

New York City to keep schools closed but decision sets mayor against governor

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3D print of a spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19—in front of a 3D print of a SARS-CoV-2 virus particle. The spike protein (foreground) enables the virus to enter and infect human cells. On the virus model, the virus surface (blue) is covered with spike proteins (red) that enable the virus to enter and infect human cells. Credit: NIH

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said Saturday that public schools in the city would remain closed to the end of the school year as the coronavirus pandemic continues to rage, but the state's governor later said the decision was up to him.

"There is nothing easy about this decision," the mayor said at a morning news conference, before adding that "it clearly will help us save lives."

But hours later, Governor Andrew Cuomo insisted that the authority to make such a call was his.

"You can't make a decision just within New York City without coordinating that decision with the whole metropolitan region, because it all works together," Cuomo said.

The [governor](#) said he understood de Blasio's position, "which is he wants to close them until June, and we may do that, but we're going to do it in a coordinated sense with the other localities."

Freddi Goldstein, a de Blasio spokeswoman, noted on Twitter that the two Democratic officials had differed earlier on the timing of shelter-in-place orders.

"We were right then and we're right now," she said. "Schools will remain closed."

The two men are longtime rivals and have butted heads before.

De Blasio unsuccessfully sought the party's [presidential nomination](#) this year; Cuomo is the son of a governor and has seen his profile grow with his daily [coronavirus](#) briefings.

The death toll in the largest US [city](#) now stands at 5,820, according to the

latest count from Johns Hopkins University. But the rate of hospitalizations has slowed, authorities say.

De Blasio said he had decided on the continued closures after conferring late Friday with Dr. Anthony Fauci, who is leading the government's scientific response to the coronavirus.

The city closed its [public schools](#) on March 16 as the virus continued its rapid spread.

Families lacking computers or laptops are being loaned city-owned devices for use in online learning; 175,000 have already been distributed.

The citywide closing affects 1.1 million students in what is by far the country's largest public [school](#) district.

The mayor said he hoped school could resume normally in September at the start of the new school year.

Cuomo had earlier extended the closing of schools statewide to April 29. The state has registered more than 170,000 cases of the coronavirus, with more than 8,600 deaths.

De Blasio also said that 6,000 single adults living in [homeless shelters](#)—one-third of the total—would be transferred to hotels "to make sure people that need to be isolated are isolated."

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