



## Schools meet recommended benchmarks

### Counties meet recommended benchmarks for Arizona schools

Arizona Department of Health (AZDHS) officials announced that Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Navajo, Cochise and Coconino counties have met the state's recommended benchmarks to begin hybrid learning. In addition, Greenlee and La Paz counties have met the benchmarks necessary for schools to resume full-in person learning. Hybrid instruction describes a mix of in-person instruction and virtual learning and limits the number of students on campuses. Hybrid learning plans can look different for each district. A dashboard available [here](#), indicates whether counties meet the recommended benchmarks for initial reopening of in-person learning in schools.

Schools are required to report any COVID-19 outbreaks to students, their parents, staff and their county health department. Aggregate data about COVID-19 transmission at schools will be available on the AZDHS website. School districts are not required to inform the general public as to which schools are experiencing outbreaks.

Unlike with businesses, these benchmarks are optional for schools. Governor Ducey has left it up to individual districts and schools to decide when to reopen safely.

To review the Roadmap for Reopening schools which outlines COVID-19 mitigation strategies for those schools who wish to begin in-person learning, click [here](#).

To review Benchmarks for Safely Returning to In-Person Instruction, click [here](#).

To review School Benchmarks by County, click [here](#).

### AZDHS issues guidance for holiday weekend

Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) officials emphasized the importance of maintaining social distancing guidelines over the Labor Day weekend. In a weekly [blog post](#), AZDHS Director Christ issued guidance for residents, which include staying at home and socializing with "quaranteams," -- the combination of two or a few isolated households to create one larger isolated unit. AZDHS recommends that until a vaccine is available, individuals wear masks and practice physical distancing along with other precautions.

AZDHS figures show that 82% of inpatient beds and 79% of ICU beds were in use, which includes people being treated for COVID-19 and other patients.

COVID-19 patients are using 9% of all inpatient beds and 14% of ICU beds. Overall, 30% of ventilators were in use. The state has one of the lowest COVID-19 rates of spread (Rt) in the nation at 0.95 (the average number of people a COVID-positive individual will infect). Of known test results from last week, AZDHS reported that 5% have come back positive. A positivity rate of 5% is considered a good indicator that the spread is being controlled.

For more information on free COVID-19 testing sites click [here](#).

### **Governor Ducey expanding flu vaccines**

Governor Ducey and Arizona Department of Health (AZDHS) officials are partnering with health care providers and businesses to prepare for the upcoming flu season.

At a press conference, the Governor announced a series of steps aimed at increasing influenza vaccination rates during the ongoing pandemic. The plan of action includes increasing flu shot access to underserved communities; partnering with health care providers and pharmacies; conducting business outreach; making the flu vaccine available at COVID-19 testing sites; and creating an online Vaccine finder.

As part of the efforts to expand access to flu vaccines, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) issued an administrative action to allow certified pharmacists to administer the flu vaccine to kids enrolled in the program as part of the state's new "Roll Up Your Sleeve" campaign. In addition, AHCCCS is offering \$10 gift cards to members who get their flu vaccine. Data from other states show these actions have increased the vaccine medication rates among Medicaid members by upwards of 50 percent.

For more information on where to receive a flu vaccination, click [here](#).

### **AZDES issues warning to unemployed state residents**

Arizona Department of Economic Security (AZDES) Director Wisehart warned unemployed residents that the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) grant program which allows states to provide unemployed persons \$300 per week in addition to the regular state unemployment benefit is projected to end in the coming weeks. Director Wisehart stated that large states like California, Texas and Florida have all been approved for LWA and are expected to quickly exhaust the \$44 billion grant program.

According to AZDES, Arizonans who have received the benefit for the past month will get that amount for the next two weeks; however, it is likely to run out after that. Unless Congress acts, the extra pay will end suddenly and the weekly amount will drop from \$540 to \$240. Latest AZDES figures suggest that 392,000 residents are currently receiving unemployment benefits which is up from about 17,500 before the pandemic began.

Director Wisehart also revealed that AZDES is holding onto more than 900,000 unemployment applications that are potentially fraudulent. The agency is also reviewing about 30,000 additional reports of possible fraud, many involving identity theft.

As more information becomes available, we will update you.

For more information on unemployment assistance, click [here](#).



## Arizona Update on Issues



Click here to find COVID-19 resources and volunteer opportunities

Click here to find the AGA 2020 primary analysis

## Legislators' Birthdays



Happy Birthday  
Rep. Rosanna Gabaldón (D)  
Wednesday, Sept. 9th

Representing LD2, Representative Gabaldón was first elected to the Legislature in 2013. Born in Bermuda, she is a past councilwoman of the Town of Sahuarita. Outside of the Legislature, Gabaldón serves in numerous facets within her community as a member of the Southeast Arizona Advisory Board of the Chicanos Por La Causa, Advisory Council of the Green Valley Salvation Army and Southeast Arizona Citizens Forum Board of the International Boundary Water Commission. At the Legislature, Gabaldón is a member of the House Transportation and Natural Resources committees. This session her top legislative priority was HB2076 which would have made a supplemental appropriation of \$6.1 million from the general fund to the Department of Water Resources to hire additional hydrologists, groundwater flow modelers and support staff members. To wish Representative Gabaldón happy birthday: [rgabaldon@azleg.gov](mailto:rgabaldon@azleg.gov)



Happy Birthday  
Senator Karen Fann (R)  
Friday, Sept. 25th

Representing LD1, Senator Fann is one of the most respected leaders at the Capitol. The current Senate President and second woman in state history to hold the position, she was first elected to the Legislature in 2011. Prior to running for state office, Fann was Mayor of the Town of Chino Valley and Mayor Pro Temp of the City of Prescott. Owner & CEO of AZ Highway Safety Specialists, INC, Fann has been a vocal advocate for transportation issues across the state. At the Legislature, she serves as Chairman of the Senate Rules committee. Outside of her duties leading the Chamber, she continues to represent her community by serving as a precinct committeeman and is a member of the Rotary International and Elks. To wish President Fann happy birthday: [kfann@azleg.gov](mailto:kfann@azleg.gov)

# Arizona Governmental Affairs

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