

Dear Arizona Educators,

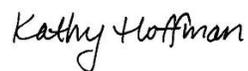
Every one of you has been on my mind over these past several days as you all prepare to return to your classrooms or already have welcomed back your students for the new school year. These past sixteen months have been nothing short of difficult, and I'm grateful for your efforts to continue supporting students throughout the pandemic. While we know that learning and growing have not stopped, many students will need additional support and resources this year to accelerate their learning and address their mental health needs.

It is my absolute hope that this school year, in-person learning will not be disrupted by COVID-19, but it is incumbent upon all members of school communities to continue practicing evidence-based mitigation strategies. **I highly encourage all who are eligible, to get their vaccine as soon as possible - this is the best possible way to stop the spread of COVID-19 and the rising Delta variant.** Visit [Vaccine Finder](#) to find vaccination sites near you.

Over the past week, **both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics have recommended that all people in K-12 schools wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status.** All public-school staff and students are encouraged to follow recommendations from public health officials and medical experts to ensure safe, in-person learning all year long. Particularly for our youngest learners who have not yet had an opportunity to get vaccinated, wearing a mask is a simple way to continue to protect the students we work with.

I know this has been a long hard road, but there is still a light at the end of the tunnel. Until we reach it, I highly encourage you all to do your part in protecting our most vulnerable and unvaccinated students, and our entire Arizona education community.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hoffman, MS, CCC-SLP
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education