



Arizona Department of Education (Office of the State Superintendent)

School Finance – Guidance on Executive Orders

The guidance below describes School Finance processes to implement Executive Orders [2020-41](#) and [2020-44](#) for the 2020-2021 school year (SY).

This guidance was published on July 15, 2020

Distance Learning Plans

- Distance Learning (DL) plans must be submitted prior to the first instructional day in which students will participate in DL pursuant to [Executive Order 2020-41](#). School districts and charter schools approved to offer Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) pursuant to A.R.S § 15-808 do not need to submit DL plans (DLP) and may begin offering AOI instruction at any time through an approved AOI school site/program. A school district or charter school that has been approved to operate an AOI but plans to operate distance learning for students enrolled in a brick and mortar school must submit a DLP prior to beginning operations. See [Approved AOIs for FY2021](#). All other DL options will require the submission of a DLP. School districts and charter schools are required to submit a DLP to be eligible for the Governor’s Enrollment Stability Grant Program.
- Students participating in DL should be enrolled in a school district or charter school in the same manner as if the student was attending in-person, except that school districts and charter schools must document the percentage of days the student spends in a DL setting as identified in this guidance.
- DL instruction may begin upon submission of a DLP. DL instruction may begin prior to August 17, 2020, but only after the completed DLP has been submitted.
 - Calendars must be submitted into AZEDS and reflect all instructional days (in-person instruction and DL), but calendars do not need to specify which days are DL.
- Tracking attendance according to the DLP shall begin as soon as the DL instruction begins.
- The first day of the school calendar should reflect the first day of instruction (whether DL or in person) and students enrolled in the school district or charter school must be logged and reported with their attendance within the first 10 days of instruction, or be deleted and reenrolled on the first day of reported attendance.
- Students participating in DL will be classified as an AOI student for funding purposes (not attendance reporting purposes) pursuant to both Executive Orders and will receive a reduction to Base Support Level funding in the amount of 5% for full-time students and 15% for part-time students.



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- The reduction will be applied based on the percentage of total instructional time the student participates in DL for SY 2020-2021. (Please refer to the attendance portion of this guidance to determine methods to track attendance and the percentage of time spent in DL.)
- The Base Support Level funding reduction is eligible for reimbursement by applying for the Governor's Enrollment Stabilization Grant Fund.
- The reported full-time equivalent (FTE) for students should be based on a combination of in-person and DL instructional time and subjects.
 - For example, school districts and charters should report a student as a 1.0 FTE if the student is participating two days per week of DL and three days per week of in-person instruction that combined meet the required instructional hours and subjects (A.R.S. § 15-901).

Calendars

- The ADE analysis of the number of school days required by Executive Order 2020-44 will be completed no later than August 31, 2020. The first day of in-person instruction may not occur prior to August 17, 2020.
 - Instructional days on which students do not attend in person, but instruction is provided as described in an approved DLP, will count towards the required 180 days of instruction and instructional time.
- Calendars may be submitted and certified until August 11, 2020 and may be changed and re-certified until August 31, 2020. After August 31, 2020, all calendar access requests must be submitted to School Finance via [Help desk ticket](#) for approval before submission.
- AOI schools approved pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-808 are not required to and should not submit calendars.

Attendance

School districts and charter schools are required to describe their plan for tracking student attendance in their DLP. The plan must establish clear class time expectations for students participating in DL. School districts and charter schools must provide access to a full curriculum with instruction and academic tasks that are estimated to meet the minimum instructional hours and number of subject requirements in A.R.S. § 15-901 for full-time or part-time status.

The school district or charter school shall describe in their DLP the criteria for being marked as present or absent for each day. If a student does not meet the criteria as laid out in the DLP, they should be marked absent. Just as with in-person instruction, attendance does not impact basic state aid funding



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until a student has been withdrawn for more than ten consecutive unexcused absences. School districts and charter schools have flexibility to design attendance tracking procedures to connect their unique DL models to existing attendance systems. In designing attendance tracking procedures, districts and charters should consider which activities best represent student participation/engagement in DL instruction, the ability of staff to track and record this information, and the extent to which chosen activities demonstrate the appropriate amount of instructional time for the day.

School districts and charter schools are not required to report minutes logged for students participating in DL. Student attendance for DL should be reported to ADE through the same systems used to report attendance for in-person instruction and each school district and charter school must maintain records that demonstrate daily student attendance based on meeting the criteria established in the DLP. The purpose of tracking scheduled DL hours by student is to determine the percentage of total instruction taking place at home so that the AOI reduction to Base Support Level is applied only to ADM generated in the DL setting.

- Attendance tracking MAY include methods such as the following:
 - Communication with a teacher via telephone, ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, or other digital meeting software;
 - Student participation in a virtual meeting or classroom session (ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, etc.);
 - Daily assignments completed and submitted by the student; or
 - A parental attestation or documentation of time spent on educational activities assigned by the school.
- Each method of taking attendance must outline the number of instructional hours associated with each day of education provided in a DL setting and must be maintained by the school district or charter school (see examples). In order to be considered full-time, a student in DL should be enrolled in enough instructional hours to meet the instructional hour requirement for full-time status pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-901 by the end of the SY.
 - LEAs must maintain DL attendance records for compliance evaluations conducted pursuant to Executive Order 2020-41 and for audits.
 - This does **NOT** require school districts and charter schools to report minutes logged for each student participating in DL.
- Absences shall be reported for each day or portion of each day of DL that a student does not meet the requirements in the identified method for tracking attendance per the school's DLP.
 - Schools should look to existing procedures on tracking absences to determine how to map absence tracking in a DL setting.



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- Attendance and absences must be recorded by day and shall be reported to ADE at least monthly. School districts and charter schools with a DLP that does not call for student contact each day must still disaggregate attendance data by day in reports to ADE for computing the percentage of time spent in DL.

The following scenarios demonstrate options for how attendance tracking may be conducted if each DL instruction day consists of 300 minutes of instruction over a 180-day calendar for grades 4, 5 and 6. These examples are to demonstrate how school districts and charter schools may take attendance and are NOT the only methods that may be used.

- Students will be given a packet of work that is designed to take five hours to be completed independently. Teachers will be available by phone to answer questions and support student work. Students will not be marked absent for the day if the daily assignment is completed and returned to the teacher.
- Students will participate in a virtual classroom setting through a Zoom meeting for the entire school day. Students will be marked present or absent for each DL instructional day in the same manner as days in which instruction takes place in-person in a physical classroom.
- Students will be given a packet of work to be completed independently each morning between 9AM and 1PM. Between 1PM and 2PM each day, students will participate in a virtual classroom meeting to discuss the assigned work and will submit completed assignments to the teacher. Students will not be marked absent for the day if the daily assignment is completed and the student participates in the Zoom meeting.
- Students will be given a list of resources and activities for the day and have freedom to choose assignments of interest. At the end of each day, parents will sign a form indicating the activities that were completed and the amount of time spent in DL.

Approved AOI

- If a school district or charter school submits a DLP and operates an approved AOI and a brick and mortar school, students may participate in either the AOI or DL.
 - AOI students should be reported as enrolled in the AOI and meet the requirements of A.R.S. § 15-808. See [Approved AOIs for FY2021](#).
 - DL students should be reported as enrolled in the brick and mortar school and meet the requirements for DL.
- If a student is participating in AOI part-time with a different school district or charter school than the one the student will attend in person, the student should be enrolled in an AOI school with its own CTDS number.



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- Minutes of instruction must be logged and submitted for students enrolled in AOI schools in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-808 and [SF-0003](#).
- Students enrolled in AOI should be reported as specified in A.R.S. §15-808. Please contact [Help desk ticket](#) with questions.
 - A reduction to the Base Support Level of 5% or 15% will be applied.
- School Finance will update ADM to reflect full-time and part-time AOI periodically throughout the year.

Distance Learning Procedures

- If there is a plan for a student to participate both through DL and in-person instruction through the same school district or charter school during SY2020-2021, the student should be enrolled in the brick and mortar school that the student will attend in person. Each of the following items must be taken into consideration when planning for a hybrid model:
 - Include the students that will participate in-person a certain number of days each week and students that plan to participate in-person at a future point in time.
 - The date on which in-person enrollment will begin does not need to be known at the beginning of the school year (for example, models that allow students to return to school when they feel safe). These students may be considered enrolled on the first scheduled day if they are contacted by the school to confirm participation in DL.
 - Attendance must be reported for these students on instructional days during which students do not attend in-person. Students must be reported as absent on days when they do not participate in DL in accordance with the school district or charter school's attendance tracking procedures described in the submitted DL plan.
 - Under this guidance, summary data must be submitted for students that are enrolled in a brick and mortar school, but do not attend in person on one or more instructional days to show the percentage of instructional time spent in DL.
 - The data that will be required is listed in the attendance tracking portion of this guidance and at the end of this document.
 - Further information about the approved method for submitting required DL data to School Finance will be available soon.
- Following August 17, 2020, or the end of the statewide school delay, students who will attend school in-person on all instructional days in brick and mortar schools should be reported through usual attendance procedures.
 - Absences should be reported through the student information system based on in-person attendance or the alternate method(s) described in the DLP for instructional days on which students do not attend in person.



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- School districts and charter schools must submit required information regarding student participation in DL **immediately following the first 40 days of instruction** to receive awards from the Governor’s Enrollment Stability Grant. An additional report will be required after the first 100 days of instruction.
- School Finance processes that generate non-fundable ADM intervals for students that accumulate excessive absences will not be enforced for SY 2020-2021.
- Per A.R.S.§ 15-901, students who generate 10 consecutive unexcused absences must be withdrawn retroactively to the last day of attendance or last excused absence.

Following August 17th: Schools remaining physically open

- School districts and charter schools are required to make a physical space available to a subset of students that do not have access to a safe and productive environment to carry out required DL instruction. This space must be offered the same number of days each week as school was in session in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020 per Executive Order 2020-41, but districts or charters may switch to a different schedule for SY 2020-2021 if the change was approved prior to the Executive Order.
 - School districts and charter schools that wish to move to a 4-day calendar and were not approved prior to the Executive Order may do so. Nonetheless, they must meet the requirement to make a physical space available the same number of days as last SY.
- It is the responsibility of the school district or charter school to operationalize this portion of Executive Order 2020-41 in coordination with public health guidance and local ordinances. The following are items for consideration:
 - If a school district or charter school is offering hybrid learning, it should consider surveying family capacity to support DL at home and prioritize in-person instruction for students without a productive home environment for learning.
 - If a school has chosen to move to schoolwide DL instruction, a physical location must be made available for students to go to during the same days and hours as the school operated prior to the school closure last year. DL instruction for students in a physical setting may look like a small subset of students working with an aide on their DL curriculum and activities on a computer at school.
 - A school district or charter school with multiple facilities can choose to open one building for this purpose rather than each school having to be open, so long as there is enough capacity for those utilizing this option within that site to follow public health guidelines.
 - School districts and charter schools can partner with community-based organizations (e.g. a Boys and Girls Club) to meet this requirement and use CARES Act dollars to



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support this partnership. All academic and attendance reporting requirements under an approved DL plan must apply to this scenario.

- Under Executive Order 2020-41, this requirement is waived if due to a COVID-19 outbreak pursuant to A.R.S. § 36-787, the Arizona Department of Health Services directs a school to close temporarily in order to appropriately sanitize the facility.

Budgets

- Budget revisions may be submitted according to existing statutory deadlines as local education agencies (LEAs) implement DLPs and better understand enrollment for SY 2020-21.

Employment Concerns, Contracts and Paying Staff

- LEAs should consult with legal counsel for guidance on all employee-related and contract concerns.
- Possible items to discuss with legal counsel and consider in the creation of DLPs include:
 - Whether it is necessary to modify existing contracts and whether contracts include provisions that address schedule changes in case of emergency;
 - Options to pay or temporarily reassign employees while schools are not open for in-person instruction; and
 - Timing of paychecks and employee benefits in the event of changes to contracts or employee work calendars.
- LEAs may look to leverage ESSER Funds to support activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in LEAs and to continue to employ existing staff of the LEA.

Grant Funding

- Enrollment Stability Grant
 - Specific grant processes and requirements will be defined by the Governor's Office and the Arizona Department of Administration.
 - Described as a \$200 million grant minimizing the funding impact of any declines by guaranteeing the greater of 98% of a school's 2019-2020 enrollment or their 40th-day ADM as enhanced by funding online learners up to the same level as in-person peers.
- Governor's Emergency Relief Fund
 - \$69 million in additional grant opportunities for SY 2020-2021 that will be defined by the Governor's Office and Arizona Department of Administration.



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Distance Learning Data to be Collected:

School Finance will collect the following data from each LEA that offers DL during SY 2020-2021. Data will be collected for days 1-40 and days 1-100:

	Number of Students	Percentage of Time in Distance Learning
Grades K-3		
Grades 4-8		
Grades 9-12		

	Number of Students	Percentage of Time in Distance Learning
ELL		
HI		
MD-R, A-R, SID-R,		
MD-SC, A-SC, SID-SC,		
MD-SSI		
OI-R		
OI-SC		
DD*, ED, MIID, SLD, SLI*, OHI		
ED-P		
MOID		
VI		