

Plans are in the works to open schools in fall, despite some superintendents' concerns that guidelines make it impossible

**By Melissa Patrick
Kentucky Health News**
Some Kentucky school superintendents say they wouldn't be able to re-open schools under suggested state guidelines that require social distancing on school buses, rely on children to wear masks and will disrupt the normal class structure of upper grades. They voiced their concerns to public-health officials and the state education commissioner in an online meeting May 26, and were told that opening under the guidelines would be difficult but possible. "I do believe we can do this. I believe it is going to be a heavy lift," Interim Education Commissioner

Kevin Brown said. Kentucky schools have been closed to in-person classes since mid-March because of the novel coronavirus. Students finished out the year at home. Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of public health, told the superintendents that because there will be no vaccine this year, and no treatment is likely to be widely used before school is fully underway, schools will have to rely on social distancing and other public-health measures to reduce the risk of infection. He warned them that the virus is so contagious that without intervention, every person who has it will infect three more. He reminded them that while

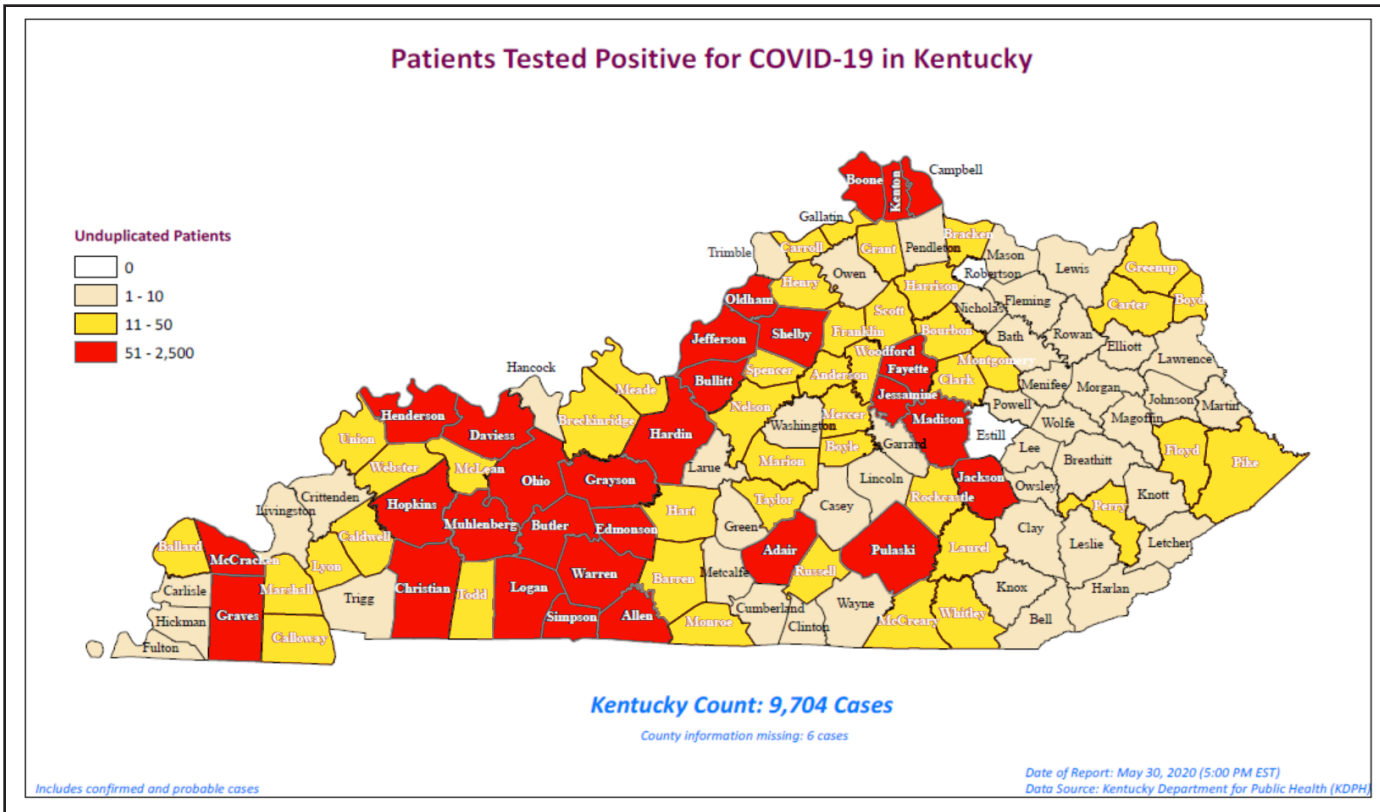
children who get the virus generally have mild cases of covid-19, they can pass it on to those who are more vulnerable, and even those who don't develop the disease can be contagious. Deputy Health Commissioner Connie White said, "Children can frequently have no symptoms and spread the infection so easily, if they are wearing a mask, it helps keep the infection to them and keeps it away from others." The guidance, among other things, includes recommendations for social distancing, not only in classrooms, but also in the hallways and school buses; to keep the same group of students together

all day, while teachers move from class to class; daily temperature checks, for those who are able to wear a mask all day; enhanced hand hygiene and surface cleaning; and for those who are sick or who have been exposed, home quarantine for at least 14 days, the incubation period for the virus. **Buses:** The guidance calls for keeping students and staff six feet away from each other, even on buses, where guidance from the CDC calls for one student to a seat, with a seat between them. "We can't transport like that, and if we don't transport, we can't have school. Is there any realistic guidance for school buses?" one superintend-

ent asked. **Masks:** The superintendents also asked many questions about who would and would not be required to wear a mask. Stack stressed that anyone who is not able to wear a mask would not be required to wear one, but said everyone else would need to wear one. The superintendents asked if schools would be required to provide cloth masks to students, then voiced concerns that if they did provide them, the students wouldn't bring them back from day to day. One solution to this problem was to ask community volunteers to make masks. The Hardin County Schools website has already posted such a request, saying masks will be accepted only from provided materials, because students will only be allowed to wear colors designated for their grade level. Hardin County students will receive masks when they get to school or when they get on the bus in the morning. Masks will be collected at the end of the day to be washed, dried and sanitized so that they can be passed out again the next day. **Classes:** The state guidance also calls for grouping students in such a way that they stay together in one classroom all day, with teachers rotating in and out. This is meant to minimize the number of personal contacts throughout the day. That will create a major challenge in the upper grades, where teachers are usually certified to teach in one subject area. Superintendents said finding ways to group students appropriately to accommodate a full day of classes will be difficult. Health officials urged them to be creative. White explained the science: "If we've got a group of students that stay together, then if one of them gets sick, then we are only having to deal with looking and caring for a smaller group, as opposed to if one kid gets sick and they've been intermingling with 250 kids in the high school."

acknowledged that telling students to stay home when they have no symptoms but have been exposed to the virus "really hits your bottom line," since state funding is based on average daily attendance. Superintendents asked if it wouldn't be best to just go ahead and plan for nontraditional instruction, or NTI, in the fall. He said schools would be allowed NTI days in the fall, through Gov. Andy Beshear's emergency powers, and "Even if we did not do it through that authority, I am confident that the General Assembly would have gone back and made that retroactive when they meet in January." After superintendents repeated their concerns about reopening under the guidelines, Stack said, "I wish I had more reassurance... but the challenges are significant, and it doesn't mean we won't let school open up; and it may mean we have to accept that when school opens up, that there are more kids together than we would prefer because the counterbalancing trade-offs of having them fall further behind in education, of having parents who can't be at work, that those things are so substantial that we have to try to figure out a way to navigate the trade-offs. I think it is premature for us to reach the conclusion that we can't have school yet in the fall."

Beshear often says at his daily briefings that his two main goals in dealing with the virus are to open the economy and to re-open schools this fall. "I want to get our kids back to school. We know that distance learning isn't the same, we know that our kids fall behind when they do it, we know as parents how hard it is to step in," he said at his May 15 briefing. That was the same day the Kentucky Department of Education released its 16-page document, meant to serve as a starting point for schools and districts as they work toward reopening. Resumption of school is a broadly accepted goal.



2 arrested over girl's absence

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KSP says the girl was not located at the residence identified by Cartwright. The woman said her boyfriend had picked the girl up at her residence and took her to their Trotting Ridge Road residence on Sunday. The boyfriend told the trooper that he had talked to Cartwright. The citation states that Cartwright did not appear normal and was very talkative to the

boyfriend. Trooper Hacker asked Cartwright about the conversation with the boyfriend, but he did not remember it. Trooper Casey Caudill wrote in a citation that state police have received several complaints of children playing in the road at this location. The citation adds there were five children living at the home from ages 2-10 years old. On Monday, he said the

children had apparent bruises and there was little food inside the home. The children had not had baths, and there was no running water inside the residence. Trooper Caudill said two of the children were placed into custody with their uncle. The other three were taken by the troopers into emergency custody for placement. The trooper's citation states that both parents admitted to having a drug

problem, and there have been drugs in and around the residence. Trooper Caudill charged Colleen Yates, 33, with criminal abuse, first degree -- child 12 and under, first degree wanton endangerment, and endangering the welfare of a minor. Cartwright, 31, was arrested on the same three charges by Trooper Hacker. Cartwright's address was given as 408 Bertha Wallace Drive, Irvine.

Local Police activity report

Irvine Officer Jason Conrad served a Madison County arrest warrant on **Ben E. Begley**, 41, of Richmond on May 28. The arrest was made on Richmond Road in Irvine. Officer Stewart Morris arrested **Michelle Rose**, 48, of Grindstone Road, Irvine on May 29 on the Joseph Proctor Memorial Bypass. The citation states that Rose was operating a vehicle on Richmond Road and did not use her turn signal to turn left onto the bypass. The officer stated that Rose failed field sobriety tests. He added that she had a white powdery substance in her left nostril, and told him that she had snorted percoset earlier. The officer reported that he found a Gabapentin pill in Rose's purse and straws. She was charged with failure to or improper signal, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol, failure

of owner to maintain required insurance, failure to produce insurance card, possession of a controlled substance, third degree, and drug paraphernalia - buy/possess. Officer Morris served a Lee County warrant May 30 on **Shelby Moore**, 24, of Willard Johnson Road, Beattyville. The warrant was for failure to appear. Moore was also arrested for assault fourth degree, dating violence (minor injury). Officer Morris said 911 Dispatch received a call of a domestic assault in the gravel lot across from Monty's Liquors. When he arrived, he said that Sheena Terry was bleeding from her nose. She reportedly told him that her boyfriend had assaulted her with his fists. The officer said that Moore had fled the scene in Terry's vehicle. He was located on Kirkland Avenue. Officer Morris served a Fayette County warrant

on **Travis Jay Cox**, 30, of McKee Road, Irvine on May 29. The warrant charged Cox with robbery, first degree on March 28. **Jeremiah L. Johnson**, 42, of Jakes Heavenly Highway, Irvine was charged May 27 with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol and leaving the scene of an accident -- failure to render aid or assistance. Officer Conrad said he was dispatched to a vehicle accident on South Madison Avenue where a red minivan had left the scene. The officer stated that he saw a water trail which went from the accident scene to Hood Avenue where the mini van was parked. Johnson was transported to Marcum and Wallace Memorial Hospital, but Conrad said he refused a blood draw. **Camille Congleton**, 43, of Ridge Road, Beattyville was arrested May 28 by Detective Sam Hensley.

The detective said he received a call that there were two individuals sitting in a vehicle in the hospital parking lot who appeared to be heavily intoxicated. He stated that Congleton was sitting in the driver seat. She reportedly told him there was a small amount of methamphetamine and a pipe in her purse. According to the detective, two pills were also recovered from Congleton's pants pocket. One was identified as Alprazolam, and the other as acetaminophen and oxycodone hydrochloride 325mg/10mg. Congleton was charged with two counts of possession of a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (methamphetamine and opiates), possession of a controlled substance, third degree, and public intoxication (excludes alcohol).

KSP resumes permit tests

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<http://kentuckys-tatepolice.org/drivers-testing/>
There you will find a list of current open test locations and the phone number for the KSP Drivers Test Administrator or clerk at each location. Please be patient as phone lines are limited and we anticipate high call volumes. More information will be distributed as additional counties are added to our list. Please visit the KSP website periodically to see when your county will begin permit testing. We anticipate an announcement at a later date regarding road tests to begin in July.

First case of corona virus in Estill Co.

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The state hotline is 800-722-5725. For local questions, call 723-5181. Our health department hours are Monday 8:00 - 6:00; Tuesday thru Thursday 8:00 - 4:30; and Friday from 8:00 - 12:00. Currently 438 Estill County residents have been tested with 437 negative and 1 positive. There are no tests pending.

Estill Fiscal court meets

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Watson also mentioned those funds will be needed because of the financial situations all counties will be in as a result of the pandemic.