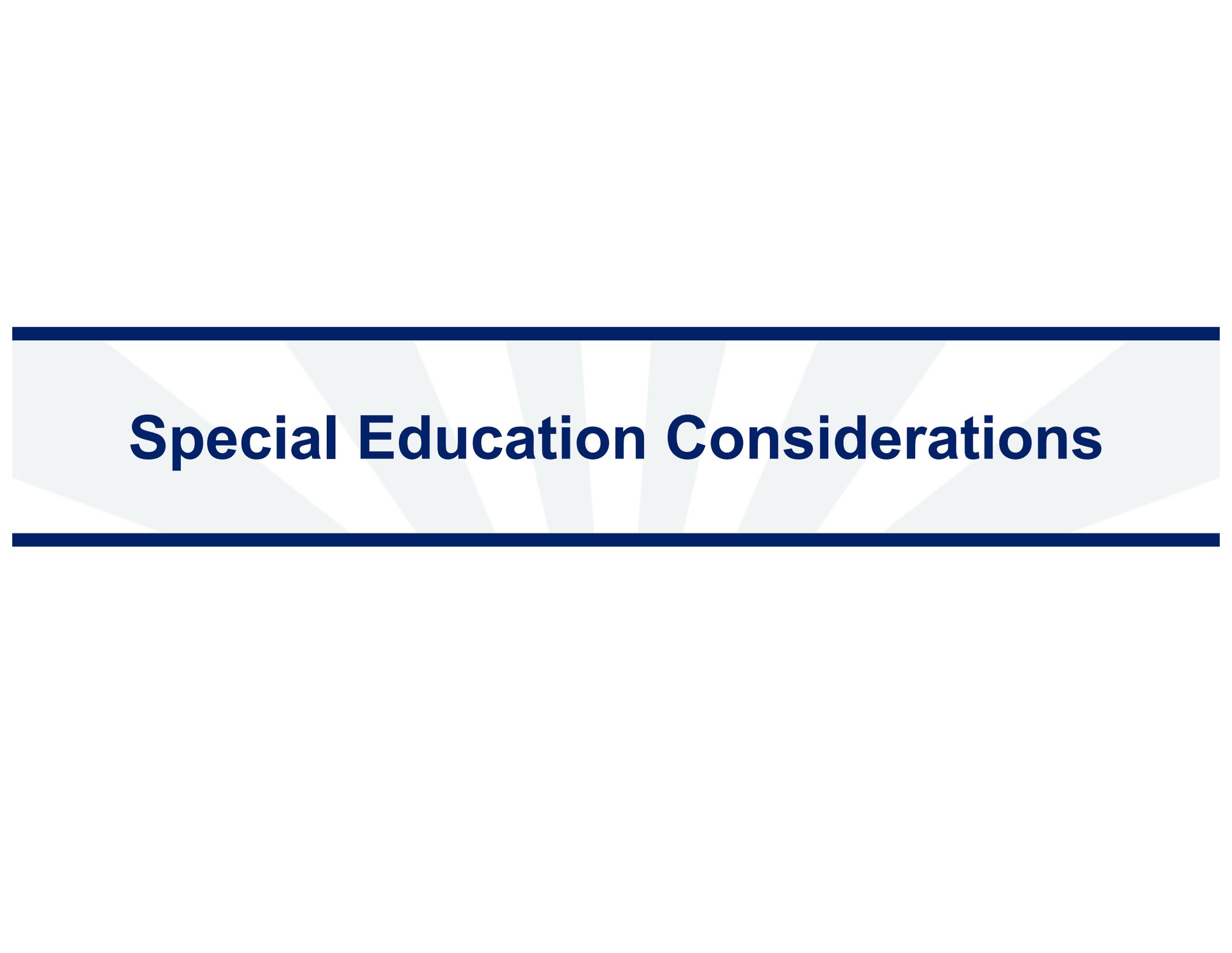
- There are state and federal considerations in regard to mandatory statewide testing.
- ADE is working closely with our testing vendors on the schedule for extending and/or delaying Spring 2020 assessments, **including AZM2 and MSAA.**
- ADE is currently engaging with our federal partners to submit any waiver that is allowable. At this time, no waiver has been submitted or approved.
- As information regarding assessments becomes available, it will be communicated via our District Test Coordinators.

State Accountability

- While we are engaging with federal partners regarding a waiver, we will need to assess state requirements with the legislature and State Board of Education (SBE)
- We understand the concerns about the impact of school closures on:
 - Accountability (A-F Grading System)
 - Move on When Reading
 - Results-Based Funding
- We are working with state leaders to be as equitable and flexible as possible in this unprecedented time.

Other Assessments

- **AZELLA:** At this time, please wait to send back any materials. Leave any unfinished or unsubmitted tests as is. If this changes, the ADE assessments team will let you know.
- **SAT:** College Board is canceling the May 2, 2020 SAT administration. Makeup exams for the March 14 administration (scheduled for March 28) are also canceled.
- **ACT:** ACT has rescheduled its April 4 national test date to June 13 across the U.S. All students registered for the April 4 test date will receive an email from ACT in the next few days informing them of the postponement and instructions for free rescheduling to June 13 or a future national test date.
- **AP:** The AP Program is developing resources to help schools support student learning during extended closures, as well as a solution that would allow students to test at home, depending on the situation in May.



Special Education Considerations

IDEA During a School Closure

- The IDEA, Section 504, and Title II of the ADA do not specifically address a situation in which public schools are closed for an extended period of time (generally more than 10 consecutive days) because of exceptional circumstances, such as an outbreak of a particular disease.
- During this school closure due to COVID-19, if the public education agency (PEA) does not provide any educational services to the general student population, then the PEA would not be required to provide services to students with disabilities during that same period of time.
- In this case, once school resumes, the PEA must make every effort to provide special education and related services to the child in accordance with the child's individualized education program (IEP) or, for students entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under Section 504, consistent with a plan developed to meet the requirements of Section 504.
- If a child does not receive services after an extended period of time, a school must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost.

IDEA During a School Closure

- If a PEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during the school closure, the school must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- PEAs must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP developed under IDEA, or a plan developed under Section 504.
- Schools should take into consideration alternate methods for providing educational services to children with disabilities, such as home visits, teleservices, homework packets, or Internet-based lessons.

Strategies to Educate Students with Disabilities During School Closures

- Virtual/online education when appropriate
- Independent study
- Blended learning (virtual/online & “brick and mortar”)
 - Schools should follow CDC guidance
- Telehealth (related services)
- In-home services

Other Considerations

- There is limited flexibility with regard to special education timelines. ADE/ESS is developing guidance to be released ASAP.
- Per OSEP, provision of an alternate mode of instructional delivery, such as online learning, during a school closure does not require an IEP amendment. Change in placement documentation would be required if online learning continued after return to school and was not already included in a student's IEP.
- Instruction/services provided during a school closure may or may not be considered FAPE. This is based on the individual needs of each student as determined in the student's IEP.
- Efforts to provide FAPE during a school closure should be documented (services, location, method) to assist in any determination of compensatory services upon return to school.

Key Takeaways for Districts and School Leaders

1. Federal law mandates that all eligible students have a right to a free and appropriate public education (i.e., FAPE as articulated in an IEP) even in times of crisis.
2. Schools/districts that close and/or move to remote instruction may need to:
 - Provide appropriate technology and access to all students, keeping the principles of Universal Design for Learning in mind;
 - Provide WiFi access/pay for it for eligible families;
 - Ensure students have required assistive technology needs met/provided by school; and
 - Provide [certain] services at home where appropriate.

Key Takeaways for Districts and School Leaders

3. Accommodations, modifications, or other supports guaranteed under Section 504 must also be provided.
4. Through this entire process, it is crucial that schools communicate **frequently** with families to think and plan about how best to meet the needs of their children in what may be a chaotic and constantly-changing environment. These challenges can best be met together.
5. Additional guidance can be found on the ADE website and through the ADE/ESS Section



Continuity of Nutrition Services

Nutrition Services

- The Arizona Department of Education's Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) team is working with district and charter leaders on steps they can take to ensure that schools who qualify offer food in a similar manner as the Summer Food Service Programs—e.g. in non-congregate settings; and/or are working with non-profit organizations to fill the gaps.
- A FAQ specifically from our HNS team can be found under School Meals: bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19
- A list of LEAs and non-profit organizations that are offering meals to any individual under age 18 via the Summer Food Service Program can be found under School Meals: <http://bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19>

Nutrition Services

Schools are also encouraged to inform families in need of other options for obtaining nutrition assistance when schools are not in session or when students are homebound, such as:

- Providing information on local food banks, food pantries and/or soup kitchens. Information to families should include the name and location of the food bank/pantry/kitchen, operating hours, and any other information needed to access their benefits.
- The Arizona Department of Economic Security's Nutrition Assistance (NA) Program may be available in your community. Schools can work with their local NA offices to obtain outreach information and materials on how to apply.
- Additional information on food assistance during emergencies can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/disaster-assistance>.

Additional Resources

Additional Resources

- bit.ly/AZED-COVID-19
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: COVID-19 Updates
- Arizona Department of Health Services: COVID-19 Updates
- Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019
- When and How to Wash Your Hands

Contacts

- Reporting School Closures: SFAnalystTeam@azed.gov
 - If you are closing your schools outside of March 16 – 27, 2020
- Health and School Nutrition: ADESchoolNutrition@azed.gov
- Summer Food Service Program: SFSP@azed.gov
- Assessments: Testing@azed.gov
- School Finance: SchoolFinance@azed.gov
- Exceptional Student Services: ESSinbox@azed.gov or your ESS specialist
- Constituent Services: Questions@azed.gov