



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

On the Desktop - July 22, 2020

Transportation and Facilities Guidance

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

The attached transportation and facilities and operations guidance documents supplement [DESE's Initial Fall School Reopening Memo](#). The initial memo put forth the goal of the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, and the safe transportation of students to and from school and the carefully considered use of school facilities are critical parts of achieving this goal. In developing this guidance, the health and safety of students and staff were our top priorities.

The Transportation Guidance is focused on supporting districts as they develop a transportation strategy that provides safe conditions for all students and staff traveling by bus while also maximizing in-person learning. Districts strategies should:

1. **Follow the medically-advised health and safety requirements** for school bus transportation;
2. **Address bus capacity challenges** created by the physical distancing requirements by considering strategies such as adding bus routes, staggering schedules, and pursuing a waiver for student learning time requirements if needed; and
3. **Take proactive steps to promote safe alternative transportation options** for students, including family-provided transportation, walking, and biking, as appropriate.

The Facilities and Operations Guidance provides details and considerations for schools' physical plants and grounds, as well as operational protocols based on the most recent information we have about COVID-19 and related mitigation practices. The document has three main sections:

1. **Preparing spaces,**
2. **Making systems and other space-use modifications, and**
3. **Developing operational protocols**

Please note that both guidance documents are subject to change depending on the COVID-19 trends and as we learn more about the virus from medical research.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner