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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear Recommends Schools Return to Some Form
of In-Person Learning March 1**

*Lt. Gov. Coleman highlights new COVID-19 guidance for schools from Kentucky
Department of Education*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 23, 2021) – On Tuesday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced he is issuing a new [executive order](#) that recommends all school districts, including private schools, offer or expand some form of in-person instructional opportunities beginning March 1.

If district personnel have not yet finished their vaccine series as of March 1, the executive order recommends some form of in-person instruction begin seven days after they have received their second vaccination.

“What we foresaw is that the safest way to expand in-person opportunities is to vaccinate all of our school personnel,” said Gov. Beshear. “Since then, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others have moved that way and other states have followed our lead.”

Lt. Gov. Coleman said the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) [issued](#) a comprehensive, 136-page manual, [KDE COVID-19 Guidance 2.0](#), which will assist with the shift back into school buildings.

“Kentucky continues to be a national leader in vaccinating our school staff, and getting our kids back in the classroom safely remains a top priority for every Kentuckian – from the Governor to our littlest learners,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “With this guidance, we hope to make the transition back to in-person learning as smooth and safe as possible.”

Lt. Gov. Coleman said the manual advises schools on planning school-related student travel; administering spring state testing; operating schools after teachers and staff are vaccinated; assessing knowledge gaps caused by the pandemic’s impact on learning; and using second round Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funding.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 1,497

New deaths today: 16

Positivity rate: 6.3%

Total deaths: 4,476

Currently hospitalized: 894

Currently in ICU: 242

Currently on ventilator: 121

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Boone, Laurel and Kenton. Each county reported at least 60 new cases. Jefferson County reported 208.

To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click [here](#).

The Governor said today’s positivity rate is the state’s lowest since Nov. 4.

He also reminded Kentuckians that regional vaccination sites will begin accepting Phase 1C appointments March 1.

“Remember, there’s a lot of people in 1C, so it’s going to feel like it’s really hard to get an appointment in the beginning,” said Gov. Beshear. “But our supply is increasing and we will get to you. Hang in there.”

Kentucky Kingdom and Herschend Family Entertainment Announce New Partnership

The Governor’s chief of staff, La Tasha Buckner, said Gov. Beshear joined Herschend Enterprises Chief Executive Officer Andrew Wexler, state officials and community leaders this morning to announce that Herschend Enterprises has become a majority partner and operator of [Kentucky Kingdom and Hurricane Bay](#) amusement and water park located in Louisville.

Georgia-based Herschend is the nation’s largest family-owned theme attractions and entertainment company. Herschend operates popular tourism attractions such as the Dollywood Parks & Resorts in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. and the Newport Aquarium in Northern Kentucky. To learn more, see the [full release](#).

State Hiring 12 New Conservation Officers

Buckner said applications are now being accepted for 12 conservation officer positions with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Kentucky’s conservation officers are sworn law enforcement officers with statewide jurisdiction and have a primary mission to focus on hunting, fishing and boating laws.

The department seeks prospective conservation officers who reflect the diversity of all citizens of the commonwealth, including those who enjoy hunting, fishing and recreational boating in Kentucky. Interested applicants must be 21 years old, possess a valid driver’s license and submit a complete online application for each county of interest.

The deadline to apply is 7 p.m. (EST) on March 5. Visit personnel.ky.gov for more information.

New Coldstream Campus Research Lab to Support Early Stage, High-Tech Companies

Today, Buckner also said Gov. Beshear congratulated the University of Kentucky and its partners on breaking ground for a high-tech building at UK’s Coldstream Research Campus, a \$15 million development to provide office and laboratory space for early stage, high-tech companies.

Known as “The Core – Collaboration. Research. Entrepreneurship.” the new facility will be an entry-level resource for companies looking to locate on the research campus. The project is supported by a \$500,000 matching grant through the Product Development Initiative, a statewide investment program created to help communities supplement site or building improvement projects. To learn more, see the [full release](#).

Flags Lowered in Honor of 500,000 Americans Lost to COVID-19

Yesterday, in accordance with a [proclamation](#) from the White House, Gov. Beshear [directed](#) that flags at all state office buildings be lowered to half-staff until sunset on Friday, Feb. 26, to commemorate the milestone of more than 500,000 American lives lost to COVID-19.

More Information

To view the [full daily report](#), [incidence rate map](#), information on [testing locations](#), [vaccines](#), [contact tracing](#), [school reports and guidance](#), [guidance for health care providers](#) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit kycovid19.ky.gov.

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