

March 15, 2020



Arizona
Education
Association

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Governor Doug Ducey
Arizona State Capitol Executive Tower
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Governor Ducey:

The potential for community spread of COVID-19 virus in our neighborhood schools has caused severe anxiety among parents, educators and our students. Therefore, the Arizona Education Association is calling for students to remain home from school until education leaders and state policymakers can present a detailed plan of support that assures students will be returning to safe classrooms and healthy school sites.

During this time we call on the Governor to exercise all the powers of his office including convening the legislature in Special Session to swiftly and directly address this unanticipated crisis. We also call on the Governor to arrange for a meeting of state education and health leaders to work collectively to ensure the safety of Arizona families.

Education leaders and policymakers must work together to fully understand whether our current state mandates and policies put our students and educators in harm's way. It has been reported that concern around the COVID-19 virus has the legislature intending to finish the year abruptly. We believe legislative leaders need to remain in session until they provide for the statutory flexibility and financial support schools will require to keep our students and employees safe.

We must provide teachers, staff, and school leaders the time to assess their ability to provide safe classrooms and school sites for our students and to determine what additional support and flexibility will be required from the state to do so. Teachers and school staff will need time to plan how to best meet the needs of our students during this unprecedented school year.

The primary concern we all share is the health, safety, and welfare of students, families, and educators, as well as the health and safety of the broader community. District leaders and staff must be able to guarantee re-opening schools in a way that is safe for everyone involved.

While any school closure can be disruptive, it is reckless to pretend we are sending our teachers, staff, and students into safe environments Monday morning. Arizona needs time to assess how healthy our schools can be and what the rest of the school year will look like for our students. We must act now for all our safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Thomas', written over a white rectangular background.

Joe Thomas
President
Arizona Education Association

AEA's MISSION

AEA...
*keeping the
promise of
quality
public
education*