



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 16, 2020

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors  
Nonpublic School Administrators

**FROM:** Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

**SUBJECT:** Emergency Order Affecting Schools - MEMO #COVID-19-138

After weeks of alarming rises in the numbers of COVID-19 cases, test positivity rates, and hospital admissions, and a tripling of deaths in the state in the last 30 days compared to the immediately preceding 30 days, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon, and Chief Medical Executive and MDHHS Chief Deputy for Health Dr. Joneigh Khaldun held a press conference yesterday evening to discuss the current COVID numbers and the need for additional restrictions over the next three weeks. Director Gordon announced the issuance of an [emergency order](#) that will affect many facets of life in Michigan, including schools.

Among many different elements, the emergency order requires the temporary suspension of in-person instruction in public and nonpublic schools for grades 9-12 effective Wednesday, November 18 through December 8, including the suspension of all athletic and other extracurricular activities.

The emergency order provides exceptions for high schools to allow in-person instruction for students with special needs and English language learners, at the school district's discretion. Child care centers in high schools may remain open, as may food distribution, access to internet connectivity, and physical and mental health care services.

In-person instruction may still be provided in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 at the discretion of each local school district.

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According to Dr. Joneigh Khaldun at the press conference, of the 200 COVID-19 outbreaks that the state is currently investigating among Michigan K-12 students and staff, 49 percent of them are associated with high schools. Of the total number of individual cases associated with these outbreaks, almost two-thirds are associated with high schools.

All in-person instruction and functions in school buildings must be done with the continued use of masks, social distancing, frequent hand washing, and regular disinfecting.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors