



Public High School • Blue Adobe Project
Dr. Shari Popen, Director
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September 10, 2020

Parents, Guardians, and Sky Islanders,

You are not alone in wanting schools to reopen and return to in-person instruction. We are following the public health guidelines very closely and anticipate the day when we can safely reopen Sky Islands to in-person instruction.

Currently we are not convinced that we have the information to make a smart decision whether to reopen the school for in-person instruction. There are several variables still in play that can affect the transmission of COVID, including the reopening of classes at the U of A and the migration of college students into Tucson, as well as the reopening of shops and restaurants in Tucson. We do not think it's a smart idea to reopen in-person at any level if there is a good chance we will have to, in short time, reclose the school and return to remote teaching.

We know that you've been parenting in addition to working without much relief since March. We are all acutely aware of the absence of the web of teachers, caregivers, family, and friends who have provided the help and social safety net in our lives.

And yet, knowing that, I would still not support reopening school in person until COVID-19 numbers are better controlled. Without a coordinated effort to stop the spread of the virus—as cases in this country climb past six million and deaths top 190,000 at this writing—prematurely returning to school risks increasing COVID cases and further straining the public healthcare system.

Thank you, parents and guardians and Sky Islanders, for the support you are providing as we all navigate this unprecedented and tragic situation. We are proud of the work that our teachers and Sky Islanders are doing remotely. But we also feel deeply our Sky Islanders' absence and the tragic losses of friendship and togetherness with their teachers.

Stay well and keep safe.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shari Popen

Director/Sky Islands School