

Parents/Guardians and Sky Islanders:

There are no easy answers for reopening school this Fall.

Governor Ducey has put August 17 in front of us as a date to reopen, but to many of us right now that seems optimistic. Arizona is currently suffering the worst Covid-19 outbreak in the US. The sad reality is that our state can expect cases, hospitalizations, and, tragically, deaths to continue to climb over the next few weeks. That will most likely close the door on a projected August 17 date to safely reopen schools.

I am not convinced that our students want us to reopen with the distance model we devised for ending the previous school year. I do think that Sky Islanders *want* to come back to school and do not want to go forward with an online, remotely taught program. I also know that our teachers do not want to return using only that safe-at-home model of instruction. We miss being in a classroom with our students. But we all also know that it is imperative that we do this using careful preparations to keep everyone safe.

COVID-19 has altered life as we knew it, and going forward requires each of us to think anew about what is most important and matters to us as individuals and as members of a larger group. As we prepare to rethink our public spaces, and public schools, we want to assure you that:

- We will not reopen until we are quite confident we can do so safely and in compliance with all local, state, and federal public health guidelines and requirements.
- We will provide hybrid/safe-at-home options for students who will not feel or be safe reentering school classrooms. As well, there will be no negative judgment placed on students or families who must opt into the hybrid program.
- We will have a plan in place prior to reopening for students who are under public health quarantine to continue their schoolwork off-site.

It is entirely likely that safely reopening schools in Arizona will not take place until after Labor Day. Many questions remain unanswered across the state about this 20-21 school year. We are very attentive to the decisions that are being made at the state and local levels, but as we said above, there are no easy answers.

Thank you for your patience, and know that we are proceeding cautiously and with everyone's welfare in mind. We'll continue to keep you up to date and seek your guidance as we make the path by walking.

Best regards,

Shari

Dr Shari Popen, Director

July 9, 2020