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# Gov. Beshear Recommends Public, Private Schools Ceasing In-Person Classes in Respon

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## *Two new positive tests in Fayette, Jefferson counties*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 12, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear recommended that all school superintendents consider ceasing in-person classes for an extended period of time beginning Monday, March 16, to help control the spread of the virus. “With advice from Dr. Steven Stack and others, this coming Monday, we are recommending that Kentucky’s public and private schools cease in-person classes for at least the next two weeks,” said Gov. Beshear. “This is a big and necessary step to give teachers and parents the time to prepare. It is important for children to go to school tomorrow so they can get the resources they need for the next couple of weeks.”

Gov. Beshear said while children seem to be relatively safe from the virus, they are able to spread it and we are taking the steps necessary to protect all Kentuckians.

As of March 12 at 5 p.m. ET, Gov. Beshear indicated that Kentucky had two new positive tests, one confirmed positive from Fayette County and a presumptive positive from Jefferson County. Both are believed to be isolated, one at home and one at a hospital, but not all results were back by the 5 p.m. news conference. Gov. Beshear said the Commonwealth also now has three labs running tests, which include LabCorp, University of Louisville and the state lab.

As of 2:30 p.m. ET Thursday, three public school districts already were closed – Harrison County, Owen County and Danville Independent – and another two had announced they were closing Friday. Two more school districts, plus the Deaf, had announced they would be closing Monday.

While the planned time of re-opening the districts has varied slightly, most districts have announced April 13 as their planned first day back for students.

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Interim Education Commissioner Kevin C. Brown said he strongly supports Gov. Beshear’s recommendation that all schools close beginning Monday, March 16, in order to prevent community spread of COVID-19.

“I want to thank the Governor, Dr. Stack and others in the administration that have been working tirelessly over the past few days to ensure that we take a proactive approach to this issue based on science and research,” Brown said.

School districts may choose to utilize the Kentucky Department of Education’s Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program for these days if they have been approved to do so by KDE. NTI instruction is an option and is not required. However, that must be made-up at the end of the year. Non-NTI districts may also choose to provide online or hard copy enrichment activities even if not providing NTI instruction.

“I am asking the Kentucky Board of Education to consider a blanket statewide waiver for all districts to utilize NTI instruction even if those districts were not approved prior to this school year,” Brown said. “So far this week, dozens of districts have announced they will utilize NTI instruction if closed as a result of COVID-19.”

Brown also said, on Monday, he asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to grant a waiver to Kentucky to permit school districts to provide non-congregate feeding during school closures. If granted by USDA, this will enable districts to provide meals to students on school closure days.

Tomorrow, Brown will convene the Leadership Team at KDE all day to provide direct consultation to superintendents and other education partners with questions about school operations affected by COVID-19. KDE will be developing

Channeling the Governor’s advice to the Commonwealth over the past few weeks, Brown said he will continue to remind our K-12 education community to follow the 3 C’s: Stay calm, you are leaders within your communities, be clean and continue working with your local health department partners and other local leaders.

Kentucky has approximately 650,000 public school students who attend classes in 1,466 schools (172 school districts).

Thursday, Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), showed infection data from the counties around Seattle to explain why Kentucky is taking a cautious approach. For more information, contact [communications@kentucky.gov](mailto:communications@kentucky.gov) or [publicsupport@kentucky.gov](mailto:publicsupport@kentucky.gov).

“If we reduce our social contact with each other by about 25% the infection line drops dramatically,” Dr. Stack said. “And if we do not contact each other at all you don’t have an epidemic.”

Gov. Beshear, Dr. Stack, Kentucky Department of Education Interim Commission Kevin Brown and Eric Friedlander, acting secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, briefed Kentuckians (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activi Capitol on Thursday evening on the latest developments and the response of state and local government.

Beginning weeks before the virus was found in the Commonwealth, state and local officials collaborated to prepare for COVID-19 and are now working together to respond.

Gov. Beshear has taken decisive action to prepare and respond to COVID-19. On Friday, immediately after confirmation of the first case, Gov. Beshear declared a state of emergency (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200306\_E resource available to respond. On Saturday, he issued an executive order to prohibit price gouging (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200307\_Executive-Order\_2020-216.pdf). On Monday, the Governor issued an executive order Order\_2020-220.pdf) to waive copays, deductibles, cost-sharing and diagnostic testing fees for private insurance and state employees. The Governor is also telling providers to expand their network to patients that may go outside thei

Tuesday, Gov. Beshear announced strong actions to protect the state’s most vulnerable populations (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/Documents/coronavirusCOVID19guidanceforlong-termcarefacilitiesLTCFregardingvisitation031020 facilities. Gov. Beshear also signed an executive order (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200320\_Executive-Order\_2020-224.pdf) to allow pharmacies to refill prescriptions for up to 30 days to ensure those vulnerable communitie prescriptions. His action will also allow, if necessary, pharmacies to operate at locations other than those designated on their permits to make sure people have access to necessary medication.

The State Health Operations Center is activated at level one – fully activated – and the State Emergency Operations Center is also activated.

More information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages people to follow these steps to prevent illness (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html?CDC\_AA\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcor treatment.html). People can find regular updates and resources including more information about when to seek medical attention and course of action for those in counties with positive cases at kyccovid19.ky.gov (https://urldefense.pro 3A\_\_Inks.gd\_\_I\_eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpbGljaylslmJ1bGxldGluX2lkjoiMjAyMDAyMjcMTc4OTA2ODEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2t5Y292aWQxOS5reS5nb3YvIn0.F2jAumJBF3 2Di&d=DwMFAA&c=jvUANN7rYqzaQJvTqI-69lgi41yDEZ3CXTglEaHlx7c&r=KHF5rLuGCRbKZFUzUGnLNWaa8D6wB-5jgAuZINFQzXM&m=tAjjZBQpoE8zg9\_2EEt\_u-A8qhJnMyb2qU6uOljGZOW&s=GxPoRsNTvElr5khynLXOkH8F0C cdc.gov/coronavirus (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) for up-to-date information. Kentuckians who want advice can call the state hotline at 1.800.722.5725 or call their local health care provider.

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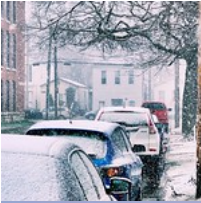
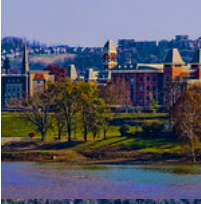
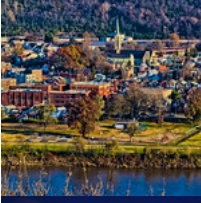
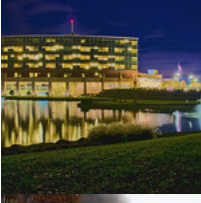



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