STATE OF VERMONT

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

GUBERNATORIAL DIRECTIVE TO ALL SCHOOL BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION PLANNING

WHEREAS, on Friday, March 13, 2020, the Governor issued an Executive Order declaring a state of emergency for the State of Vermont in response to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, since that time, additional cases of COVID-19 have been tested as presumptively positive in the State; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has determined, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and the Secretary of Education, to proceed with an orderly dismissal of schools in Vermont to support both the State's response to COVID-19 and the needs of children and families across Vermont; and

WHEREAS, this decision is based on the best scientific evidence available to the experts at the Vermont Department of Health and is expected to help prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of Vermont by the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the emergency powers set forth in 20 V.S.A. §§ 8, 9 and 11 and other laws, hereby direct the governing bodies of all public and independent schools as follows:

1. All public schools and independent schools shall be dismissed, and all school related activities shall be cancelled, no later than Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

2. No student shall be required to be in school Monday, March 16, 2020 or Tuesday, March 17, 2020, if necessary, to address the concerns of parents or guardians in response to COVID-19.

3. In order to meet the needs of students and prepare for the potential for an extended dismissal, each school district and independent school must develop a Continuity of Education Plan that includes, at a minimum:

    a. Meal service for those students who need it;
    b. Continued services for children with disabilities and special needs;
    c. District-based options, developed in collaboration with the State, that meet the childcare needs of healthcare workers and other Vermonters essential to the response (such as doctors, nurses, healthcare technicians, emergency medical service providers, fire service, law enforcement officers, emergency management officials and National Guard personnel);
    d. Systems for ensuring maintenance of education for students, such as educational materials and assignments, when schools are dismissed Tuesday; and
    e. Developing a remote learning plan that ensures continuity of education if schools are dismissed for an extended period.

4. School districts with Continuity of Education Plans in place that meet these directives may elect to close before Wednesday, March 18, 2020. All schools shall be closed for instruction at the end of the school day on Tuesday.

5. All schools shall remain operational for administrators, teachers and staff to sustain essential services and to plan and implement continuity of education through remote learning.

6. All school administrators, teachers and staff shall follow guidance issued by the Department of Health to ensure a healthy workplace.

7. Pursuant to the powers granted to the Governor in 20 V.S.A. §§ 8, 9 and 11 and other provisions of law, I shall from time to time issue recommendations, directives and orders as circumstances may require.

8. The Secretary of Education shall oversee the implementation of this Directive and I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Education such authority as may be necessary for this implementation. All local school officials and governing bodies shall consult with and abide by the direction of the Secretary of Education with respect to compliance with this Directive. School officials shall work with and assist the Agency of Education as directed by the Secretary of Education.

This Directive shall take effect upon signing and shall continue in full force and effect until April 6, 2020, at which time the Governor, in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, the Department of Public Safety/Division of Emergency Management and the Agency of Education shall assess the emergency and determine whether to amend or extend this Directive.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

By the Governor:

Brittney L. Wilson

Dated: March 15, 2020