



## NC Coronavirus Task Force Unveils COVID-19 County Alert System

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Governor Cooper and members of the NC Coronavirus Task Force unveiled on Tuesday the [\*\*COVID-19 County Alert System\*\*](#), a statewide data sharing tool aimed at helping community leaders make informed decisions based on local virus transmission metrics. According to Rebecca Planchard, Senior Early Childhood Policy Advisor at the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the Alert System “pinpoints counties with the highest levels of viral spread and offers specific recommendations for individuals, businesses, community organizations, and public officials to bring numbers down.”

Utilizing data from the White House Coronavirus Task Force and local health departments, the Alert System compiles key information such as case rates, percentage of positive tests, and county hospital impact. The System then categorizes counties into three tiers: (1) Yellow: Significant Community Spread; (2) Orange: Substantial Community Spread; and (3) Red: Critical Community Spread. For a county to be assigned to the red or orange tier, a county must meet the tier’s specific case rate threshold, as well as meet the threshold for either positive test rates or hospital impact. Governor Cooper noted in Tuesday’s COVID-19 press conference that counties will remain in their assigned tiers until the second week of December, and NCDHHS plans to publish an updated County Alert System Report during the second week of every month going forward.

School leaders should note the COVID-19 County Alert System does not include any new requirements for K-12 schools, but rather may be used by district leadership, in conjunction with their local health departments, as another tool to help determine the best plan for keeping students and staff safe. Schools and districts located in red or orange tier counties may continue to stay open or move forward with school reopening plans, but are strongly encouraged to review prevention strategies in the [\*\*Strong Schools Toolkit\*\*](#), as well as the [\*\*CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making\*\*](#).

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