

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: September 2nd, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

09/2/2020

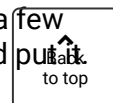
Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon, everyone. As always, I'm joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. We also have in the audience today, and forgive me, the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Service Medical Director, Dr. Ed Lifshitz, great to have you. To my far left, Superintendent of the State Police and the guy who needs no introduction, Colonel Patrick Callahan. And today we've got several special guests. To my right, the Interim Commissioner of the Department of Education, Kevin Dehmer, who's going to update us on schools and school openings, and to my immediate left our Chief Policy Advisor Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis. We also have in the audience a real treat, the First Lady of the Great State of New Jersey, Tammy Murphy is in the house.

So with Monday's announcement of the return of indoor dining and the reopenings of our theaters and performance spaces, albeit limited, we now have restarted our retail stores, restaurants and indoor entertainment and recreational activities, all with appropriate safeguards. Certainly, these are important steps and just as certainly, they could not have been made without the work that millions of you have done collectively to give New Jersey one of the lowest daily positivity rates and rates of transmission in the nation.

Let's be clear where we are. The virus is not done with us yet, not by a longshot, but today we can say that New Jersey is one of the safest states in the United States, although as Judy and I will go through in a few minutes, our numbers continue to be moving around. I would say sideways, Judy, would be the way I'd



But with the restart of our economy now more fully underway, our attention turns to the restart of our schools. And let's also be clear about where we are. This is one of our most sacred and precious responsibilities. Kevin is with us to provide more color on the efforts his team at the Department of Education have been taking throughout the summer to ensure that our school year gets off to a safe start.

Before we go into some of those steps, let's start this discussion with some really good news. This morning, Education Week came out with its annual rankings of the states – and by the way, Education Week, on these rankings, is the gold standard – and for the second year in a row, New Jersey can proudly call ourselves home to the very best public education system in the entire United States of America. This is possible because of our commitment to partnering with our educational communities, to supporting our schools and communities, and to the tremendously talented professionals, the educators in front of our classrooms, as well as those in the administrative offices.

And next week, absent any unmet health and safety guidelines spelled out in my Executive Order from two weeks ago, or any other, please God, unforeseen issues between now and next week, I fully expect that our educators, administrators and support staff will be at the ready and that millions of students and families will be too, to get working to make it three years number one in a row. We have done and we will continue to do all we can to be their partner, their resource, and their advocate in these uncharted waters. We are committed to the success of every district, every school, every teacher, and most of all, every student.

So we all know this will be a school year unlike any other we have ever had. As of today, as you can see, and Kevin will get into this in more detail:

1. 434 school districts are fully prepared to begin next week, or in a few cases have already opened, with a hybrid model of both in-person and remote learning;
2. 68 will open to all in-person instruction;
3. 242 will be all remote up until a certain specific date in each of those district's cases; and,
4. 22 will start the year with some combination of all of the above.

In developing -- and by the way, Kevin will add to this -- very simply, the numbers add up to more school districts that we have as a public education matter, and that's because it includes a certain grouping of our private schools as well. Not all, but it does include a whole series of categories, and Kevin can get into that.

In developing the guidelines which have informed these district-made decisions we consulted with health and safety experts, both here and across the country. We have provided district leaders, administrators, educators, parents and other key stakeholders with what they need to ensure everyone is taking the same precautionary steps to lessen, as much as possible, the threat of this virus, whether that be in requiring masking, ensuring proper sanitation procedures, and lessening building and classroom densities. School buildings that meet our guidelines are safe environments for students, faculty and staff.

We are confident that these steps we have in place will make the kind of chaotic situations we have seen in other states far less likely to happen in ours, yet we also have in place specific health guidance for what to do when a case arises in a school, or if we see a spike of cases or a cluster in a school. I think it's fair to say that we are ready for all of the above. As I said, Kevin will be able to speak to all the department has done over the past several months to assist our schools and our educational communities, whether it be in direct financial assistance or greater administrative flexibility.

And remember that each and every school district is unique. Each has its own unique makeup and faces its own unique challenges. There are no, and I think can be no, one-size-fits-all measures. We have asked our educational leaders to lead, and they have so far shown themselves up to that task and beyond.

There will be nearly as many paths to reopenings as there are school districts, and that's exactly how it should be. But for all the different approaches we are bound together by far more. We all share a common goal: to keep our standing as the home of the best public schools in the United States of America. We all share a desire to get back to full-time, in-person school days, and we all share an unshakeable commitment to keeping students, educators, support staff and families safe. With those shared values and priorities, I know we can overcome every obstacle.

So as our kids, for the most part, enjoy their last week of vacation, as our educators prepare their lessons, and regardless of whether they will start the year in a classroom or at a kitchen table, I wish -- we all wish -- everyone a good, safe and smart start.

And while we're on the topic of education, I want to quickly highlight a couple of really good stories coming from our schools. First, last week, I had a great conversation with Shawn Adler. There's Shawn, and as well as a couple of his administrators. Shawn teaches English at Cliffside Park High School in Bergen County. Like so many of his colleagues and educational peers, he saw the onset of the pandemic and the impact that it had on the lives of his students as a teachable moment. As he saw his students fighting for how best to convey and share the range of emotions they felt, Shawn worked with them, and they worked with each other to put their stories to paper, creating the Memoir Collection, the Class of COVID-19: Insights From the Inside. And by the way, in Cliffside Park, this was not an abstract matter. They suffered pain and they suffered loss. You may remember, one of the first persons we memorialized was the baseball coach at Cliffside Park High, Ben Luderer, who himself was a former baseball star, and Ben was only 30 years old. Ben is memorialized in this collection.

The commitment Shawn has to his students, not just to their education but to their wellbeing, is not unique. It is shared by countless thousands of other educators up and down our state. The students have been recognized across the nation for their work and insights and the Class of COVID-19 is available through Amazon, a shameless pitch, Judy. So to you, Shawn, and to your fellow teachers, educators and administrators, thank you for being a model educator. I wish you and everyone at Cliffside Park High a great start to your school year, and I hope you're able to stop by, and I hope I will be able to stop by, as I said to Shawn, and visit when time allows, and a special shout out to your extraordinary students.

And if that's not enough, Zakiya, staying in Bergen County in nearby Fort Lee is Yewon Lee, who was just named the winner among sixth and seventh graders and a national finalist in Google's annual Google for Doodle Art Competition. This is Yewon's Doodle titled "We're All Neighbors". The artist statement she submitted not only highlights the best of Fort Lee but the strongest part of so many of our communities, and I quote Yewon. "I show kindness by treating all different kinds of people as my neighbor." As a national finalist, Yewon has already won a \$5,000 scholarship, and now her doodle is alongside five others before the judges, and we send her our best as she competes to be the national winner. Dan Bryan, you will keep us posted as to how she does in that competition. In fact, if she wins, I'm going to commit right now that she's going to be sitting beside us in that seat that Zakiya's in, in person. So to you, Yewon, best of luck and thank you. Win, lose or draw, by the way, you've already won for representing not just Fort Lee, but all of the Great State of New Jersey.

Switching gears again, completely unrelated, the list of states from which travelers to New Jersey are being advised to observe a 14-day self-quarantine period was updated. Two states, Alaska and Montana, returned to the list, which is now comprised of 33 states and territories that have over a seven-day rolling average, Judy correct me if I'm wrong, either more than 10 new cases of coronavirus per 100,000 residents, or a daily spot positivity rate greater than 10%. And again, either of those on a rolling seven-day average. So visit, please, [covid19.nj.gov/travel](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/travel) for the complete -- it's on that chart but it's at the bottom, somewhat of an eye chart down there -- [covid19.nj.gov/travel](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/travel) for the complete list of states and to learn whether you should be self-quarantining.

And if you're arriving from one of these states, use your smartphone to fill out the Department of Health travel survey which is available through this page. We continue to ask everyone to practice self-responsibility and good citizenship. By complying with our travel advisory, and this goes equally whether you are a visitor or a New Jersey resident returning home, let's all remain vigilant and self-aware. And let's all remember that our number one goal is to slow the spread of this virus and save lives. And it's particularly important to remember this, Judy, as we wind down summer, head into a big holiday weekend and then turn the page to school.

With that, let's take a look at the overnight numbers. I want to say, as I mentioned earlier, a number of these numbers are up marginally and while Judy and team are trying to track down some of the root causes, overwhelming with is no one X or Y reason. There's no one geography, there's no one incident, there's no one particular, again, Judy and team are trying to run some of the things down but it is just generally sort of, this is a virus that ebbs and flows and we have to accept that, and then we have to put the proper policies in place to deal with that ebbing and flowing, and all have been extraordinary in adhering to those policies.

So we are best in the nation in so many respects, but we're not out of the woods. With that, we are reporting an additional 329 positive test results. That's a cumulative total of 192,595. Spot positivity from August 29th tests, 2.14%. Rate of transmission currently sits at 0.96. In our hospitals, 270 confirmed, 244 persons under investigation for a total of 514, of whom 99 were in intensive care and 29 ventilators were in use.

Today with heavy hearts, we are reporting an additional 11 deaths that have been confirmed to be from COVID-19 related complications. By the way all of those Judy, I believe, from the past five days, bringing our statewide confirmed total to 14,181 confirmed deaths, and the number of probable deaths has been updated to 1,783. Again, running the risk of apples to oranges, because these are not confirmed and not in these numbers, but we should note in our hospitals yesterday there were 14 reported deaths. But again, not yet lab confirmed. Let's take a couple of minutes, as we do every day, to recall three more of the blessed souls who we have lost to this virus.

First up, we remember a 50-year resident of Parsippany in Morris County, Calvin Schoenfeld. Cal was 83 years old. Too bad he didn't know how to smile – look at that. And he had spent more than half a century as a graphic designer, closing out his career in 2012 with the global pharmaceutical company, Sanofi. But art wasn't just Cal's vocation. It was also his lifetime love, one he shared with his family even long after he ended his professional life.

One of those who he inspired was his 15-year-old granddaughter Hannah, who has created her own project on Facebook called Faces of COVID Victims, where she produces digital portraits of those who have been lost. I spoke to her mom the other day and they are overwhelmed by requests, so God bless Hannah for carrying that torch of her grandfather.

Cal was a family and community-oriented soul and a longtime member of the United Odd Fellows. He leaves behind his wife Sheila, please keep her in your prayers, and their children Karen who I spoke to. As I mentioned, she is Hannah's mom, and their son Eric, and their families including four grandchildren. Cal's legacy will live on and may God bless him and his family.

Next, we recall a couple of law enforcement members, and the outpouring for each of these guys has been overwhelming. First up we recall retired Jersey City Police Detective Ramon Regalado, known by everybody as Ray. Born in the Dominican Republic, Ray came to the United States as a child in 1973 and the family settled in Jersey City, where he was raised and educated. He attended St. Peter's University and in 1995 joined the Jersey City Police Department. Ray was a well-respected member of the department, rising to the rank of detective and also serving as the community service officer, mentoring students at PS-23 in Jersey City.

He was also President of the Dominican Latino Foundation of Jersey City, Chairman of the Latino Caucus of Hudson County, and was heavily involved with Jersey City's annual Dominican Independence Day celebration. Ray was only 50 years old, and as I said, I've heard from all sorts of folks who have come out of the woodwork since Ray passed.

Service was his calling. Ray leaves his beloved wife Marlisse, his sons Ramon Jr. and Emilio, nine brothers and sisters. I spoke to his brother Giovanni the other day, and his longtime friend and partner, Detective Victor Chery. We thank Ray for his service to Jersey City and the State of New Jersey, and may God watch over him and bless him and his family.

And finally, we remember another member of our law enforcement community, Newark Police Detective Irving Callender III. Irv, as he was known, was only 43 years old. This is a guy that I knew. Irv was born and raised in Newark, and an all-state standout athlete in both football and basketball at Malcolm X Shibe High School. After high school, he went to Montclair State University and continued to stand out on the football field, and it was there that he met his future wife Melissa, with whom I had the honor of speaking a couple of days ago.

In June 1998, Irving was hired by then Mayor Sharp James to serve as his aide. In October 2005, he took his oath as a Newark police officer. He would continue serving the people of his hometown until his death, a total of 23 years in service in Newark, not just to Sharp James, but to Mayor Cory Booker and to Mayor Ras J Baraka. Family always remained first in Irving's life, and he was a loving father to his and Melissa's sons Irving IV and Cameron, never missing any of their sporting events. And another son, Kendall, who he lost. When a

family tragedy occurred. He stepped up to become a father figure to his niece, Kamani. He leaves them all, along with his sister Amanda and a broad family of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, as well as countless lifelong colleagues and friends, including his mentor and father figure and our friend, former Mayor Sharp James. We thank Irv for his service to his hometown, and for being a tremendous role model for so many. God bless you, pal and God bless and watch over you.

So Calvin, Ray and Irving will not be forgotten, just as we will cherish the memories of every one of the residents. We have lost to COVID-19. Their stories, the lives they lived, their legacies, will live on and on.

And I'll switch gears one more time today, Judy, before we move things along. Let's recognize another of the small businesses who not only give us one of the most diverse economies anywhere, but who we are committed to seeing through this pandemic so they can continue to fuel our growth into the future. Alberto Garcia came from Madrid, Spain to Red Bank in 2002. Tammy, you'll appreciate this, I said Real or Atletico? Definitely A Real Madrid fan. He opened his own firm Red Bamboo Marketing in 2014 and set out to help his clients build their brands, establish their presence in the digital space and excel in the B2B marketplace. Alberto and Red Bamboo have grown a diverse client lists from large companies to small nonprofits, and each is treated as equals.

To help keep Red Bamboo running throughout the past several months, Alberto received a small business grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority. Red Bamboo is one of the many small businesses we have partnered with to deliver tens of millions of dollars in direct assistance. And because of this partnership, Alberto and Red Bamboo are still going strong, and are poised for continued growth and excellence. So to Alberto, with whom I had the great honor of speaking on Monday, we are so proud that you chose to make New Jersey your home, and we are honored to be the home of Red Bamboo. Alberto is also taking one of the final steps this month to interview to become an American citizen. He got his interview date and time and appointment the same day I spoke to him on Monday, so we wish you the very best on that one as well.

That's as good a place to stop as any today. Now, before we hear from Judy, to speak more about our efforts to ensure a safe start to our school year, it is my pleasure to welcome back and turn things over to a guy who's been thrown into the fire and has done a terrific job. Please help me welcome the Interim Commissioner of the Department of Education, Kevin Deemer. Kevin.

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Deemer:** Thank you, Governor for the opportunity to be here today. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the spring, it led to a seismic shift in education. Every school district throughout the state pivoted to a system of remote instruction for every one of their students. They did this with little notice, even though they had never planned for anything of this magnitude.

Our role at the Department of Education was to set the standards, with a focus on providing a quality education for all students, ensuring equity among all groups of students, and ensuring food security so no child goes hungry. The State set the overarching goals, and school districts rose to the occasion. What our school leaders and educators accomplished during the past school year was nothing short of heroic.

The department quickly turned our attention toward identifying areas where we need to improve and providing resources to prepare for the new school year in whatever shape that would take. We've accomplished so much over the summer. We're now far, far more prepared to take on public education in the age of coronavirus. We begin this school year light years ahead of where we started last Spring. Let's start by taking a look at the numbers and the massive resources going into education.

For instance, the CARES Act included a fund that allocated \$310 million for K to 12 education in New Jersey. The vast majority of that amount, 90%, will go directly to school districts for them to decide the best approach to address their COVID-19 issues. School districts are allocating about 25% of this CARES funding to bridge the digital divide. To help school districts and make sure they're able to close the technology gap, in July, the Governor announced up to \$60 million in targeted funds for the Digital Divide Grant to help schools provide students with technology they need. Later this week, the department -- I'm very excited about this -- the department plans to make resources available to both families and schools to assist with technology-based instruction. We want to help educators get the training they need to effectively engage with their students. We also want to make sure parents and families know how to use the technology that links them with the school.

Just last week, the Governor announced his revised fiscal 2021 budget. This includes more than \$8.7 billion in direct aid to schools. Despite the state's tight fiscal situation, two-thirds of school districts will receive more funding than they did the previous year. The budget plan would benefit our youngest learners, with an additional \$68 million going towards high quality preschool, \$10 million of which will be used to establish new preschool programs in districts.

And finally, the Governor also announced an allocation of \$100 million in federal coronavirus relief funds to help schools meet critical health and safety standards for reopening. A budget reflects the priorities of its creators, and it is clear that this administration prioritizes education, and we're seeing the impacts this investment is having on our children. Today's announcement by Education Week Magazine shows those results are something that we should be proud of.

New Jersey has always been strong in academic achievement and chances for success and last year, our financial support to schools helped New Jersey earn, for the first time, the number one ranking in the nation, so it's gratifying to hear that New Jersey again retains that title.

As we move toward reopening and ensuring this same high quality education to our students, despite current challenges, some people have said there should be a single set of rules handed down by the state: a rigid, unbending, one-size-fits-all approach. That doesn't work in a state as diverse as New Jersey. What does work is collaboration, adaptation and flexibility. As the Governor mentioned, we're working with school districts, charters and other schools that educate special needs students, also known as approved private schools for students with disabilities, to review their plans and make sure they meet health and safety requirements. Again, diverse set of needs among all.

In June, when we came out with The Road Back, our school reopening guidance, we set the core protocols for school reopening plans, and we gave schools the flexibility to craft plans that work best for them. It was created with stakeholder input, and we said we will continue to evolve based on that stakeholder input. Almost immediately, families and school officials alike called for the option of giving parents the ability to decide whether their child should receive all-remote instruction. We responded with that flexibility. School officials then told us they were facing problems meeting the health and safety protocols and the reopening guidance, and they wanted the ability for an all-remote start of school. We provided that flexibility too.

Will there be ongoing challenges and obstacles in the coming school year? Certainly. This is a massive undertaking like we've never experienced before, and we're still in the middle of the storm. But when it comes to education, our foundation is strong. I want to thank the Governor and all of those involved in the school community at the local level for the leadership and focus that's needed to ensure a safe and successful start of the school year. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Kevin, thank you, and thank you for jumping into this and doing such a terrific job. A couple of things. You alluded to it at the very end of your comments. Anybody who's expecting a normal school year has not been paying attention over the past six months. This will be unusual, no matter what your configuration is, no matter what your district is.

But secondly, thanks to your leadership and the extraordinary leadership of superintendents, administrators, educators, parents, kids, other stakeholders, it will be a successful year and it will be guided by safety, high quality education, equity, and a big dose wrapped around that of flexibility. Thank you, Kevin, to you and your colleagues and good luck to you as we, as they say in baseball, round third and head toward home with next week upon us.

Zakiya is not giving prepared remarks, but I just want to make sure that everyone knows that Zakiya, whose entire professional and educational history is in education, is with us and obviously, you'll jump in and correct the record wherever I know I'll get it wrong at some point today. Thank you for your leadership overseeing our entire policy suite.

With that, let's switch gears. Please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction to my right, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Thank you, Governor and good afternoon. Since the beginning of the pandemic, scientific and medical communities around the world have searched for therapeutics and treatments to provide remedies for patients with COVID-19. As you know and as we've reported, some individuals have mild to moderate illness from the virus, and some require hospitalization and care in an intensive care unit.

Typically, establishing a standard of care for an illness can take years. However, since this is a novel virus that we are still learning about, the severity of illness in some patients led healthcare providers to turn to novel treatments, or new ways to save lives. As you know, hydroxychloroquine has been found to be ineffective against COVID-19. But some medical treatments hold promise, like Remdesivir, an antiviral drug that is found to shorten hospital stays. Additionally, the steroid dexamethasone has shown to reduce deaths of patients on ventilators by one-third. And for patients requiring only oxygen, the steroid helped reduce mortality by about one-fifth.

Last week, the Food and Drug Administration approved the emergency use of convalescent plasma therapy for hospitalized coronavirus patients. In this treatment, antibodies are removed from individuals who have recovered from the virus and those antibodies are infused into hospitalized patients. An emergency use authorization, an EUA, allows the use of medical products to be used in an emergency to prevent or treat a life-threatening disease when there are no approved available alternatives. The FDA takes this action when they feel a treatment or the benefits of a treatment outweigh its known risks.

While this therapy is new in the fight against COVID-19, it is not a new practice. Convalescent plasma has been used before as potentially lifesaving treatment against quickly developing diseases and infections, when proven treatments or vaccines were not yet available. It has been used against diseases such as polio, measles, mumps, and more recently used to treat SARS and Ebola patients. For those who recovered from COVID-19 and are interested in donating, please visit [RedCrossBlood.org/plasmaforCOVID](https://www.redcrossblood.org/plasmaforCOVID). As always, we encourage everyone to do their part and call [RedCrossBlood.org/plasmaforCOVID](https://www.redcrossblood.org/plasmaforCOVID) and donate your blood. It could be lifesaving.

I have shared this overview of therapies not only to keep you informed on current treatments, but also to reinforce the most important things we can do to prevent COVID-19. Overall, protect yourself and others. Practice social distancing, stay at least six feet apart. Wear a face covering, wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, and use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. What we call NPIs, or non-pharmaceutical interventions, work. As we end the camp season, I'm pleased to report that with 746 active camps preliminarily, we are reporting four outbreaks including five individuals. That's one camper and four staff. So 746 camps, four outbreaks, five individuals, one camper, four staff. That's an amazing testament to the non-pharmaceutical interventions that were practiced in our camps.

The medical community, through their heroic care in healing COVID-19 patients, have reduced mortality over time using therapeutics and modalities such as high flow oxygen and proning, which is turning a patient from their back onto their stomachs, so the individual is lying face down and removing pressure from the heart and lungs. As they have learned more about the virus and what therapies worked, they've had more success in treating patients. However, again, the best course of action is to prevent getting sick in the first place. So please adhere to the health precautions that we keep encouraging to protect your health.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 514 hospitalizations with 99 individuals in critical care and 29% on ventilators. I am reporting today one new report of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. There are now 57 cases in the state. As reported previously, all these children have tested positive for active COVID-19 or have had positive antibody tests.

The Governor review reviewed the new cases and deaths today. The breakdown by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 54.1%, Black 18.3%, Hispanic 20.3%, Asian 5.5% and other 1.8%. All the deaths we are reporting today occurred at the end of August.

The veterans homes and the psychiatric hospitals numbers remain the same. Overall, New Jersey, the daily percent positivity as of August 29<sup>th</sup> is 2.14%. The Northern part of the state reports 1.9%, for the Central part of the state 1.95%, and the Southern part of the state 2.74%.

That concludes my daily update. Stay safe and remember, for each other and for all of us, please take the call. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, well done and deeply appreciate the upfront commercial for folks to donate. We had, I thought, a good call with the White House and their team, Dr. Fauci, Dr. Birx and others on Monday after we were together. May I ask, call an audible, Ed, I can't see if you've got a mic. Do you have a mic? He's got one of those Wayne Newton era mics. Judy, either you or Ed, when I said earlier that the numbers were a little bit sideways but having said that, I know you're trying to track down a couple of situations here and there. There does not feel like any particular geographic surge, any particular major fallout from any steps that we've taken, at least that we can see so far? Is that fair to say?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I haven't seen anything. Ed?

**DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz:** Yes, I would say that was fair, and one of the things I'd also say is particularly when we look at the spot positivity rates, we tend to see them highest on Wednesdays and Thursdays, which means tomorrow I expect they'll probably go up a little bit more, because they're looking four days back, that's the weekend, tend to get sicker people usually getting tested on weekends so you'd expect them to be somewhat higher there. So overall, yes, we're certainly keeping an eye on things, but no, I'm not seeing anything in particular that's concerning. Got it. Thank you for that. And thank you, Judy, for that.

Pat, I noticed Jared Maples is not here, so I assume you've already sent out an APB to make sure that he's okay. But also, I just had a really nice exchange with your friend and mine, Mike Kelly, the Chief in Jersey City, over Ray Regalado. But Pat, welcome. Anything you've got on compliance or other matters, and thank you for everything.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor. Just three Executive Order compliance incidents to report. In Sicklerville on Sunday, there was a large pool party where the homeowners issued a citation, allegedly charging people. There was 250 plus. In Lacey Township, the Lakeside Diner owner was cited with another EO violation, as well as in Winslow Township, police had observed a patron in the store who they had warned a few days ago. That subject refused to put on a mask, so that subject was cited.

And just, I'll add one piece of color. Yesterday was the first time on my way to work that I was behind a school bus and I couldn't remember the last time I was, and I know for most of us sometimes that comes with angst and impatience, but I took it as a good sign that we were on the road to recovery and ask that everybody be mindful of those students that have been waiting to get back to school, whether they're around the school or the school buses. I just ask you to be patient and take it as a good sign. Thanks, Gov.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It's anecdotal, so I'm not going to give empirical evidence to this, but there feels like there's an enormous amount of pent-up demand, assuming that folks believe and please God they do, based on all the great work that districts have done with the Department of Education and the Department of Health, assuming they can do it safely and they feel like they're health will be protected, it feels like there's an enormous pent-up demand by everybody. Including perhaps an all-time high pent-up demand by kids to get back to school. I can't recall that swinging into Labor Day and going back to school was necessarily one of my favorite moments of the year, but I think this year may be a different one.

We'll start over here. Before we do, we've got a lot of you here today so if you could be economical, you'd be doing all of us a favor. I want to give a quick shout out to Tammy and the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund. It's njprf.org. It has raised about \$38 million and it's already put a lot of that out on the street to extraordinary uses, so njprf.org continues to be a great spot if you're looking to help out folks who need help the most. That's a great website to go to. And thank you to you and all your colleagues.

Secondly, Dan Bryan, we will not be live tomorrow but we'll be with you virtually. We will be live Friday at one o'clock unless you hear otherwise. I still think we're trying to figure out how we want to deal with next week unless you tell me otherwise. We won't be with you on Monday. It's the national holiday, obviously Labor Day, we celebrate labor and organized labor in particular, but we'll come back to you by the end of the week and give you a sense of what next week will look like. Does that sound all right? With that, Brent, please don't give me the machine gun. Just pick your nuggets, pick your nuggets.

## Q&amp;A Session

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** Do the school numbers you announced include private schools? How many of the school reopening plans have been approved? How many were rejected or sent back for revisions? And how many have not been reviewed yet? EO-183 allows smoking to resume inside casinos. Smoke carries the coronavirus. Why allow it? Should the state do more to limit smoking in outdoor areas?

Would you sign the two bills on your desk to provide relief for drivers waiting in line at the MVC? Barring that, would you consider issuing an executive order to extend the expiration dates of licenses or registrations to reduce lines?

And last one, would you reconsider your budget cut of \$11 million for the school-based youth services program? There has been a groundswell of support for this successful mental health program.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Kevin, you should dive in. I think you said exactly this, and I think this is on me. I implied it was all private schools, and that's not true. Private, say a religious or a private school that is not under the watch of the state has to attest that they have met all their health guidelines.

**Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger:** The numbers didn't add up to the numbers of public schools in the state, so we are just wondering what the --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It's more than that. And Kevin, the category again, how do you define that category?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** So there's not only just public school districts, it's also charter schools which have their own separate plans, as well, there's a group of private schools that are approved by the state that serves special needs students, they're public school students so they're approved by the state. They also have to have a plan that's submitted to us.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Other private schools have to attest to the fact that they have followed the health and Department of Ed guidelines. Okay, so this is hot off the press. Tell me if I got this right. Kevin, 545 approved plans, 221 still under review, 35 not yet reviewed. Does that sound right to you?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** Yes, that's right. On the 221 number, just a point of clarification. That could be because they're working with the county to just understand something better, or it could be that the school district asked to make a revision. So the 221 is those that are in collaboration. I just want to emphasize that there's only 35 that haven't yet been looked at, which is less than two per county, on average. They're moving in real time.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And presumably you'll get there by the end of the week, early next week. Okay, so your colleague, Mr. Arco, asked this and I don't know that we ever answered it. Of the ones that have been approved, this is the 545 that have been approved -- thank you, Zakiya, for this, you're making me look smart -- 328 of them are hybrid, 150 are remote. Kevin, again, if you see this differently, let me know. Fifty are full time in person, and 17 are combos, which could include any combination of the above. Does that sound right? Thank you for that.

Listen, the carve out on smoking in casinos, that is from, I don't know, was it 1978? It predates us. If I thought there was a way, so it is the law. If we can find a way to prove that health realities are worsened as it relates to COVID in specific, that's something I'd be committed to, or the other alternative is to get our Legislative colleagues to write a new law.

I don't know, I'm not going to comment on any specific bills on the drivers at the Motor Vehicles Commission but if folks are frustrated, I don't blame them, and they're chopping through this. Again, the reason why there are lines outside other than it was a tsunami and they're still going through their backlog is that on the inside, it looks completely different than what it used to look like, and that's a good thing in terms of social distancing, capacity, face coverings, etc. But folks, if they're standing in line outside and they're frustrated, I don't blame them. I am too and we're pressing, and they're doing a terrific job, but we're pressing on the folks there, leadership and their colleagues to chop through this backlog and get these lines back to where we need them to get to as soon as possible.

No comment in specific on the school-based aid number other than to reiterate this is an extraordinarily challenging budget, and so that's a point we've made I think at every step here. Am I open-minded to try to get the right monies appropriated that deal with some of the most pressing needs we have as a state? You betcha, but I can't commit to a specific item. I know that this one in particular has caused a lot of anxiety. Thank you for all that. I think I answered all of yours. Nikita, how are you?

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** Hi, Governor, I'm well, thank you. So I have a few questions about the new law allowing ballots to be opened and canvassed for 10 days ahead of an election. I'm wondering, when you were running for Governor, did you receive any early tallies in the primary or general? Have you received any early tallies in this year's elections?

Then how can someone like John Currie who is on the Passaic County Board of Elections and who is also the County Chair and the State Democratic Chair, how can he walk out of a County Elections Board meeting 10 days out from the election and restrict that knowledge? How can he not use that knowledge?

Separately, is there any way to prevent political leaders from trading this insider information while making late campaign decisions? Should these county chairs and other players resign from county elections boards?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Did Brent give you a couple of extra questions he didn't get to, or what?

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** He did, actually. And then --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Sorry, the one you just asked, if you could wrap this up, but what was the one you just asked after, is there any way to prevent this?

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** Sure, so should county chairs and other political players resign from county elections boards? And then what is the recourse for losing candidates whose opponents may have benefited from insider information?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let me, I'm join by Matt Platkin who will want to weigh in here, our Chief Counsel, but let me say this. First of all, I've never heard anything on tallies before, either my election or any other one, so the answer is I don't have any color on my personal history. The point here was to allow us, with as a high degree of level of certainty as possible, to be able to certify all of our elections by November 20<sup>th</sup>, and that's the rationale. So this allows folks to begin to count votes 10 days before actual Election Day, with that in mind.

I think the simple answer and I'll ask Matt to come in behind me here, the simple answer, I think, to all of your questions, although I haven't given a whole lot of thought as to who should be allowed to be on board or not, is the penalties, just like insider trading, have been ratcheted up and are significant. And so you're faced with a very significant penalty, which includes a very significant potential jail time. And so to me, it is like insider trading in that respect. You may have knowledge but if you trade on that knowledge and you're convicted, you'll go to jail and you'll pay a big price. And so that's the spirit.

So you're trying to balance, like a lot of things, we're balancing public health with the sacred right to vote, which is why we're giving that hybrid model, which we think worked well in the primary. Likewise here, you're balancing being able to certify on the one hand, which we all want to do, but also ratchet up the penalties that one would have to pay even further so that no one screws around with the system. Matt, would you add anything to that? Matt says he would not. I haven't thought through about who should be on or not on a board, but the penalties are significant and that applies to everybody. Thank you. Real quick.

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** The penalties don't really address someone like John Currie, Frank Holman, Rich Ambrosino. So these are people that sit on county boards of elections, they don't need to leak the information because they are already the party chair.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** It's anybody who leaks any information associated with this is subject to that penalty. Anybody. I've gotcha, I'm good with that. Let's go. Thank you. Dan, you follow up with Nikita afterwards.

**Matt Maiorano, CBS-3:** Hi, thank you for your time. My name is Matt, I'm with CBS-3. We obtained video over the weekend from a bar in Sea Isle that shows a whole bunch of people on the patio, no one is, it appears, social distancing or wearing a mask. I was wondering if you saw that video. The bar is owned by the Sea Isle

mayor, so I'm wondering if you saw that, if you have a message for him or other bar owners and patrons. What's your initial response to that?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I haven't seen the video. I've read the headline, I know the owner. Listen, I was asked about a restaurant that I was at last week and we were complying perfectly and someone was questioning whether or not if you had a tape measure, they had enough of their walls open. This is a local matter, but we've all got to play by the rules and that includes social distancing, face coverings, doing the right thing. Whether it's this situation in particular or any other one, folks have to play ball. That's the system. You good with that?

**Matt Maiorano, CBS-3:** Yeah. And I mean, if you didn't see the video, I don't know if you saw a screenshot or something but --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I didn't, but I was told people were congregating without face coverings. Is that accurate?

**Matt Maiorano, CBS-3:** Yeah, so I was wondering, looking at that, what goes through your head? Is there any concern of possible spread of the virus?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** As a general matter, I think we've been very clear about this. If you're closely congregating without face coverings, and I would say especially if you're indoors, but I don't think we endorse either, you are running a public health risk, period. I think we've been unequivocal about that. And again, let's let the local authorities adjudicate one way or the other and let's all do the things that we've been preaching now for, it's hard to believe, going on six months. Social distancing, face coverings, wash your hands with soap and water, if you don't feel good stay home, get tested, etc. Thank you. Let's come down. We'll do Dave and then keep rolling.

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** Thank you, Governor. I have a couple of questions from my newsroom. Brent tried to give me six questions. I rejected that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I appreciate that. I believe by the way, it's Daniel Munoz his birthday, is that correct? So Happy Birthday, Daniel. Does anyone have any questions from Daniel?

**David Matthau, NJ 101.5:** No, I do not.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, so we wish him a happy birthday in absentia.

**Dave Schatz, New Brunswick Today:** The numbers that were mentioned in the beginning of the update today, 180 schools were set to go remote August 24<sup>th</sup>, now it's up to 242. That's 62 more. What's driving this? What's going on here? Does this signal that schools are unprepared, that many more?

I know that the schools have to give a deadline for being able to adhere to the standards that they must meet in order to offer at least some in-person instruction but is the state and in particular, the DOE, giving a hard deadline? Because the fear might be some might be dragging their feet in this regard.

Governor, if we start to see cases surge in some schools, are you going to take a case-by-case basis kind of a look at it, or are you just going to shut everything down? Would it depend on the type of outbreak that takes place?

And last question, I was chatting with the Commissioner who needs no introduction a couple of days ago, and we were talking about the opening of limited capacity health clubs, fitness centers and so forth. Governor, you know that there are hundreds of thousands of Jersey residents who live in either townhouses, apartment complexes and so forth and they have fitness centers, and they may not have somebody who can take somebody's temperature. The rules state you have to have somebody taking a temperature but the Commissioner was saying that she thinks -- and I don't want to put words in your mouth, Commissioner -- but you know, you were telling me that, you know, this is really, it comes down to personal responsibility where somebody needs to even if it's yes, I took my temperature, I made an appointment. I'm going to go into the fitness center at two o'clock, from 2:00 to 2:30. My temperature is 98.4. Does that sound reasonable to you, Governor, to make that accommodation for these fitness centers that don't have people actually working in them? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, I'm going to go quickly and if either Kevin or Judy or Zakiya want to weigh in, but we've got to pick up the pace here. What's driving the numbers? The numbers, we allowed for not just families to have their child learn remotely, but also districts a few weeks ago. I think you're just seeing the final shifting of that. There are only 35, if I'm doing the math here, that have not yet been reviewed and 221 are under review. I think it's a natural shift once we gave districts the option to do that, and I know you allowed districts to resubmit their plans. The deadlines are by district, there's not one deadline that applies to the state. Am I right, Kevin?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** We're asking them to do it seven days before they start and so far we've had very strong compliance and very good collaboration. We don't really have any concerns on that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** The point being, it's not November 1<sup>st</sup> for all of New Jersey. This is a negotiated point with each district. I think we've been clear on this, but I think it's a good question and it's a timely one to answer. We would not take a – unless it's a complete meltdown in terms of the public health reality – Judy has now, with the Department of Education, has established not just three but six regions: two in the North, two in the Central, two in the south. And if there is a surge in some schools, depending on where those schools are located, that will be first and foremost a local and then regional reality. It would only be, and I don't want to put words in your mouth or in Kevin's, if we're shutting the whole state down then all hell's broken loose, and we don't anticipate that, please God.

I think yeah, without getting into the great amount of details, Matt, you may want to weigh in, I think the answer is yes. If it's an unmanned, it's like a house party, Pat can't be at every house party in the state, as much as we all may want him to be. We can't be in every fitness center and every complex but the notion of personal responsibility, don't go in there if you have a temperature. Don't go in there if you don't feel well. Don't get crowded, don't be on top of each other, wear face coverings. That seems to me that's largely that. Matt, would you like to add something to that?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah, that's right. The order covers licensed health clubs and fitness centers, which those would not fall under the definition. Obviously, we expect they'll abide by the guidelines to the fullest extent possible, but they're not subject to the order in the same way as licensed health facilities are.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you, Dave. Let's go back in here. Good afternoon.

**Reporter:** Good afternoon. A quick clarifying question. Can schools reopen if their plans are awaiting revisions or not yet approved?

Second question, FEMA is cutting back its non-emergency funding for PPE and other COVID-19 related supplies to schools on September 15<sup>th</sup>. What bearing do you think that will have on district reopening plans, based on the plans that have already come in?

And then last question, a major reason you've given for sequencing reopening steps is so that you can roll back if there is fallout from any single step. Gyms, indoor dining, some in-person instruction, that'll all be back within days of each other. Contact tracing response rates are pretty low. If data takes a turn for the worse, how will that roll back look, and how do you identify causes, given the response rate to contact tracing?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** On the third one, I think we addressed this the other day. We have deliberately tried to space, so group in small steps together, one or two or maybe three at the same time. We did, if you go way back golf and county parks on the same day, and then we have deliberately and methodically done that so that Judy and Ed and their colleagues could look at then the fall out of those steps.

Our numbers, so you've got a couple of realities here. You've got gyms, which as of yesterday, I'm happy to say, subject to a lot of parameters and restrictions, are open. You've got the pending reality of school next week, which we have always known. The fact of the matter is that the numbers were sufficiently good for a sufficiently prolonged period of time, dropping indoor dining in with a slightly shorter runway in the middle of that we just felt strongly was the right thing to do.

I'll go to the top. Kevin, very simply, you've got to have a plan to be able to open. Is that right?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** Yeah, so we want that plan in and so far that's happened and we've been able to review and approve it prior to opening. We're pushing hard with that, as I mentioned before, that collaborative effort so that the counties are aware of what's going on in each school district and we're doing really well on that.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And again, I misspoke. It's not just the plan. It's the plan approved before you can open for business. The FEMA September 15<sup>th</sup> reality?

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** I'm sorry, the question was muffled to me with regard to --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** You're saying that they have indicated they're going to cut back on PPE as of September 15<sup>th</sup>?

**Reporter:** Yeah, non-emergency funding and it applies, I think, to schools and courthouses and a couple other things as well.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I want to come back to you on that. Can we do that? Unless you have something glib, so we'll come back to you. Thank you. Sir, do you have anything? You're good? Sir. How are you? You're not going to pass as you did the other day?

**Reporter:** Unfortunately no, sorry. What is the penalty or punishment for violating the Governor's Eviction Executive Order? Also Admiral Brett Giroir says the Trump administration will begin distributing new rapid COVID tests from Abbott Labs to Governors this month. Has New Jersey been promised any of the 150 million tests so far? And if so, how do you plan to deploy them?

Will districts need to get approval before starting the school year, or do you anticipate some will still be waiting for final approval on the first day of school? How many of the 242 all-remote plans have been approved by the state?

Also, can you provide any updates on the state's response to the DOJ request for nursing home data? Does the potential of a federal investigation, even if limited in scope, interfere with its own plans to review how nursing homes in New Jersey have handled the pandemic? And how confident are you in New Jersey's ability to handle a possible second wave of the virus? How much PPE will we have to handle it?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Where was your question on the origins of man? I missed that one. Okay, Matt, the penalty for violating the eviction order, or we can get back to you on that one. I'm not sure either way, but.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah, all executive orders carry a potential disorderly person penalty, but we can get back to you on the specifics.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Rapid tests were discussed quite at length by Admiral Giroir and his colleagues on Monday. We will certainly get our fair share but I don't believe, unless Judy or Pat tell me that we have a distribution schedule or a timeframe, Zakiya was with us, am I right in saying I don't think we got any meat on the bones, unless you want to -- this is now beyond the long-term care.

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, the equipment will be deployed directly to the long-term care facilities, and we do have a list of those that are receiving the equipment. When they're actually going to receive it, I don't know.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think this is also the second bucket that they also came up with that they implied, at least. If it turns out to be the case, this is a potential game changer. We talked about it, it is a whole other batch that would be available potentially at schools, in a perfect world. I still believe this is as the least qualified person up here, I'll say that. I still believe it's only a matter of time until this is a, Ed tell me, it's a home pregnancy test. It's you take it and you know within a minute or two, and it's available off the shelf and we're in this what is sometimes two steps forward one step back process of getting to that. I can't promise you when.

Districts need their plan approved to open, right Kevin? You've already said that, right?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** That's right.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay, you were going so fast, I missed the one after that.

**Reporter:** How many of the 242 all-remote plans have been approved by the state?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** 150. How's that for an answer? And then you had nursing homes. Again, apologies.

**Reporter:** Can you provide any updates on the state's response to the DOJ requests for nursing home data? And does the potential of a federal investigation, even if limited in scope, interfere with your own plans to review how nursing homes in New Jersey have handled the pandemic?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** As you can probably imagine, no update on the Department of Justice. We obviously take it seriously. We'll obviously respond in an orderly fashion. We are obsessed with long-term care and we have been since moment one. It exploded there. Whether it's in our own veterans homes, whether it's in the entire industry, not only trying to figure out what happened, but also trying to figure out that what happened doesn't ever happen again. That's the reason why Judy hired the Manatt firm. That's the reason why a lot of laws that came out of that Manatt study have been forwarded and will be signed, and it informs an enormous amount of our actions. So if your question was, do we need the Department of Justice to establish that focus? The answer is no. But I won't have any comment on the specifics of the Department of Justice.

How prepared are we? I think was your last one, for a second wave. I think we're, I'm going to say we're as prepared probably as any American state, but we're all going through this for the first time. We have a budget that has \$2.239 billion surplus in it for a reason, not just because we like sitting on money, but because the epidemiologists will tell us that a surge in the fall is probably a \$1 billion revenue item at a minimum. It is the reason why we have our plan in place, Judy and Pat, by the end of the fall, to get to, I believe, 98 million pieces of PPE in our own state stockpile. It's the reason why we're doing a lot of the things we're doing.

I think we're probably as prepared as any American state, but I would say nobody's going to pat themselves on the back or do any celebrations. We're all going through this together, and God willing, we'll be fortified enough to be able to push back if there is a second wave successfully. Again, the good news is there's a lot of movement on therapeutics, there's a lot of movement on vaccines and so this is, God willing, not a forever state we're in. This is a period of time and hopefully we've got enough of a bridge to get us to that better place. Thank you.

Are you good, sir? Okay. Alex we'll do you and then we'll come down to Carly and I guess go across. Thank you.

**Alex Napoliello, NJ.com:** Thank you, Governor. Two quick clarifications for the Interim Education Commissioner. You said a moment ago that -- I want to make sure I heard you correctly. Schools need to have their plans in a week before school starts, or can they literally, up until the moment that the bells ring and the doors open or not, can they change what they're doing to either be all remote or partially remote? I wanted to clarify that.

I also wanted to clarify when you said \$60 million in digital divide money, how much of that has actually been given out as of right now?

And a question for Commissioner Persichilli. Can you walk us through what would happen if there was an outbreak in a school? What number does the department consider an outbreak? Is it four students? Is it five? When do parents get notified? Who makes the decision on whether or not to shut down a school, a district, or a region? Yourself, Mr. Dehmer, or Governor Murphy?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** So just let me say Alex, before Kevin, let's go Kevin and then Judy, if that's okay. Remember that of the approved plans are 545, so these are largely, the overwhelming amount of these plans are in the tank. But Kevin, do you want to clarify that question, and then also the comment on the digital divide?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** Sure. The seven days is, or as soon as they can. These are not going back and forth, they are in process right now. We're working with districts to get them done as soon as possible, and then they're required to put them up on their website so parents and everybody can see them. The target is seven days. If they're a little bit less than that we're going to continue to work with them to get them out as quickly as possible but we're targeting seven days before they open.

On the digital divide, the funds are available, all the public school funds are available. There's \$6 million that was set aside for non-public schools, that's in process. That process is being developed, but \$54 million was targeted specifically for public schools. All those applications have been approved, and that funding is available. It's a reimbursement basis, so they purchase the devices and get reimbursed. All of those have been approved and all that's available.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** How much we have reimbursed, we may not know, but we can come back to you with the specific amount. Do you happen to know, Zakiya?

**Chief Policy Advisor Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis:** Well, we've already told the school districts how much they would be eligible for from each of the districts, so they know how much, up to the amount that they could spend on this program.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And we can come back to you with how much we've put out the door. Judy, what happens in the scenarios that Alex has gone through?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I do not have the matrix in front of me. First and foremost, if a child gets sick while they're at school they're to be isolated, removed from the other kids, isolated, parents should be called and they should be referred to a medical professional for testing. The matrix identifies, step by step, what to do if a child tests positive. For example, if it's one child in one classroom and it's a cohorted group and there has not been travel throughout the school, that people have maintained social distancing, the classroom may be closed and the children asked to quarantine but the school could stay open.

If it's two children but they are two different classes, it identifies exactly what to do. And it progresses through to tell you when to close the school. I just refer you to the matrix. We can get that to you. I'm sure you have it. The matrix is pretty specific. I don't know if Dr. Lifshitz has it with him but it does step through exactly who's to be called, what to do and whether you close the classroom, a full school, and then what's going on in the region definitely affects decisions about the school. That's why the Communicable Disease Service has broken down the state into six regions. Ed, you might have --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Also Judy and Ed, does it make sense to put that slide up on Friday?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** That'd be great, sure.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Does that work for you all?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** Yeah, the matrix is good. Ed's team has put it together.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Please, Ed.

**DOH Communicable Disease Service Medical Director Dr. Ed Lifshitz:** It's exactly what the Commissioner said. It is spelled out. There are a whole lot of different possible scenarios. It that depends on whether the kids are related, where they might have got infected out of school, for example, or not within school. But it does go through all those details as she mentioned.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Zakiya.

**Chief Policy Advisor Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis:** When you look at it, it's page 15 of the Department of Health guidelines. I think we focused a lot on the school health and safety components and what the school districts need to do. But our guidelines from the Department of Health and they're Communicable Disease Service do outline if a student gets sick, what are we supposed to do? And the first step is obviously, if the student is sick, they should not be in school, as the Commissioner mentioned. But literally, if it's one student, if it's two students, if they're in the same classroom, so that's on page 15 of the guidelines, which we'll get you but we will also show the slide. I just don't want there to be any delay on it.

**Alex Napoliello, NJ.com:** Do the parents get a letter or something?

**Chief Policy Advisor Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis:** The schools have to communicate. If your child is sick, as the parent you're going to know. There is a communication process that the school has to go through. The school community, we also say that schools do have to communicate appropriately without identifying, obviously, the individual student, what's going on in their school. That's part of their plan that they have to have, which is, what are you going to do if a child gets sick?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And by the way, let me just say this, I'm going to go out on a limb here, this is going to happen. Right? It's going to happen. Now, please God, we have the experience we had in camps this summer, which was overwhelmingly positive. But this is something that I know Kevin and Judy and their teams and Zakiya have worked on with the districts, and so I don't think anyone in the category of why this school year won't be a normal one, this will be on the list as to why.

I for one am really happy having lived through this up until now, with obviously a lot of anticipation about what it's going to look like when we open, that we're not a monolithic school system. That we have the ability to be flexible to deal with the variety of districts and their characteristics and their uniqueness and have those plans reviewed at such a minute district level, as opposed to dealing with a huge monolithic reality that some places have. New York City has got that reality, for instance, and we don't have that. I view that as an asset for us right now. Thank you. But again, can we bring that up on Friday, Dan? Thank you. Carly.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** Governor, sorry, it must be the mask. This is Stacey Berchenger with The Record.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Stacey, I'm sorry.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** No, I'm sorry. I don't mean to correct you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Jesus.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** Can I get some extra questions then?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Don't we have the Chinese government facial recognition program upon coming in?

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** It's totally okay.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Nice to see you.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** Has New Jersey's application for the \$300 unemployment benefit been approved? Can you give us any more specifics about the questions that FEMA was asking? You had mentioned this all on Monday.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I have to tell you, I don't know. It's a very good question and I did not speak to Rob this morning. Can we come back to you on that? I know they were going back and forth, as we said on Monday, and I don't think the texture of the questions was anything – it was much more in the sort of process lane than it was in a big picture sense. Dan, can you help me there? That's Stacey, by the way.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** Can we have a list of the districts that fall into the category of hybrid, remote or in-person learning? When you say hybrid and combo, that sounds like the same to me, so is there may be like an example that you could give us of what a combo is?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I spoke to a superintendent yesterday and Zakiya introduced me to one, I can tell you that one right now, that means – I don't know that this is exactly true for what the school is, the high school is hybrid, the middle school is in person, the elementary school is remote. Meaning that there's more than one under the roof of that one district. Kevin, how did I do, was that right? Okay.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** Thank you. Can we have the lists as well?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** There's no reason not to, I don't think. Kevin, there's no reason we don't –

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** We can get something to you. Like you know, it's changing all the time.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Of the approved, right?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** Right.

**Stacey Barchenger, Bergen Record:** And then what's the current number of kids who fall into the digital divide? As many of you have pointed out with school starting soon, are we going to get that number to zero? And if not, how do you feel about that? Have we done enough?

And the last question is, do the indoor dining guidelines allow for casinos to serve drinks on the casino floor?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Given the summer we've had, I sure hope so. This is the total number of kids in the digital divide? I think it was a couple hundred thousand as I recall, but Kevin, what do you have?

**Interim Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer:** When we rolled out this grant we had estimated it was 230,000 students, which is what we funded to support. Again, those are kind of incoming, back for the reimbursement. That was designed to address those remaining 230,000 students that we identified.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** And again, that number, God willing, shrinks and it shrinks quickly. Paterson, if I read this right, Paterson got their Chromebooks, I think to the tune of 10,000 the other day, so that number, we want to obviously get that to zero.

Matt, can you drink them while you're gambling on the casino floor? The answer appears to be yes.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yes.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Okay. And if it's otherwise, we'll come back to you. Thank you, and again, apologies, Stacey. Again, the most important part of that exchange though is the matrix which I want to make sure we show that on Friday. Maybe, Judy, if you wouldn't mind, or Ed, you could go through, sort of war game what that looks like. Last but not least.

**Phil Andrews, NJ News Network:** Always. Phil Andrews, New Jersey News Network. Two quick questions, one for the Colonel and one for you. Colonel Callahan, we talked about it earlier. I know that last week we talked about the number of police chases up and you were concerned about that. What have you or will you do to try and curtail some of that?

And Governor, could you explain to me or us how businesses that have switched to PMAs are beholden or not beholden to your executive orders and your guidelines? I'm a gym guy, I know. There are certain gym owners who during this, while waiting for your order last week, switched over to PMA, the privately-owned situations. Are they still beholden by the rules and regulations that you put down when you sign an executive order as to the numbers that people are allowed to come in and all that stuff?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I probably would ask Matt to come in and help me out here. But I would say if the spirit of whatever change in their ownership structure was to get around our executive order, we wouldn't be terribly happy about that. So we would treat them, my personal as a non-lawyer, we would treat them as what they are, in fact, which is subject to the executive order. Matt, would you see that differently?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah, I'm not entirely familiar with which facilities you're referencing, we'd have to take a look at the specific case.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Can we get you off line and figure out more detail. Or I guess they may not want to have that conversation.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Just one clarification to the casino floor that I should have mentioned. You have to be seated at your table while you're drinking.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I think that's true in any of these, right. You can't be roaming around, either without your mask on or drinking. Pat, on the first.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thanks, Phil. With regards to again, remember pursuits up 50%, accidents up 34%, fatalities up 10%, starting Monday afternoon, as soon as we left here, I noticed that DOT, having spoken with the Commissioner had those signs changed around the state with regards to highway traffic safety messages, in addition to still the 511 quarantine message. I simply ask, it's just not worth it. Whether it's a taillight summons or warning or a speeding summons, to put your own life, law enforcement's life, other motoring public lives at risk over what could ultimately end up in being, quite frankly, a written warning – not all the time – but it just doesn't make any sense to put those lives at risk over a motor vehicle summons. Plus just having troopers out on the interstates and toll roads, we just ask that people pull over when the trooper is trying to pull them over. Thanks, Phil.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'm going to mask up, but a couple of things. Dan, could you put up the phase slide right now, do you mind? So we were asked about this the other day and we acknowledged we hadn't put it up in a while. Just take a minute and just look at what's on the list of each.

I would just say in the stage three list, Judy, I don't know if you see it this way, the stage three bone in my throat is the bars with limited capacity. I think what we've seen in other states where they either kept open or opened early, the explosions were from the inside and bars were a huge culprit and I'm a big bar guy, so with a heavy heart, I say that. But you could see we're largely ticked through the box, things in stage two and at this point, we're well into stage three, whether in substance, form or otherwise. But again, the bars, Pat, I'm not sure if you would see it as a compliance manner differently, but that sticks out to me.

So with that, and we'll show the matrix on Friday. With that, I want to thank Judy and Ed who are with us regularly; Pat, likewise. Kevin, thank you for being here and for your work and your team's work and chopping through all of these plans. Zakiya, likewise, not just in your wearing your ed hat but your broader policy hat. Kevin, you won't be here on Friday, but I wonder if you and Zakiya can help me commit to a promise of updating the numbers we went through today, including what the approved looks like in terms of the breakdown. That would be great.

Matt, thank you, Dan, Tammy Murphy, thank you. Again, njprf.org is the website for the Pandemic Relief Fund. Again, we'll be virtually tomorrow, with you on Friday. This is a big week. This week and next week are big weeks. There's kind of no other way to put it. We've got gyms and indoor entertainment yesterday. We've got indoor dining Friday at 6:00 a.m. and we have schools.

Tammy and I were in one of our kids schools today and the freshmen were already in there getting their orientation, doing a scavenger hunt. So in many respects, teachers are doing their plans. And it's already, it's not a light switch as we all know, whether as a student, educator, administrator, you don't just have everybody show up on Tuesday. There's a lot of tracks being laid right now. But having said all that, next week is the big back to school week. Folks have been extraordinary, now going on six months of doing the right thing. We've got Labor Day weekend between now and then. We need folks to continue to do the right thing, as you have done overwhelmingly. Let's keep at it, folks. Thank you for everything you've done. We'll see you Friday. God bless.

## Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

### Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](#)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](#)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](#)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

### Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](#)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

## News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation](#)

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

## Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

[TikTok \(https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?\)](https://www.tiktok.com/@njgov?)

## Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

# Statewide

**[NJ Home \(//www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)**

**[Services A to Z \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)**

**[Departments/Agencies \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)**

**[FAQs \(//www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)**

**[Contact Us \(//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)**

**[Privacy Notice \(//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)**

**[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)**

**[Accessibility Statement \(//www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)**

[\(//nj.gov/opra/\)](http://nj.gov/opra/)

[\(https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login\)](https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023  
Office of Governor PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000

[\(https://tech.nj.gov/\)](https://tech.nj.gov/)