

# Yonkers Free Press : Special Edition

SUNDAY MARCH 15, 2020 - BRIAN HARROD PUBLISHER



Governor Andrew Cuomo Orders All Yonkers Schools To Close This Week To Limit Spread of COVID-19

## Governor Shuts Down Yonkers Schools

By BRIAN HARROD

Yonkers Schools to close for two weeks beginning Monday, March 16th.

Governor Cuomo says, "Any school closings need to be done with these contingencies in mind so that children are not harmed."

The Governor also announced New York City, Nassau and Suffolk and other Westchester schools will close this week too.

"Our goal is to slow the spread of the virus to a rate that the health-care system can manage, and one of the ways to do that is to reduce density," Governor Cuomo said.

"Closing the schools is a good idea but you have to anticipate and correct any unintended consequences - we have to ensure children who rely on free school meals continue to get them and that there's adequate child care, especially for healthcare workers and first responders who are parents of young children. We will close these schools but it needs to be done with these contingencies in mind so that children are not harmed and our hospitals aren't understaffed - otherwise we cut off our nose to spite our face."

The Governor also called on school unions to work together to ensure children who rely on school breakfast and lunch programs will continue to receive that support, and parents will be provided access to child care as needed, including temporary daycare centers.

These centers would prioritize care for children of healthcare work-

ers and first responders to ensure these school closures do not strain the hospital and emergency response systems.

Earlier today, the Governor tasked SUNY Empire State College President Jim Malatras with working with counties to develop contingency plans in preparation for school closings, including how to provide meals to food insecure children and ensuring families have adequate access to childcare.

The county executives from Westchester, Suffolk and Nassau joined a conference call with Governor Cuomo earlier today to discuss the closures.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said, "Our county has been coordinating with the State to ensure an effective means of slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Cancelling group events and

meetings, limiting access for non-essential social contacts and anticipating additional testing and health-care needs are all part of our response

in concert with the Governor and his administration. Closing schools-with adequate childcare and nutrition provisions-is the next step we will un-

dertake this week. We deeply appreciate the leadership shown by Governor Cuomo."