

Winter storm snarls travel, gives some schools the day off

January 7 2022, by Mark Pratt



Snow covers a statue of composer and entertainer George M. Cohan, in New York's Times Square, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew

A winter storm that had already blanketed parts of the South in snow moved into the Northeast on Friday, snarling air travel, crushing morning commutes and giving hundreds of school districts struggling to keep kids in the classroom during a wave of new coronavirus cases an excuse to shut down for a one-day respite.

Schools in Boston closed, and Providence, Rhode Island, [public schools](#) switched to distance learning, but New York City kept the nation's largest public school system open.

"Children need to be in school. We don't have any more days to waste" after the many closures and remote-learning days of the pandemic, said Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat dealing with his first major storm after taking office Saturday. He also noted that many children rely on in-school meals and that some working parents can't stay home.

But there was a sense of relief for some educators.

Michael Gow, a middle school social studies teacher in Medfield, Massachusetts, called Friday a "snowvid day" and acknowledged it gave parents and teachers a reprieve from the daily dilemma of whether to continue with in-person instruction as the pandemic rages.

"This is a well deserved break for all of the teachers, staff, and students dealing with the surge of omicron," Gow tweeted.

In central Pennsylvania, Ericka Weathers, a Penn State University education professor, scrambled to finish a fellowship application while her two kids were home from school because of the snow. She started working around 5:15 a.m. to try to ensure she'd have enough time to finish by the deadline Friday evening.



A woman walks through snow in Times Square, in New York, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew

"I've been trying to juggle," she said as her 7-year-old sledded on the hill outside and her 4-year-old didn't want to go out. "Every five minutes, someone's asking me a question."

By midday on the East Coast, airlines had scrubbed more than 2,400 flights, with the largest numbers at airports in Boston and the New York City area, according to tracking service FlightAware.

Airlines have struggled with staffing shortages caused by an increase in COVID-19 cases driven by the highly contagious omicron variant. In the U.S., cancellations had eased a bit this week after peaking at more than 3,200 on Monday.

By midday Friday, some spots in New England including Danielson, Connecticut, Norwood, Massachusetts, and Burrillville, Rhode Island, had received well above a foot (30 centimeters) of snow, according to the National Weather Service.



A girls kicks at snow n New York's Times Square, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew

Drivers were urged to stay off the roads, but there were reports of crashes around the region.

Plow driver Michael D'Andrea got a firsthand look at the mess on the roads. He saw plenty of vehicles spin out as the thick snow fell.

"The first storm is always a bit more dangerous," said D'Andrea, 34, of Norwood, Massachusetts. "No one has driven in this weather for like six months. People have to relearn how to drive in this. And it's usually not a foot of snow the first one. This is almost a blizzard with how fast it came down. 2022 is off to a bang, but I suppose we were overdue."

A driver died at about 7:30 a.m. when a car went off Route 140 in Freetown, Massachusetts, state police said.

A commuter bus spun out of control and blocked lanes on the Massachusetts Turnpike just outside Boston early Friday. No injuries were reported, but the bus caused a huge traffic jam.



A worker clears snow in New York's Times Square, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew

A tractor-trailer jackknifed in Greenwich, Connecticut, and forced a temporary closure of southbound Interstate 95, state police said. There were no indications of mass strandings on the major north-south thoroughfare, as happened after snow in Virginia earlier this week [left hundreds of motorists marooned](#) for hours.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy on Thursday night declared a state of emergency and delayed opening state offices for nonessential employees until 11 a.m.

But the snow had ended by 10 a.m. in New Jersey, allowing plows to do their thing. Preliminary snowfall amounts showed 6 inches had fallen in Berlin, with 5 inches in Howell.

The National Weather Service said 5.5 inches (14 centimeters) of snow fell on New York City's Central Park and 8.4 inches (21 centimeters) at LaGuardia Airport.



People pose for a photo with a snowman in New York's Times Square, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew

Snowfall totals were much more modest in northern New England, with about 4.5 inches (11 centimeters) in Nashua, New Hampshire, and about 3.5 inches (9 centimeters) in Hollis, Maine, by late morning, according to National Weather Service spotters.

The storm also affected coronavirus testing sites, many of which have been overwhelmed with long lines and waits for days. Some testing sites in Rhode Island delayed their openings until later in the day, when the storm was expected to start tapering off.

In Connecticut, most state-sponsored testing sites that are usually open on Fridays closed because of the storm, but some sites run locally and by pharmacies, remained open.

The storm brought record-setting snow to some areas of the South on Thursday.

Nashville saw 6.3 inches (16 centimeters) Thursday, shattering the city's previous Jan. 6 record of 4 inches (10 centimeters), which had stood since 1977, the weather service said.



A lone pedestrian walks across the "Iroquois" installation during a snow day along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, Pa. Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the South with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the Northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: Jose F. Moreno/The Philadelphia Inquirer via AP



A man takes a photo of a snowman in New York's Times Square, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew



Postman Josh Ashley fights the driving snow and cold weather, as he make his way up Main Street in Fairhaven, Mass., using a cart to deliver mail on Friday, Jan. 7, 2022. A winter storm that has already left areas of the South with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the Northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: Peter Pereira/The Standard-Times via AP



A US Postal Service carrier delivers a package during a snow storm Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in East Derry, N.H. A winter storm is expected to drop about a half a foot of snow in the area. Credit: AP Photo/Charles Krupa



Wild turkeys tangle during a snow storm Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in East Derry, N.H. A winter storm is expected to drop about a half a foot of snow in the area. Credit: AP Photo/Charles Krupa



A small truck removes snow from an unplowed road, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in East Derry, N.H. A winter storm is expected to drop about a half a foot of snow in the area. Credit: AP Photo/Charles Krupa



A person on a wheelchair uses the bike lane to navigate the snow covered streets in lower Manhattan, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in New York. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



New York City Sanitation Department workers use a front-end loader to to fill a salt spreader at one of the Department's salt sheds in lower Manhattan, Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in New York. A winter storm that has already left areas of the south with more than 6 inches of snow moved into the northeast during the morning commute and prompted many school districts to close for the day. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer



Karen Axelrod, walks her dog, Mazie, as the snow falls on Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, in Brattleboro, Vt. Credit: Kristopher Radder/The Brattleboro Reformer via AP

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear closed state offices at noon Thursday and later extended the closure through Friday.

The largest snowfall in Kentucky was nearly 10 inches (25 centimeters) in Lexington, according to the weather service.

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