



CHANDLER

EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Saturday, January 2, 2021

Dear Peoria Governing Board and Superintendent Reynolds,

We, the Chandler Education Association, stand in solidarity with our fellow Peoria educators that do not feel it is safe to return to in-person instruction following the winter break. The Arizona Department of Health Services metrics are all in the red. State Superintendent Kathy Hoffman has just [published a statement](#) urging Governor Ducey to order schools to remain in distance learning for a limited two-week period to align with quarantine protocols and current Arizona Department of Health Services benchmark recommendations. We urge you to reconsider resuming in-person instruction.

- [Arizona is currently second in the nation](#) in average daily COVID cases per 100,000 people over the last 7 days, trailing only California. Arizona's 7-day average is 84.6 per 100,000 people, compared to a national average of 54.2.
- [Arizona continues to set new records](#) in the following areas (For the first three areas, the previous record was set only one day earlier. Note: Data from 12/30/20):
 - COVID-related hospitalizations (4,526)
 - COVID-related ICU occupancy (1,076)
 - COVID-related ventilator usage (750)
 - ER visits related to COVID (2,341)
- The COVID dashboards for both [Maricopa County](#) and the [state of Arizona](#) now recommend a full return to virtual instruction.

Given this data, it's no wonder so many educators are frustrated, anxious, angry, and scared about returning to work. As concerning as these current numbers are, [experts overwhelmingly expect things to get worse](#) after the holidays as those who chose to ignore mitigation recommendations by [traveling](#) and gathering in large groups return to home and school, where community spread of COVID will surely accelerate. School and district buildings will not be immune to this reality ... indeed, our classrooms, facilities, school buses and cafeterias are by definition places to avoid (large gatherings of people in enclosed spaces and the inability to properly social distance) during the COVID pandemic.

We call upon Peoria district leadership to listen to its educators and put safety first. As educators, we want nothing more than to be in the classroom with our students, when it is safe enough to do so.

In solidarity,
Chandler Education Association Executive Board