

Governor Cooper Issues Executive Order Closing K-12 Public Schools and Banning Gatherings of More Than 100 People

Raleigh
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Governor Roy Cooper today ordered all K-12 public schools in North Carolina to close for a minimum of two weeks in response to COVID-19. The Executive Order also bans gatherings of more than 100 people. North Carolina currently has 23 people in 12 counties who have tested positive for COVID-19.

“We do not have the luxury of a wait-and-see approach. These are hard decisions but they are necessary so we can learn more about the virus,” Governor Cooper said. “We do not want any regrets in the rearview mirror, and I am guided by one objective – doing what we must to keep people from getting sick and to make sure that those who do can get excellent care.”

The Executive Order directs all public schools to close beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 for at least two weeks. The two-week period allows time for North Carolina to further understand the impact of COVID-19 across the state and develop a plan for continued learning for students should a longer closure be needed. Governor Cooper made the decision in consultation with State Board of Education Chair Eric Davis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson, and North Carolina Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen.

Governor Cooper has appointed an Education and Nutrition Working Group to develop a plan to ensure that children and families are supported while schools are closed. The working group will focus on issues including nutrition, health, childcare access for critical health care and other front-line workers and learning support for children at home.

The Working Group will be co- chaired by Susan Gale Perry, Chief Deputy Secretary of NCDHHS and David Stegall, Ed.D, Deputy State Superintendent of Innovation at DPI, and will have representatives from DPI, NCDHHS, the State Board of Education, as well as other education, nutrition and childcare associations.

“I am standing up this new working group to ensure that children have enough food to eat, families have care in safe places for their young children, and student learning continues,” Governor Cooper said.

In addition to closing schools, the Executive Order prohibits mass gatherings that bring together more than 100 people in a single room or space, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large

conference room, meeting hall, theater, or other confined indoor or outdoor space, including parades, fairs and festivals. Violations of the order are punishable as a Class 2 misdemeanor.

The ban on gatherings does not include airports, bus and train stations, medical facilities, libraries, shopping malls and spaces where people may be in transit. Office environments, restaurants, factories, or retail or grocery stores are also excluded.

The Order received concurrence by members of the NC Council of State without objection. The full executive order is available [here](#).

Make sure the information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources like the CDC and NCDHHS.

For more information, please visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and NCDHHS' website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus, which includes daily updates on positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina.