



July 9, 2020

Dear Kyrene Families,

Thank you for your flexibility and resilience as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our plans for the 2020-21 school year. Last week, we shared with you that Kyrene schools will observe two calendars this year.

Kyrene Digital Academy will begin, as scheduled, on July 30. All other Kyrene schools will begin August 17, as directed by the State of Arizona. This includes students in the Flex Distance Learning model. All students will attend school for the same number of days. The start and end dates are simply staggered by two weeks.

Why not start online?

Some of you have asked why Kyrene is not starting all students online and transitioning to in-person learning later. The answer is simple: **Equity.**

As I processed last week's order to keep schools closed, my heart was heavy with concern for our students who face challenges with online learning. Every family's circumstance is different, and if all students are forced to begin the year online, we know there will be students who will not participate, even if technology and other resources are provided. Those students could then fall behind their peers. I am also concerned for our students with Special Education needs, who may not be adequately served in an online environment. Further, I wish to be respectful of working parents who may not have an opportunity to support online learning at home.

We must do everything we can to ensure ALL Kyrene students have an equitable start to the academic year. This means keeping our In-Person and Flex Distance Learning models aligned, as parents have the choice to move children between these options during the year. Kyrene Digital Academy, on the other hand, will

serve students online for the entire year, so there is no reason to delay.

One silver lining of the delayed start is that it will also give Kyrene additional time for training all teachers in digital instruction, in the event that schools remain closed.

There is a threshold at which we cannot continue pushing the start of the school year. If there are further delays to in-person learning, we may be forced to start all Kyrene students online—a contingency we have planned for. However, we are hopeful that, with modified behaviors in our State over the next five weeks, it will be safe to begin school on August 17, without further delay.

Important Reminder:

All families have been asked to [choose a path back to school](#) that works best for your children and your own personal circumstances.

- Families interested in **Flex Distance Learning** are asked to take action by **July 23**.
- Families interested in [Kyrene Digital Academy](#) are asked to take action by **July 10**.
- Families who have already enrolled and plan to have children attend school in person do not need to take any further action.

Design teams are continuing to add new layers of detail to the plans for each of these models, in order to answer your most common questions. Please remember to bookmark www.kyrene.org/safestrong and check back often for updated information.

Sincerely,

Jan Vesely, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Our Vision: All students achieve at their maximum potential to become problem-solvers, creators, and visionaries of tomorrow.

Our Mission: Kyrene School District will commit to student success for all, by providing engaging, challenging educational environments which promote and inspire passion for learning, leading, and achieving transformative life outcomes.

LEARNING. LEADING. ACHIEVING.

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