



*News from Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley & the
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

On the Desktop - June 10, 2020

Additional Guidance on Fall Reopening Plans

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Leaders of Approved Special Education Schools, and Collaborative Leaders,

After continued discussions with the field, I am writing to provide you with additional guidance on fall reopening plans.

As noted in our initial fall guidance, I am requiring districts to submit one reopening plan that will address health and safety requirements and different student learning models — in-person, hybrid, and remote learning. The plan must also describe how special populations will be effectively served within each of the models. **This reopening plan is due to DESE by Friday, July 31, and we will provide a template next week.**

At this time, given the current low transmission rates of COVID-19 in the state, and pursuant to emergency regulations recently passed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, we are asking districts and schools to prioritize in-person instruction. Specifically, we have asked districts to focus on assessing the feasibility of bringing back students in-person, and those feasibility studies should be taking place in your districts now.

While you continue working to flesh out these models, **I am requesting that you hold off on announcing any final decisions about what reopening will look like for the fall in your district until early August.** While preparations for the fall must move forward, we are still waiting for key information that will directly impact the best fit reopening model for each community. This includes more information about financial resources that may be available, including the possibility of a second federal stimulus package, and any change in local COVID-19 transmission rates.

I understand that local communities are eager for districts to finalize their reopening plans as soon as possible. At the same time, I am confident that our families and students will be better served by a thoughtful planning process that works first to explore options and takes in critical additional information before local plans are finalized.

To support your planning, we have attached our first installment of answers to frequently asked questions. We will continue to release FAQs with updates and covering additional topics as more details become available.

Thank you for all of your tireless work on behalf of our students.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner