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## MEMO

**July 28, 2020**

**To:** Arizona Conference Pastors, Constituents, Stakeholders in Adventist Education

**From:** Arizona Conference Education Superintendent, Nicole Mattson

**Re:** School Reopening, Fall 2020-2021

This memo is in response to several concerns that have come before our Arizona Conference Administration regarding the reopening of our schools. After an active summer of consulting with various health organizations and officials, private school leaders, the Arizona Conference Administrative team, Pacific Union Education Department personnel, multiple information resources, and the guidelines currently being enacted by the state of Arizona and local health officials, our position remains that our Arizona Conference SDA schools should create reopening plans that:

- 1) embrace the safety guidelines currently in effect by health officials when referencing school reopening;
- 2) fluidly adapt to the constraints of the current health crisis in the school's local area;
- 3) uniquely address the needs of the parents enrolling their children as much as possible;
- 4) plan ways to have the students in a face-to-face learning environment as much as is safely possible while providing reasonable remote-learning options for parents who choose not to send their children into the classroom;
- 5) although schools will take every possible measure to ensure the safety of all children, nothing is a guarantee, and there is some risk involved. Parents need to make the best decision for their families.

It is our belief that face-to-face instruction is best for the majority of our students for their emotional, social, physical, and spiritual growth pursuant to the goals of Adventist Education. This is, and will continue to be, our goal throughout this pandemic and any other crises that may arise. All schools have written plans outlining the measures to be taken to maintain a safe school environment, follow health guidelines, and address the individual needs of the students. They also have emergency measures outlined to deal with any presence of COVID-19 cases on their campus. Many have chosen a "transitional" approach that will include limited **face-to-face instruction** to begin with and will increasingly add back in more face-to-face instruction as is deemed safe by the local school board in accordance with local area health conditions regarding COVID-19.

Arizona Conference Seventh-day Adventist Schools will officially begin school on either August 13 or August 17 depending on the local school's decision to begin with remote learning or face-to-face instruction. On August 7, 2020, the Governor of Arizona, Doug Ducey, has pledged to release health "benchmarks" for the schools to follow as they evaluate the circumstances that will allow students to safely return to the classroom. All schools will attend to these guidelines as they continue their planning. As fluid as this situation may be, the goal of all of our schools will continue to be to provide a seamless education that begins and ends with optimum safety and an optimum student learning experience as we educate students for the Kingdom.