

North Carolina to Continue Working Toward Getting Students Back in the Classroom

This week, the state has provided personal protective equipment to schools around the state as preparations continues

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Governor Roy Cooper today shared that North Carolina will continue working with schools, teachers, parents, and health experts to ensure that plans for school this coming year will protect everybody, especially those at high-risk.

“We want to get our students back in the classroom, and we want to make sure we get this right. My number one opening priority is classroom doors,” said Governor Roy Cooper. “We encourage our public schools to continue planning, with a special focus on how teachers, staff, and students can best be protected – especially those who are high-risk.”

In June, the state released the [Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit](#) laying out essential health practices for schools to re-open safely. Schools were asked to prepare three plans: Plan A – in-person learning with key health and safety rules in place. Plan B – same as Plan A, but with fewer children in the classroom at one time. And Plan C – remote learning for all students.

With the goal of getting students back in the classroom for in-person learning this school year, planning continues to ensure teachers, staff and students will have adequate protection.

“We need to do everything within our collective power so that our children can return to in-person instruction,” said NCDHHS Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen. “We can do that with the scientifically proven protective measures in the StrongSchoolsNC guidance and all of us practicing the 3Ws.”

This week, the state distributed supplies of personal protective equipment to schools across the state for use in the upcoming school year to keep students safe and healthy while at school. These PPE Starter Packs include a two-month supply of thermometers, surgical masks, face shields & gowns to school systems and charter schools, for school nurses and delegated staff who provide health care to students for the 2020-2021 school year.

In total, the shipments include more than 16,500 thermometers, 7,200 face shields, 81,000 gowns and more than 347,000 surgical masks. Shipments to 203 charter schools, lab schools, and regional schools will travel via UPS. Supplies for the 116 public school districts will ship either via UPS or directly to the school district warehouse by North Carolina National Guard teams or by a contracted trucking firm.

The state has also provided school districts with access to statewide contracts so they can more easily purchase other health and hygiene supplies, like cloth face coverings and hand sanitizer, for their staff and students. More is needed, and Governor Cooper is committed to work with schools, teachers, parents, the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education on a strong plan to re-open schools.

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