

Governor Kelly announces proactive measures to mitigate spread of COVID-19 pandemic in Kansas

Mar 17, 2020

This afternoon Governor Laura Kelly announced two additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and better position Kansas to combat this unprecedented emergency in the months to come.

First, in consultation with the Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Board of Education, the Kansas Association of School Boards, the Kansas School Superintendents Association, United School Administrators of Kansas and Kansas National Education Association, Kelly officially extended the closure of K-12 schools for the duration of the 2019-2020 school year by Executive Order # 20-07.

“This was not an easy decision to make,” Kelly said. “It came after close consultation with the education professionals who represent local school boards, school administrators and local teachers. These unprecedented circumstances threaten the safety of our students and the professionals who work with them every day and we must respond accordingly.”

Kelly emphasized the need for students to continue to receive high-quality education during this closure. On Sunday, March 15, Governor Kelly tasked the Department of Education to convene a group of experts to develop a comprehensive education plan for students for the remainder of the year.

Additionally, effective Monday, March 23, Kelly directed state employees to stay home on administrative leave to minimize additional risk of exposure to the virus for two weeks. The break will allow agencies to assess their essential functions to ensure that they can safely continue to serve the core needs of Kansans. This directive only applies to executive branch agencies under jurisdiction of the governor. This does not include agencies such as the Office of the Attorney General, the Insurance Department the State Treasurer or the Secretary of State’s office. Additionally, the order does not apply to legislative or judicial branch employees. Those branches will issue their own, separate, guidance to employees.

Kelly has directed Cabinet agencies, boards and commissions to develop an internal plan that will ensure a seamless transition. They will each identify which employees can work remotely, which will need to be placed on

administrative leave, and how to best ramp operations back up at the appropriate time.

“The steps we are announcing today will create the space we need at the state level to develop a more strategic, resilient infrastructure so that we can get ahead of this threat and limit its long-term impact to Kansans,” Kelly said.

[To see Executive Order #20-07, click here.](#)