



ARIZONA DECISION DAY TOOL KIT

CELEBRATING ARIZONA'S GRADUATING CLASS
OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS



CELEBRATING OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Dear School Principals, Counselors, Administrators and Educators,

Spring is a special time of year as high school seniors look forward to graduation and the next steps in their lives. Along the way, you have been instrumental in shaping their future and helping them plan for success in the next steps of their education and career journeys after high school. Thank you for your tremendous work and outstanding commitment to the graduating Class of 2023!

As your students prepare to start their next steps in life, we hope you will take a moment to help celebrate their decisions.

Arizona Decision Day is an exciting celebration of our state's high-school graduating class and their choices for college and careers. This may include plans to attend one of Arizona's public universities or a community college, starting an apprenticeship, joining the military or entering the workforce. This tool kit is designed for schools across Arizona to celebrate your graduating seniors. School counselors, teachers and administrators can use this tool kit as a framework to shape messaging and celebrations at schools throughout the state.

Thank you again for all you do to teach Arizona's students and prepare them for college and career.

Sincerely,

Lyndel Manson
Chair, Arizona Board of Regents

John Arnold
Executive Director, Arizona Board of Regents

ARIZONA DECISION DAY GOALS:

- Celebrate the work students put into graduating from high school and taking steps to future success.
- Recognize students' plans for the future including going to college, joining the military, attending a trade school or starting an apprenticeship.
- Acknowledge and commend individuals who are the first in their families to go to college.

Arizona Decision Day is May 1 and schools may choose to celebrate their seniors during the entire week of May 1-5. Elementary and middle schools can get involved by joining high school celebrations or creating college-ready celebrations of their own.

PLAN

Events to celebrate Decision Day can take a lot of forms. Make your event one that celebrates your students. This can be a celebration of students in your classroom, a pep rally, general school spirit day or lots of other options! Make your day a reflection of your students and community. Include students in your planning process - they will have great ideas!

1. Hold a brainstorm session:
 - a. What have you done in the past to celebrate our seniors that students enjoyed?
 - b. What types of events can maximize student, parent and community participation and include those students who can't attend in person?
 - c. Do you have a budget to support events, or do you need to consider events that won't cost money? Do you have parents or donors that might support the event with resources?
2. Apply for funding!

If you don't have funds to support celebration events, you can apply to [DonorsChoose](#), which allows individuals to donate directly toward your Decision Day event! The money can be used to buy supplies from a list of approved donors. To apply, please follow these steps:

 1. Go to [donorschoose.org/teachers](#) and create a school counselor or teacher account.
 2. Create a project for the materials you need for College Signing Day.
 3. Once your project has been screened by the [DonorsChoose.org](#) team, you will be notified and you'll receive a link to your project. Make sure to email your project link to your friends and family in case they want to donate to your project.

Note: At this time, funding is only available through [DonorsChoose.org](#) to educators at public schools.
3. Determine a date, time and location for your event(s).
4. Get ideas for events and celebrations by checking out the #CollegeSigningDay hashtag on Twitter and Instagram for posts from schools and students.

CELEBRATE

In Arizona, May 1 is Decision Day and the first week of May is designated for Decision Day events. This allows schools to pick the day that works best for them. Here is a suggested timeline for the week that schools can follow for events and messaging:

- **Friday, April 28:** Let students know that Decision Day Week will be celebrated the following week. Share the purpose of Decision Day Week. Inform parents and the community through your various communication channels of your intention to celebrate Decision Day.
- **Monday, May 1:** Gov. Katie Hobbs will issue a proclamation recognizing Decision Day. The proclamation will be on the [Governor's website](#). Recognize the governor's proclamation for the week through your communication channels. Ask student government leaders to share a message in a morning address. Raise awareness through social media and begin highlighting seniors and their plans. Be creative!
- **Tuesday, May 2:** Continue recognizing seniors through social media posts.
- **Wednesday, May 3:** Host a school-wide event. There is no right or wrong way to host a college signing day event, so feel free to be flexible and creative! This could be an assembly, a pep rally or a spirit day - or just about anything that brings the student body together in spirit to celebrate Decision Day!
- **Thursday, May 4:** Continue awareness and social media presence.
- **Friday, May 5:** Wrap-up Decision Day Week with a school-wide congratulatory message for seniors.



IDEAS

Have fun and just be creative as you plan events to celebrate your seniors! Depending on how your school is structured, you may have students who attend in person, online or both. Following are suggested ideas to host events for both modalities.

In-Person:

- Host an open-mic assembly for seniors to announce to other students what they are doing after high school.
- Have students sign their college acceptance letters and take photos documenting the moment.
- Have photography students take photos of seniors, adding backgrounds that represent schools where they are enrolling (e.g. college, mascot or logo). Younger students can also pose and share their post-high school plans.
- Host a panel discussion featuring seniors sharing the importance of planning for education after high school. Host the discussion as part of an assembly or create a video of the discussion and post on your school's website so other students can view it.
- Encourage all students to decorate doors or lockers with illustrations of their future plans.
- Ask staff to wear clothing from their college and talk to students about why they decided to go to college.
- Ask the admissions or enrollment officers at Arizona's public universities or community colleges and trade schools for spirit gear, apparel or giveaways for seniors as part of your Decision Day celebrations!
- Set up a parade route for seniors through the school's parking lot with cars decorated in themes reflecting their future plans.

Options for Remote Students:

- Ask seniors to share a photo or prepare a 10-20 second video about their future plans and post to your school's social media accounts and website. Post to the school's social media page or host an event showcasing videos/photos at school on Decision Day. Use hashtags to drive awareness throughout Arizona.
- Invite representatives from the colleges, trade schools or military to join a virtual celebration with remote students in which they announce the students attending their institution. Students can sign their acceptance letters during the virtual celebration.
- Ask alumni to join the virtual tour and talk about their college experiences. Encourage attendees to wear college swag.
- Profile students who are graduating and their future plans through newsletters and local media outlets.

MAXIMIZING SOCIAL MEDIA

Below are sample social media posts for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Make sure to use the hashtag, **#AZDecisionDay**, so other schools and students can follow along.



- It's #AZDecisionDay! Learn what our seniors are doing after graduation.
- See what the future holds for this year's graduates. #AZDecisionDay
- This week we are celebrating the hard work and determination of our graduating seniors! We wish them the best of luck as they begin new adventures in life, including going to college! #AZDecisionDay
- A special shout out to our seniors who are declaring their future college this week. #AZDecisionDay
- Today, we're celebrating our seniors and different paths they'll take after graduation - including college, career, trade school or the military! #AZDecisionDay

After the week concludes:

- Thank you to all the students who participated in #AZDecisionDay!
- To all parents, families and loved ones of our graduates - thank you for your support! #AZDecisionDay
- Thank you to the volunteers who helped make our #AZDecisionDay a success!

SOCIAL GRAPHICS

