



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting

March 11, 2021

7:00 p.m. Open Meeting
8:30 p.m. Executive Session

Virtual Public Meeting

To attend: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

To preregister for Public Comment (required):

https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_szz-FOrmTgKoCNySfZotiQ

(pre-registration must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting)

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING AGENDA

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1. **Call to Order (7:00)**

- a. **Chairperson's Welcome** - *Tessa McKinley*
 - i. Procedures added to Public Participation Policy BEDH-R
- b. **Public Participation** - *Please see note in the heading above*
- c. **Superintendent's Update** – *Peter Light*

2. **PRESENTATION**

- a. **Hybrid to Full In-Person Learning Planning** - *Peter Light*

3. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

- a. **Consent Agenda - VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley*
 - i. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 2/8/21, 2/11/21, 3/4/21 – **VOTE**
 - i. Recommendation to Approve \$865.49 Donation from O'Connor Studios to the Gates School to Support Students' Activities - **VOTE** - *Peter Light*
- b. **Budget Update** - *Peter Light, Dave Verdolino*
 - i. ALG Update (BLF to meet 3/16)
- c. **EDCO Update** - *Peter Light*
- d. **Subcommittee and Members' Reports**
 - i. **Building Committee** - *Adam Klein*
 - ii. **Policy** - *Diane Baum*
 - 1. Meal Charge, File: EFD (new) - *Second Read* - **VOTE**
 - 2. Commitment to an Inclusive and Representative Educator Workforce, File: GBAA (new) - *Second Read* - **VOTE**
 - 3. Curriculum and Instructional Materials, File: IGA (*with procedures*) - *First Read*
 - 4. Adoption of New Courses & Programs, File: IGD (new) - *First Read*
 - iii. **Health Insurance Trust (HIT)** - *John Petersen*
- e. **FYI**

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (8:30)**

Pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) because

an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee.

The Committee will not return to Open Session.

Posted on 3/8/21 at 4:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS (via zoom):

ABRSC: March 18 at 7:00 p.m. (Open FY22 Budget Hearing at 7:05 p.m.)
April 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Next Community Coffee with the Superintendent & ABRSC Chair via zoom:
April 7 at 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

- a. **Acton Annual Election is March 30, 2021**
- b. **Boxborough 2021 Annual Election Calendar & Candidate's Checklist**
- c. **Gift of 300 KN-95 masks from Dunkin of Acton/The Pesce Family**
- d. **Gift of \$50 from VMware Foundation to R.J. Grey Junior High Math and Science student programs**
- e. **This Month in the Division of Open Government, February 2021**
- f. **Suicide Prevention Training** - Click here [QPR Training Flyer](#) for details and to sign up online. Next one: March 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Procedures effective January 29, 2021

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee recognizes the value of public input at its meetings as well as the high value our community places on public participation in government. Effective immediately, the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee will resume public comment at its meetings. In light of recent racist and anti-semitic attacks at its meetings, however, the committee will implement enhanced security measures for individuals wishing to speak:

1. Any member of the public who wishes to watch the meeting live, but does not wish to speak may do so by watching on either Acton TV or on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>
2. A member of the public who wishes to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting or during the meeting (at the Chairperson's discretion), may request to participate in the zoom meeting using the following procedures:
 - a. The attendee must complete a pre-registration form for the zoom meeting through the pre-registration link posted on the meeting agenda.
 - b. Pre-registration must be completed 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
 - c. During pre-registration, an attendee must provide all of the required information, including a telephone number where the attendee can be contacted to verify the speaker's identity.
 - d. On the day of the meeting, District staff will contact attendees by telephone or text message to verify the identity of the attendee wishing to be recognized.
 - e. Following verification of an attendee's identity, the attendee will be sent a link to the zoom meeting. The attendee must use this link to attend and speak during the meeting.
 - f. The attendee wishing to participate must sign into the zoom meeting using the name or telephone number they provided when pre-registering.
 - g. During the meeting, the attendee may indicate their desire to speak by using the "raise hand" feature in zoom, or if using a telephone, by pressing *9.
 - h. Attendees are recognized to speak at the discretion of the chairperson.

Only individuals who have followed the above procedures will be allowed to speak during the meeting, at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Superintendent's Office
15 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700 www.abschools.org

Marie Altieri
Deputy Superintendent

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Director of Special Education Finalists

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Director of Special Education Search Committee is pleased to announce two finalists for the position of Director of Special Education for July 1, 2021. The person appointed will replace Interim Director of Special Education Debbie Dixon when she completes her two year Interim position. A 20 member search committee reviewed 23 applications, interviewed 6, and identified these two finalists. Each finalist will visit the district this week, and they will meet with several groups within the district and the community. A family/community forum will be held via zoom webinar on Wednesday night, March 10th from 7:00 - 8:00 to meet each of the candidates. To join this meeting, please use the zoom link at the bottom of this email. Below is a brief description of each candidate as well as a link to their resume.

Jennifer Truslow *Visiting Tuesday March 9*

Jennifer Truslow is the Director of Student Services at the Weston Public School District. She has served in this role for four years and she was the Assistant Director of Student Services for one year before that. Previously, Jennifer was the Assistant Principal for Student Services at the Brown Middle School in Newton for ten years. Before moving into leadership, Jennifer spent eight years in roles that included a learning center teacher, inclusion facilitator, and program director for special education. Jennifer also spent six years as an adjunct professor teaching special education graduate classes at Lesley University. Jennifer has a Master of Education from Lesley College and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Vermont with a dual major in Elementary/Special Education: Intensive Special Needs. Jennifer has also completed the Educator Leadership Institute at the EDCO Collaborative and Endicott College with licensure as an Administrator of Special Education. [Here](#) is Jennifer's resume.

Dr. Courtney Dunne *Visiting Wednesday March 10*

Courtney is the Director of the EDCO Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the EDCO Collaborative in Newton, MA. Courtney has been in this position for the last six years. Prior to EDCO, Courtney was the Director of the Early Childhood Center at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf for three years. She previously taught for seven years at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and she taught high school English and History at the Harry S Truman High School in Bronx, NY for two years. Courtney has a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Arts in Deaf Education from Teachers College at Columbia University, and a Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Marywood University in Scranton, PA. [Here](#) is Courtney's resume.



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Marie Altieri
Deputy Superintendent

March 11, 2021

McCarthy-Towne Principal Finalists

The McCarthy-Towne Principal Search Committee is pleased to announce two finalists for the position of Principal of McCarthy-Towne to start on July 1, 2021. The person appointed will replace McCarthy-Towne Principal Dr. David Krane, who will be retiring in June after twelve years as Principal. A 15 member search committee reviewed 23 applications, interviewed 7 candidates, and identified these two finalists. Each finalist will visit McCarthy-Towne next week, and they will meet with several groups within the district and the McCarthy-Towne community. A family/community forum will be held via zoom webinar on **Tuesday March 16th from 7:00 - 8:00 pm** to meet each of the candidates. A zoom link will be sent to McCarthy-Towne families before the webinar. Below is a brief description of each candidate as well as a link to their resume.

Christy Nealon *Visiting Monday March 15*

Christy Nealon is the Assistant Principal of the Center School in Stow, which is part of the Nashoba Regional School District. She has served in this role for four years. Previously Christy taught for eleven years at the Merriam Elementary School here in Acton-Boxborough. Christy also stepped in as an assistant to the Principal at Merriam in her last year. Christy has a Master of Education Degree in Elementary Education from Salem State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Christy also participated in an exchange program with the University of Hull. Here is Christy's [resume](#).

Kellie O'Brien *Visiting Tuesday March 16*

Kellie is the Principal of the West Brookfield Elementary School in the Quaboag Regional School District. She has served in this role for three years. Previously Kellie was the Assistant Principal of the Paxton Center Elementary School in the Wachusett Regional School District for seven years. Kellie taught first grade for eight years in Virginia and Wachusett. Kellie was also an Adjunct Professor at Anna Maria College for a year teaching a course in Social Emotional Learning. Kellie has a Master of Education in Elementary Education from Worcester State College, a Master of Education from the College of William and Mary in Elementary Reading and a Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education from Worcester State College. Here is Kellie's [resume](#).

Thank you to the members of the search committee for all their work over the last several months.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Spring '21 Transition to Full In-Person Learning

March 11, 2021

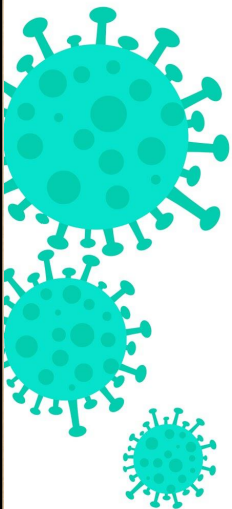
Agenda

- x The Science of a Safe Return
- x Pooled Testing
- x Planning Updates
 - x Elementary
 - x JHS
 - x ABRHS
- x Operational Updates
 - x Travel & Quarantine Updates
- x Budget Implications



What Does the Science Tell us About Bringing Students Back to School?

RISK REDUCTION MEASURES

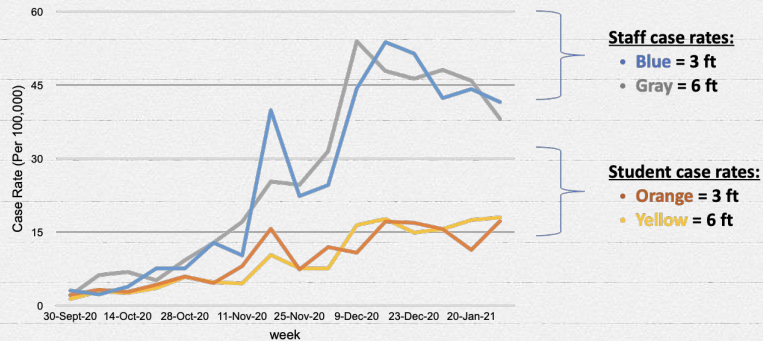


Increased air turnover
Air purifiers
Well-fitted, consistent mask use
Distancing
Hand hygiene
Sanitizing
Isolating & testing when sick
Self-screening
Surveillance testing
Quarantine protocols
Contact tracing
Cohorting
Adapting activities
Vaccination



Study of Massachusetts data indicates no substantial difference in cases among students or staff with 3 versus 6 feet of distance since schools re-opened

Cases of SARS-CoV-2 Among Students and Staff with 3 versus 6 feet of Physical Distancing Policies

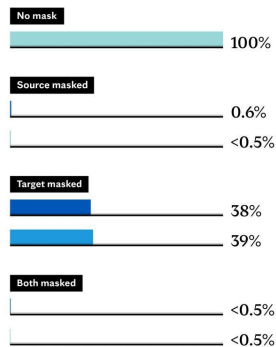


Source: Polly van den Berg, MD; Elissa M. Schechter-Perkins, MD, MPH; Rebecca S. Jack, MPP; Isabella Epshtein, MPP; Richard Nelson, PhD; Emily Oster, PhD; Westyn Branch-Elliman, MD, MMSc. SARS-CoV-2 Cases in Students and Staff in Massachusetts with Variable Distancing Policies. Infection control plans for Commonwealth school districts with any in person learning were collected, with universal masking for students in grade 3 and higher and universal masking for staff mandatory. 243 districts were included, comprising 520,129 students and 6,227,765 student learning weeks, and 97,679 staff and 1,313,532 staff learning weeks. SARS-CoV-2 cases in students and staff in districts with in-person learning with different distancing policies were compared.

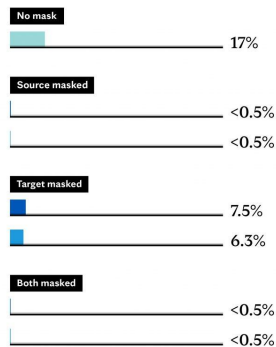
Exposure Risk Based on Masking and Distance

NO MASK DISPOSABLE MASK FABRIC MASK

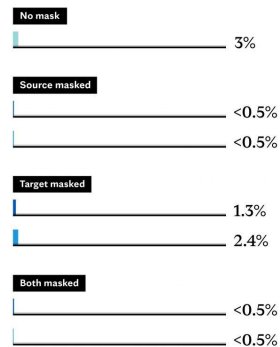
1-foot distance



3-foot distance



6-foot distance



Source = person with active COVID-19

The graph shows percentage of particle counts across various distances of 1 foot to 6 feet when the source, target and both are masked using disposable and cloth masks.

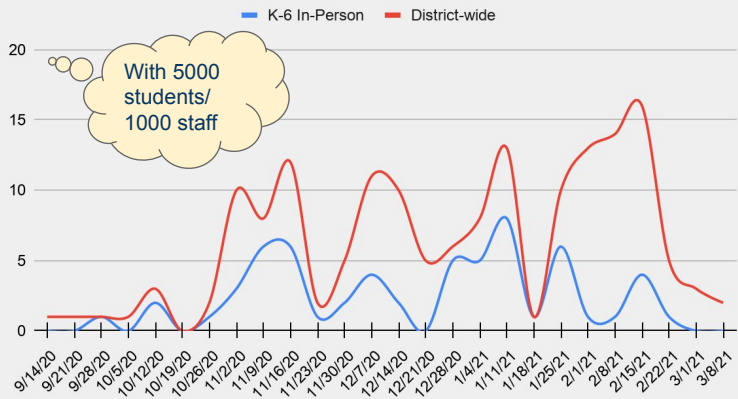
<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-research-confirms-critical-role-of-masks-in-preventing-covid-19-infection/>

ABRSD Covid-19 Cases YTD



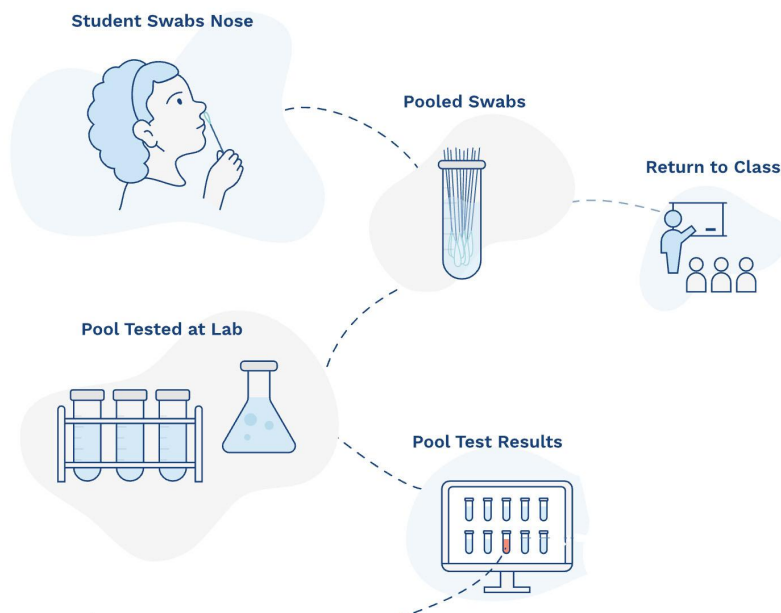
www.abrsd.org

District-wide and K-6 Weekly COVID-19 Cases by Date

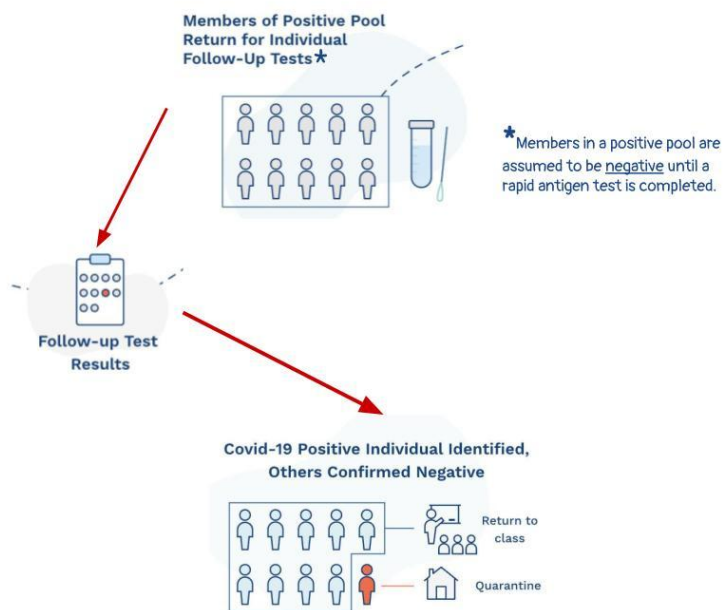


Pooled Testing

How Pooled Testing Works in Our Schools



How Pooled Testing Works in Our Schools (Cont'd.)



Pooled Testing Rollout

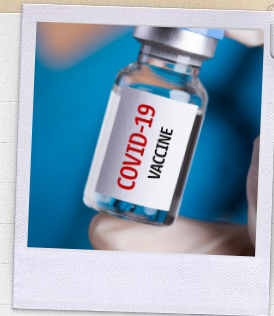
- X **Week of March 8:** Gates (pilot site)
- X **Week of March 22:** Gates, Conant, Blanchard
- X **Week of March 29:** All six elementary schools

TBD: JHS, HS



Educator Vaccine Update

- X Educators added to vaccine Priority list
- X Announcement 3/10 that 4 dates designated ***specifically for educators*** at Mass Vax Sites
 - X 3/27; 4/3; 4/10; 4/11
- X Approximately 100 staff (10%) now fully vaccinated,
 - X many more received or scheduled for 1st shot
- X Parent Volunteer Vaccine Finders - Thank you!!!
 - X 86 Employees requested assistance
 - X 42 Appointments in 1st Day



Planning Update

Planning Status (Overview)

Grade Level	Date of Change	Change
Kindergarten*	April 5	Continue ½ Day Model; Alternate in-person Wednesdays
Grades 1-6*	April 5	Full In-person Learning; ½ Day Wednesdays (11:50 a.m.)
Grades 7-8*	April 28	Full In-person Learning; Early Release Wednesday TBD
Grades 9-12*	TBD	TBD - More Information Week of 3/15



*** Note:** Families may continue to opt for a fully remote option for the remainder of the year.

DESE Updates & Guidance

- x MA Board of Education Vote: grants Commissioner authority to amend learning time regulations
- x Hybrid & Remote Learning will not count* toward Time on Learning effective:
 - x 4/5 - Elementary Schools
 - x 4/28 - Middle School
 - x TBD - High School
- x Districts accountable to former learning time regulations (only in-person counts)



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

*** Note: Learning time for students who opted for fully remote programming will count toward time on learning for the rest of this year**

Family Choice Surveys

"...parent/guardians have the option to choose full in-person or remote learning for their students"

From DESE (emphasis added):

"For many districts, this will be a substantial programming shift mid-school year. Families should expect that districts may need to make challenging tradeoffs to accommodate the full in-person instructional mode. For instance, if students are currently learning in a hybrid model, the shift to more in-person days may require changes in classroom learning spaces and, in some cases, teacher-student assignments. If students are currently in a remote model or choose to learn remotely when these new requirements go into effect, the remote learning option may look different than the model offered prior to the implementation of these new requirements."



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Survey Status

1-6 - Completed 3/10
7-8 - Pending
9-12 - TBD

Selected Guidance Updates

Distancing

- x will move from 6' to 3' between students; students facing same direction
- x Tables may be used, but students must be 3' apart and face same direction

Transportation

- x No cap on ridership for K-6
- x 2 students max per seat 7-12



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Selected Guidance Updates

Meals & Recess

- x Students must be 6' apart when masked
- x Key strategies:
 - x Desks instead of caf tables or students at tables 6' apart
 - x Outdoor options as much as possible
 - x Elementary:
 - x Stagger lunch & recess
 - x Split between classrooms and cafeterias
 - x Secondary
 - x Multiple spaces including cafeterias, gyms, outdoor



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Pre-K

- x No change to program - already full-day program



Kindergarten

- x **K will continue as ½ Day Program through June '21**
 - x Staffing Challenges - Some teachers are split between in-person and remote programs
 - x i.e. - AM In-Person; PM Remote
 - x K students have option to move between remote and in-person program
 - x Do not have staff to return K students to Full Day Program
 - x 13.5 hrs. per week
- x **Alternate in-person Wednesdays beginning April 5**
 - x Begin w/ A.M. Cohort (4/7); P.M. Cohort (4/14)



Elementary Grades 1-6

Return to Full-Day In-Person Program April 5, 2021

Planning Steps Completed to Date:

- X Determine capacity limits for all classrooms @ 3'
 - X Determine available spaces by grade in each school
- X Inventory all furniture
 - X Needs assessment (tables vs. desks, etc.)
 - X Determine furniture "trades" between buildings
 - X Beginning to add additional furniture to classrooms
- X Family surveys
- X Beginning to address scheduling modifications
 - X Special education, specials
- X Develop lunch, recess plans by school



Elementary Grades 1-6

Survey Results:

By the numbers - Survey Results (as of 3/11):

- x 124 requests to change from RLP to In-person
- x 9 requests to change from In-person to RLP
- x 204 *new* requests for transportation

Impact

- x Space is insufficient in "home school" classrooms to fully satisfy requests
 - x Requests exceed capacity by 52 students



We will need to consider staffing and/or student assignment in order to accommodate all requests

Elementary Grades 1-6

Next Steps:

- x Determine modifications needed to accommodate requests to change programs
- X Confirm placements with families requesting change (3/18)
- X Continue to prepare classrooms and facilities
- X Publish necessary modification to operational procedures
- X Finalize continuity of education plan for quarantined students
- X Rebuild and communicate new transportation routes
- X Determine process to support students in making transitions between programs and in move from hybrid to full in-person
- X Finalize and communicate schedule changes for special education and specials as needed



RJ Grey Junior High School

Return to Full-Day In-Person Program Wed. April 28

Planning steps:

March 18-19	Guidance regarding full return to school options and details, and fully remote plans; instructions for submitting learning plan change requests
Mid-March	Portal open for families to submit learning plan and transportation change requests
March 29 - April 16	Review learning plan changes, develop scheduling options, finalizing schedules and communication to families
April 19-23	April Vacation



RJ Grey Junior High School

Return to Full-Day In-Person Program Wed. April 28:

Why Wednesday?

- x Opportunity for students to return to current cohorts Monday & Tuesday to learn about new procedures, changes
- x Wednesday will serve as team-building and orientation day for students in combined cohorts



ABRHS

ABRHS Return Date Remains TBD

Continuing to assess and plan for:

- x Spaces and plans for large(er) classes that allow for 3' minimum distance
- x Lunch spaces
 - x Increase in # students during lunches
 - x 250 per lunch currently
 - x 500 per lunch upon return
- x More robust continuity of education plan for quarantined students



ABRHS

of Sections with higher student (by period)

Period	24+	25+	26+	27+	28+	29+
1	11	9	7	5	3	3
2	12	10	6	5	4	2
3	20	15	8	4	4	3
4	17	15	13	9	6	3
5	12	8	8	8	8	5
6	14	11	6	5	5	3
7	18	14	11	7	3	2
Total # of sect	104	82	59	43	33	21



Classes of 26+
pose the greatest
challenges due to
distancing
constraints

ABRHS

ABRHS Return Date Remains TBD

More information will be available for families in the next week.

Thank you for continued patience.



Travel Update



TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Updated 3/10/21

OUT-OF-STATE

(higher-risk states as indicated [here](#) and including U.S. Territories)

Prior to returning to school, provide [the school nurse](#) with negative Covid [PCR test](#) result, administered no longer than 72 hours before your return to Massachusetts (you may test *after* your return if you prefer).

If you choose **NOT** to be tested for Covid, you must quarantine for **10 days** upon return to Massachusetts.

When returning to Massachusetts, you will need to follow the [Massachusetts Quarantine Requirement and Testing Options](#), the [CDC Travel/Health Notices](#), or the [ABRS Guidelines](#), whichever is more stringent.

OUT-OF-STATE

(lower-risk states as indicated [here](#))

No testing or quarantine is required.

INTERNATIONAL

(including U.S. Territories)

You must quarantine for **14 days** upon return to Massachusetts, with or without Covid testing.

Individuals who have received 2 doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR 1 dose of the Janssen vaccine more than 14 days prior to travel AND who are not symptomatic DO NOT need to obtain a negative test and DO NOT need to quarantine.
[\(MA COVID-19 Travel Order\)](#)

Note:
Testing/Quarantine exemption does **NOT** apply to individuals who have not yet fully vaccinated (i.e. students)



Quarantine Updates



WHEN CAN I RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK?*

EFFECTIVE 2/22/2021

[LINK TO SCREENING QUESTIONS](#)

Symptomatic; no contact with confirmed positive case

Symptomatic AND close contact with confirmed positive case

Close contact* with confirmed positive case; no symptoms

See Scenarios A-C below

MUST QUARANTINE FOR 10 or 14 DAYS.
See Scenarios A-C below

SCENARIO A
Positive COVID-19 PCR/Molecular Test
(must provide results to school nurse)

SCENARIO B
Negative COVID-19 PCR/Molecular Test
(must provide results to school nurse)

SCENARIO C
No COVID-19 Test Done

May return after **10 days**
AND
At least **24 hours** no fever without fever-reducing medicine
AND
Symptoms have improved
AND
Received clearance from Local Health Department

May return after **14 days** if:
• Close contact is someone living in the same household, **AND/OR**
• Close contact is related to sports, travel, and/or gatherings/activities outside of school

May return after **10 days** if:
• Identified as a close contact in the classroom **AND**
• At least **24 hours** no fever without fever-reducing medicine **AND**
• Symptoms have improved

May return after **14 days**
AND
At least **24 hours** no fever without fever-reducing medicine
AND
Symptoms have improved

Staff/students may **NOT** return to school while awaiting COVID-19 test results.

*If you have traveled out of the state or country, refer to [this document](#).

*A Close Contact is defined as anyone who has been within 6 feet of the infected person for at least 15 minutes (cumulative).

Updated 2/22/2021



Budgetary Impact

- x Not yet fully known
- x Possible sources of funding
 - x Budget Contingency Line
 - x Additional Federal Stimulus
- x Staffing costs - c.\$65K
 - x Additional hours needed for bus drivers, assistants, other support staff
- x *Possible* other budget impacts
 - x Desks/chairs or similar
 - x School & Classroom Supplies



Q&A



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

On the Desktop - March 9, 2021

Guidance on In-Person Learning Requirements

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Leaders of Collaboratives,

On March 5, 2021, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted amendments to the Student Learning Time regulations on an emergency basis. These amendments provide me with the authority to determine when hybrid and remote models will no longer count toward meeting the required student learning time hours. 603 CMR 27.08(2)(d). Consistent with these amendments, and following consultation with medical experts and state health officials, I am exercising that authority as follows:

- **Elementary school phase (grades K-5):** For **elementary schools**, hybrid and remote learning models will no longer count towards meeting the required student learning time hours as of **Monday, April 5, 2021**. As a result, districts and schools are required to shift their learning model for **elementary school** grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week effective **Monday, April 5, 2021**.
- **Middle school phase (grades 6-8):** For **middle schools**, hybrid and remote learning models will no longer count towards meeting the required student learning time hours as of **Wednesday, April 28, 2021**. As a result, districts and schools will be required to shift their learning model for **middle school** grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week, effective **Wednesday, April 28, 2021**.
- **High school phase (grades 9-12):** We will announce the details and timing of the high school phase of the plan in April. Districts will be provided with at least two weeks in advance of the date for high school students to return to full-time, in-person instruction, but should start making such plans now.

Accompanying this message is a guidance document that provides detailed information to support districts in the transition to full in-person learning.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Guidance on In-Person Learning and Student Learning Time Requirements

March 9, 2021

Summary of Regulatory Change and New Requirements

At the meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on March 5, 2021, the Board adopted additional amendments to the Student Learning Time (SLT) regulations, 603 CMR 27.00, on an emergency basis. The amendments establish the Commissioner's authority to determine when district-wide hybrid and remote learning models no longer count for structured learning time. Consistent with the regulations, the amendments prioritize in-person instruction and will result in more students returning to full-time, in-person learning with appropriate school-based mitigation measures in place.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department or DESE) welcomes [public comment](#) on the emergency regulations. The Board will vote on the final adoption of the amendments, with any changes resulting from the public comments, at the Board meeting in May 2021.

In consultation with public health officials and medical experts, the Commissioner has elected to use this authority to expand full-time, in-person learning through a graduated approach this spring. **The plan will begin with a return to in-person school for elementary schools grades K-5. As of April 5, 2021, the Department will require elementary schools to use a full-time, in-person learning model for instructional hours to count towards structured learning time.** With recent significant improvements in COVID-19 health metrics, rigorous implementation of key mitigation strategies, and weekly pooled testing up and running for students and school staff across the Commonwealth, more districts and schools have already started to bring more students back, especially at the elementary level. **The plan will proceed with other grade levels at the Commissioner's discretion and in consultation with medical experts and state health officials.**

Importantly, families will retain the choice as to whether to send their children to school in-person or have them learn remotely through the end of the school year. Districts¹ may also apply for a waiver from DESE. Waivers will be considered in a limited set of circumstances described later in this document.

These regulations are legally binding. Any district that does not comply with the regulatory requirements or receive a waiver by April 5, 2021 (for the elementary school phase of the plan) will be required to make up any missed structured learning time. This time could be made up during this school year, over the summer, or into next school year if necessary. In addition, G.L. c. 71, § 4A links Chapter 70 funds to structured learning time.

Overview of this Document

This document provides further information to districts about the new requirements and guidance for effective implementation, and is organized into the following sections:

- Background and rationale
- Supports and resources for schools and districts
- Timeline for phased implementation
- Detailed requirements
- Implementation planning

- Waiver process
- Looking ahead

Background and Rationale

In preparation for reopening schools in the fall of 2020, DESE released its initial fall guidance² in June. Our initial guidance established a layered set of mitigation strategies to protect against COVID-19 transmission in schools, including masks, hand hygiene, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, symptom screening, and contact tracing. We indicated that it was not one factor, but a combination of strategies that would keep our students and staff safe.

As part of this guidance, DESE required districts to prepare plans for three learning models heading into the 2020-21 school year – in-person, hybrid, and remote – while prioritizing in-person models whenever possible. Our expectation was that based on the evolving science and depending on the trajectory of the virus, schools would likely need to pivot among the models. We also modified the required number of school days to provide extra time at the start of the year for school staff to train on reopening models and the key mitigation strategies.³

Importantly, 72% of districts in Massachusetts took advantage of the fall months to return to school fully in-person or in a hybrid model. And based on recent SLT survey data, nearly 80% of districts are currently in-person or in a hybrid model as of mid-February 2021.

Schools and districts have rigorously adopted the health and safety strategies outlined in DESE's guidance and we have seen very few incidences of transmission in schools. In fact, we have an ever-growing body of evidence locally, nationally, and from across the globe that in-person school is safe when proper health and safety protocols are followed.^{4,5,6,7,8,9}

Since June 2020, DESE guidance has consistently noted that three feet in classrooms is a safe standard for physical distancing when masks are worn and other mitigation strategies are in place, based on guidelines from the World Health Organization¹⁰ and the American Academy of Pediatrics.¹¹ Our guidance balanced the urgent need to bring students in the Commonwealth back to in-person learning while minimizing the risk to students, staff, and their families. While districts should space students further than three feet when feasible, evidence demonstrates that the additional risk reduction associated with six feet as opposed to three feet is low – when masks are worn and other mitigation strategies are in place.^{12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19}

DESE's approach to physical distancing was endorsed last summer by the Governor's COVID Command Medical Advisory board, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and medical experts from Mass General Brigham.

Since then, DESE's approach has been further endorsed and validated, with numerous groups noting the safety of a three-foot distancing in classrooms standard and supporting the return of students to full-time in-person school at three feet of distance:

- Additional organizations have noted the safety of a three-foot distancing standard between students in classrooms when part of a holistic mitigation approach in school.²⁰
- Individual school districts have formed their own medical advisory boards and conducted their own due diligence, reaching with similar conclusions about the safety of reduced physical distancing.²¹

- Recently, hundreds of Massachusetts infectious diseases physicians, pediatricians, and public health experts, endorsed DESE's guidance on three feet of physical distancing in classrooms, noting that the risks to students of not being in school are dramatic.²²
- In March 2021, a peer-reviewed study provisionally accepted to *Clinical Infectious Diseases* demonstrated that districts in Massachusetts using a physical distancing standard of three feet in classrooms did not see an increased number of COVID-19 positive cases, as compared to districts that maintained a strict six feet of distance.²³

In the fall, we began adding further layers to the school-based mitigation strategies through COVID-19 testing and reporting practices. We implemented mobile rapid response testing and BinaxNOW rapid antigen testing for symptomatic individuals in schools. We also began publicly reporting the case rates in K-12 settings.²⁴

In January 2021, we announced that pooled testing would be universally available across the Commonwealth for all students and staff, starting with a state-funded initial phase that began in February. Approximately 50% of schools across the Commonwealth have signed up to administer pooled testing on a weekly basis to proactively screen large numbers of students and staff for COVID-19. Participating schools can now quickly locate and isolate any individuals that test positive.

Starting March 11, 2021 all educators and school staff will be eligible to schedule appointments to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as part of Phase 2 of the state-wide vaccination rollout plan. Vaccinations for persons over 65 and those at risk of severe COVID-19 due to co-morbidities are already underway. Even with strong evidence that in-person school environments are safe with existing mitigation strategies,²⁵ and while vaccinations are not a prerequisite for returning to in-person instruction,²⁶ vaccination for educators and their vulnerable family members will provide additional confidence in returning to the classroom.

In recent months, we have also focused on the student learning experience in remote and hybrid settings. In December, to address increasing reports of troubling student mental health trends, the Board voted to amend the SLT regulations to require districts to further prioritize “live instruction,” whether through in-person or synchronous remote learning. These emergency regulations went into effect for schools and districts on January 19, 2021 and were permanently adopted at the Board's February meeting. These requirements for live and synchronous instruction will support student engagement and mental health until students return to the classroom full-time.

As we have stated repeatedly throughout this pandemic, there is no substitute for in-person learning, especially for younger students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other high needs populations. In addition to academic instruction and support, when students are in school, they have the opportunity to learn important social and emotional skills, and they have access to mental health and other support services, as well as healthy meals and opportunities for exercise.

With the extensive mitigation strategies in place in our schools, including further validation of our guidance on physical distancing, widely-available pooled testing, and as state health metrics continue to improve, the time is now to begin shifting away from remote and hybrid learning models and return to the in-person instructional format.

In addition, a return to in-person school this spring will lay the groundwork for a full-time, in-person return for all grade levels in fall 2021, likely with some continued mitigation measures. In the fall, DESE will no longer require districts and schools to provide a district-wide remote learning option. Districts

should work individually with parents/guardians of students who cannot school in person in the fall due to a medical condition.

Supports and Resources for Schools and Districts

At the start of the pandemic, we recognized that planning, preparation, and implementation would come at a significant cost and advocated early for much-needed additional funding for schools. Beginning in summer 2020, hundreds of millions of federal and state dollars were made available to districts.

Specifically, DESE distributed \$194.4 million through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I) Fund and \$182 million in School Reopening grants were issued last summer. DESE also provided nearly \$33 million to address remote learning technology needs and to provide students with adequate access to technology, including devices (e.g., Chromebooks), internet connectivity (e.g., wi-fi hotspots), and assistive technology, for use in remote learning environments during the 2020-21 school year. DESE has also provided districts and schools with additional supplies, including personal protective equipment, masks, and air purifiers. To date, DESE has distributed over 12,000 air purifiers and 1.5 million masks.

The additional \$740 million federal stimulus funds (ESSER II) announced in December 2020, and the Governor's proposed budget which fully funds the Student Opportunity Act, will enable districts to plan not just for immediate needs but also for long-term recovery and student acceleration. As part of the ESSER II package, DESE has committed additional resources to ensure that each district will receive a minimum of \$75,000 in ESSER II funds. DESE has also distributed \$4 million in supplemental funding to assist with the social and emotional needs of students. An even larger distribution of federal funds is expected as part of the pending American Rescue Plan.

Additionally, DESE continues to provide resources for districts and schools to hire additional staff to support an in-person return including: emergency license opportunities,²⁷ MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) database partnership for substitute teachers,²⁸ and the high school internship program.²⁹

Finally, DESE's COVID-19 rapid response help center has been in place since the fall to support districts and schools with reopening questions, provide guidance on managing positive COVID-19 cases in schools through DESE's protocols, and providing operational guidance and support. The help center will continue to be available, including onsite, to support districts and schools in expanding the number of students engaged in full-time, in-person learning this spring. For schools and districts seeking additional support, contact SLTsupport@mass.gov.

Timeline for Phased Implementation

With the authority to determine when remote and hybrid learning models no longer count towards structured learning time hours, the Commissioner has laid out a graduated strategy for providing all students with the opportunity to return to full-time, in-person learning this spring, beginning with elementary students.

We encourage schools and districts to bring back students at each grade level as quickly as possible. With pooled testing in place and improvement in COVID-19 health metrics across the state, many districts and schools are already moving to bring back all students K-12 for full-time, in-person learning in the coming weeks. However, the timeline below represents the requirement for full-

time return for districts who would not otherwise have students back by the dates below at each grade level.

With this timeline, DESE aims to steadily increase the number of students learning in-person for the remainder of the school year. The plan unfolds in phases, allowing us to assess implementation and health indicators before moving to the next phase. During these phases, we will work in close collaboration with state health officials and medical experts to monitor case counts in schools, assess public health metrics, and monitor for potential impacts of the COVID-19 variants. In addition, we will seek feedback from district and school leaders on implementation. Ultimately, the Commissioner will confirm the timeline for proceeding to subsequent phases based on the review of these data points and other relevant findings from implementation, and following written notice to the Board.

We know COVID-19 positive individuals will be identified in schools, as has been the case throughout the school year. However, districts and schools are well-equipped with the necessary protocols to effectively manage these cases and prevent in-school transmission, including the testing, contact tracing, and quarantine procedures found in DESE guidance.

While the timeline below is subject to change, the following dates provide a roadmap for local planning this spring. In reviewing the timeline below, please note that districts and schools may apply for a waiver from DESE, and parents/guardians who wish for their children to learn remotely will still have that option. Schools and districts must have robust and reliable ways to communicate with all families, students, teachers, and staff to send and receive key messages related to the timelines below. To the greatest extent possible, districts and schools should give families, remote enrichment learning programs, and the broader community at least a two-week notice of planned changes to their school schedules.

- **Elementary school phase (grades K-5):** Districts and schools are required to shift their learning model for elementary school grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week effective **Monday, April 5, 2021**.
- **Middle school phase (grades 6-8):** Districts and schools will be required to shift their learning model for middle school grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week, effective **Wednesday, April 28, 2021**. Districts may choose to ask students who have traveled to a state on the restricted list to learn remotely for the week of April 26, 2021 (the week after April vacation).
- **High school phase (grades 9-12):** **We will announce the details and timing of the high school phase of the plan in April.** Districts will be provided with at least two weeks advance notice of the specific date requirement for high school students but should start making such plans now.

The Commissioner may delay or accelerate the timeline for subsequent phases of the plan in consultation with medical experts and state health officials.

Detailed Requirements

Below are key requirements and other information necessary for implementation.

Survey families to determine their choice between full in-person and remote learning. As the new requirements take effect for each phase (elementary, middle, and high school), parent/guardians have the option to choose full in-person or remote learning for their students. These options apply whether the students are currently in remote learning, hybrid, or in-person learning. **The family surveys should be conducted as soon as possible for all students K-12,** and districts should make every effort to reach all families.

For many districts, this will be a substantial programming shift mid-school year. Families should expect that districts may need to make challenging tradeoffs to accommodate the full in-person instructional mode. For instance, if students are currently learning in a hybrid model, the shift to more in-person days may require changes in classroom learning spaces and, in some cases, teacher-student assignments. If students are currently in a remote model or choose to learn remotely when these new requirements go into effect, the remote learning option may look different than the model offered prior to the implementation of these new requirements.

After families make a choice between full in-person and remote, a parent or guardian who subsequently wishes to have their student switch from a remote to in-person model, should be aware that the school or district may require a reasonable transition period. Consistent with DESE's Remote Learning Guidance,³⁰ we recommend that this transition period be ideally no more than four to six weeks.

We encourage districts to use a "livestreaming" or simultaneous instructional model for remote students. In this model, students learning at home participate in largely the same classroom activities as students who are learning in-person. This will continue to allow students to access remote learning if they need to quarantine this spring due to a COVID-19 related issue.

Applicable elementary grades. The requirement for full-time, in-person learning for elementary schools applies to all grades K-5 within a district or school. However, if districts or schools have one or more school building configurations of K-4, they may request a waiver from DESE to delay the implementation of full-time, in-person learning for grade 5 until the middle school implementation timeline begins.

Districts that have school building configurations of grades K-6, K-7, or K-8 may similarly opt to accelerate their implementation of full-time, in-person instruction in grades 6, 7, and 8, or they may choose to begin with K-5 and keep upper grades learning in hybrid or remote models.

Pre-kindergarten grades are not required to meet these new standards, though districts are encouraged to plan for a return to in-person learning for pre-kindergarten as soon as possible.

Definition of full-time in-person learning. The requirement for "full-time" in-person learning means that **all structured learning time hours³¹ (on average 5 hours per day of structured learning time at the elementary level and 5.5 hours per day at the secondary level) are required to be delivered in-person, five days per week.** This will generally mean that students are attending a full school day equivalent to the length of their school day pre-pandemic. Any deviation from offering full-time, in-person instruction five days a week to all students requires a waiver.

Students can still learn remotely and have their hours count towards SLT in two "exception cases." First, as noted above, parents/guardians may choose to have their students learn remotely through the end of this school year, and the learning hours for these students will continue to count towards structured learning time. Second, following DESE COVID-19 health protocols,³² individual students may need to isolate or quarantine and therefore learn remotely if they are symptomatic, diagnosed with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone who tests positive. In these cases, where the district is following the DESE

COVID-19 health protocols and students are learning remotely due to a COVID-19-related issue, learning hours will also continue to count towards structured learning time.

As noted in DESE's Updated Guidance on Interpreting DPH COVID-19 Health Metrics issued in November,³³ schools should remain open at all levels of community prevalence and districts and schools should follow DESE's COVID-19 protocols in effectively managing any COVID-19 cases in schools. There are processes already in place to effectively manage any COVID-19 cases in schools, including contact tracing to isolate any positive individuals and their close contacts and working with the local board of health to determine if it is likely that there is transmission happening in school. Districts and schools must continue to consult with DESE's COVID-19 rapid response help center and the local board of health prior to shutting down a school or district due to suspected in-school transmission.

School committee vote. Because the regulations have the force of law, once the Commissioner makes the determination that hybrid and remote learning will no longer count towards structured learning time, a school committee vote on which learning model to adopt is not necessary because full-time, in-person learning will be the default required model. Remote learning should be provided only if parents/guardians opt out of in-person learning for the remainder of this school year and for students who must remain home due to a COVID-19 related issue. If a district intends to submit a waiver request, DESE encourages the district to hold a school committee vote on the content of the waiver, but this is a local decision. Given the need for rapid implementation, superintendents may submit a waiver request to DESE without having first secured a school committee vote.

Coordination with remote learning enrichment centers and other community providers currently supporting remote learning. Districts and schools should coordinate closely with remote learning enrichment centers and community-based programs that have been providing student support services during the regular school day. Districts should endeavor to notify all such providers at least two weeks prior to the implementation of any planned changes to the school schedule, to ensure parents continue to have access to the wrap-around care they need to return to work.

Districts and schools should work with community-based providers to plan for effective transitions to enable the continuity of services for children whose parents opt to keep them in a remote learning environment through the remainder of the school year. Districts and schools are encouraged continue to build partnerships with community providers to enable sufficient access to critical wrap-around services, complement and strengthen expanded summer learning opportunities, and maintain capacity for on-going early education and out-of-school-time needs for families across the district. Districts may also seek feedback from these programs, with parental consent, on student needs and developmental challenges.

Implementation Planning³⁴

Student Supports

When these new requirements go into effect in early April, some schools and districts will be returning students to in-person learning for the first time this school year. In such instances, students and families may require additional supports to successfully make this transition, particularly for students with disabilities, students who experience anxiety and mental health issues, and other vulnerable populations. DESE recommends that schools and districts take additional steps to prepare such students and families so they can take full advantage of the opportunities for learning and socialization that in-person instruction will create, including:

- **Family engagement is a critical component of school reopening.** It is essential to reach out to parents/guardians and promote ongoing engagement in a manner that works for the family. DESE strongly recommends that schools and districts continue to cultivate excellent two-way communication with families. All written and oral communication must be provided in the primary language of the home and in language that is understandable to the general public.
- **Parental input is always valuable but is particularly critical during this time when parents/guardians may have unique insight into their child's remote learning experience.** Input from parents/guardians on their child's primary areas of need, including their child's engagement, attention, behavior, progress, skills, home experiences, and other observations about their emotional and social well-being, are critical to determining how to meet students' needs.
- **Schools and districts should partner with parents/guardians to support a smooth transition to re-opening of school,** with physical distancing and other health and safety protocols as well as new schedules. It is particularly important that educators work closely with parents/guardians of students who experience difficulty with changes in routine (for example, students with autism or students who experience anxiety). Schools and districts should consider strategies such as creating individualized social stories³⁵, recording tours of new buildings or programs, conducting virtual tours, holding a "meet and greet" for teachers with their students, or providing opportunities for students to ride new bus routes and visit new school buildings in person before the resumption of in-person learning.
- **Schools and districts should continue to create safe and supportive learning environments that encourage positive behavior.** Schools should proactively implement direct instruction and additional supports for school- and class-wide routines, social skills instruction, and other preventive measures. Schools and districts should utilize disciplinary action as a last resort for students exhibiting behavioral challenges.
- **Additional de-escalation training and/or training on trauma-sensitive practices for all staff including school resource officers may be needed** to support the transition back to full-time in-person learning modified for health and safety needs, and the potential of increased behavioral concerns.
- **IEP teams must ensure that a free appropriate public education is provided to all students with disabilities.** Whether the primary instructional delivery is in-person learning or remote learning, students with disabilities must receive all services in accordance with their IEP.

Facilities and Operations

As noted, DESE's initial fall reopening guidance³⁶ explicitly endorsed a full return to classrooms following health and safety protocols, including three feet of distance between students in classrooms when masks are worn and other mitigation strategies are in place. **We encourage districts to revisit this guidance as they plan for a full-time return this spring. DESE's facilities and operations guidance³⁷ will also serve as a helpful resource for building configuration and space planning work.**

As a reminder, we recently issued **updated transportation guidance³⁸ that significantly expanded bus capacity.**

In addition, **we are updating our face mask guidance to require masks at all grade levels, unless students receive a medical or behavioral exemption.³⁹** Previously, masks were strongly encouraged in grades 1 and below, but not required. **This requirement is effective immediately and other DESE guidance documents will be revised accordingly in the coming days.**

We recognize that, at this point, the critical constraint most districts are facing in bringing more students back for in-person instruction is physical distancing. Below are some important points to keep in mind regarding physical distancing and space configuration. In consultation with state health officials and medical experts, DESE will provide periodic updates to these guidelines.

In general, districts and schools should review a wide range of options for serving all students full-time, in-person with physical distancing constraints:

- Classroom capacity should be assessed first, followed by other spaces in the school that could be repurposed at different times of the day, including the cafeteria, gym, art and music rooms, and other spaces. Classroom configurations including layout and furniture may need to be altered to accommodate all students.
- Some teachers, including specialist teachers, may be able to utilize carts and deliver lessons in students' homerooms, thereby freeing up additional classroom space and allowing students to remain in cohorts. In some cases, shifts in teacher assignments may also be required.
- Use of outdoor spaces at the school should be maximized, including putting up tents so these spaces can be used in rainy weather.
- If indoor and outdoor spaces at the school-level are insufficient, districts should look at other spaces not otherwise used by students within the district, if available, and then consider spaces within the broader community. For instance, individual grade levels within a school could be moved to local community spaces, including non-profits, businesses, or other spaces, to expand the physical footprint of classroom space.

Classroom set-up and required physical distancing:

- **As a reminder, our guidance is to set up classrooms with desks at least three feet apart, with students facing the same direction.** The three feet distance is measured "seat edge to seat edge" front to back and side to side.
 - Having students face the same direction should be the default desk set-up in the classroom.
 - However, for short periods of time (e.g. 15-20 minutes several times per day), students may face each other for a "turn and talk" or other group activity. During these short periods, students should refrain from singing or engaging in activities that involve increased respiration. Appropriate mask use should be verified before these short periods.
- **Please see DESE's facilities and operations guidance⁴⁰ for further suggestions on classroom set-up and maximizing space for students.**
- **In elementary schools, if the typical classroom configuration is tables with students facing one another**, consider the following strategies to fit students at three feet apart in classrooms:
 - Replace tables with individual desks, if feasible.
 - Reduce the number of students at each table and relocate additional students to another area of the classroom, if feasible. For example, for tables that typically seat four students, one pair of students sits together at the table in the morning and then shifts to the rug for the afternoon, while another pair of students starts on the rug and shifts to the table in the afternoon.
 - Have all students at the table face in one direction, at least three feet apart, with the students facing away from the table using clipboards or lap desks. Again, the pair using clipboards or lap desks could switch with the other pair at the table halfway through the day.

Meal set-up and required physical distancing:

- **During meals, and any other time students and adults are not wearing masks, districts and schools must plan for a strict six feet of physical distance between individuals.**
- **Consider the following strategies to increase physical space for meals:**
 - Add additional meal periods to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria during each session. (This may include shortening lunch periods.)
 - Have students eat meals in the classroom. (If classroom space is set up with three feet of distance between seats, have the other half of the class eat in another area.)
 - Alternate students between recess and lunch to reduce classroom or cafeteria capacity during meals (e.g., half the students eat lunch while the other half attend recess).
 - Repurpose other space as meal areas including gyms, art rooms, or music rooms (depending on the scheduling of specials, this may require teachers to utilize carts for part of the day).
 - Set up eating areas outside, including in tents. This could expand cafeteria capacity or could provide an alternative space for students eating meals in classrooms (e.g., half the students stay in their classroom; the other half eat in the tents).
 - Replace café tables with desks in the cafeteria to increase capacity at six feet of distancing.
- **Consider the following strategies for increasing staffing to cover meal periods:**
 - To provide sufficient staff to monitor students during meals, repurpose paraprofessionals, other support staff, school administrators, or hire lunch monitors (bus company monitors or crossing guards may be available, high school student interns, parent volunteers, etc.).
 - To have teachers supervise meals in classroom, schedule teachers' duty-free lunch at the end of the day and allow for a 30-minute early release.
- **Please see DESE's facilities and operations guidance⁴¹ for further suggestions on lunchroom set-up. DESE will continue to collaborate with school and district leaders to collect and share effective strategies for lunchroom set-up.**

Physical distancing at other times of the day:

- **At all other times (passing time, transitions, etc.), students should maintain physical distance from one another as feasible, and follow the guidelines below.** More information can be found in DESE's facilities and operations guidance:⁴²
 - Ensure that students keep their masks on properly.
 - Ensure that students do not congregate in the hallways or other spaces. During transition periods, we encourage all teachers and staff to monitor students (e.g., from doorways) to keep students moving.
 - Schools should continue to stagger transitions as feasible and students should not use lockers (or locker use should be staggered) to prevent congregation.
 - Schools should continue not to host visitors to the extent possible.
 - Use signage and other markers to remind students and staff to follow proper health and safety protocols, to indicate direction of travel and to encourage physical distancing.
 - To account for increased volume of students during passing time, schools may consider increasing installations of hand sanitizer, while ensuring hand sanitizer use is appropriately monitored with younger students.

- Allow students to use the bathroom during class time to reduce bathroom use during transition times, and otherwise using a bathroom sign-out system to reduce the number of students in the bathroom at one time.

Teacher and staff spaces and protocols:

- **In many studies, adult-to-adult transmission has been more common than transmission between adults and students in schools.^{43,44,45,46} While teachers and other adults should always remain vigilant implementing the health and safety mitigation strategies, they should be especially careful not to relax their mitigation measures during duty-free periods or other times students may not be present (e.g., preparation periods, common planning time, professional development, etc.).** Consider the following strategies for these circumstances:
 - Ensure strict use of masks when adults are present together.
 - Reconfigure staff furniture to support physical distancing.
 - Consider adjusting staff schedules or creating adult occupancy thresholds to limit the number of adults in a room at one time.
 - Encourage the use of virtual staff meetings where feasible, as opposed to gathering in-person. For in-person staff meetings or gatherings, do not provide food which can lead to the removal of masks.
 - During duty-free lunch periods, encourage staff to eat outside or individually in their classrooms.
- **Teachers and staff should maintain six feet of distance from students and other staff when feasible. For short periods of time (e.g., helping a student individually, walking between desks, etc.), teachers and other staff may be less than six feet away from others.**

We recognize that planning for these configurations and protocols is not simple and that building configuration vary. At the same time, many communities have already returned to full-time in-person learning at the elementary level, demonstrating that it is possible.

DESE's COVID-19 help center is available to serve as a thought partner to any district or school that is challenged by space constraints. Contact SLTsupport@mass.gov to request this support.

Waiver Process

The recent student learning time amendments include that upon the written request of a school or district leader, the **Commissioner may, in his discretion, grant a waiver for a limited set of circumstances in which districts make a compelling case that they must take an incremental approach to implementation of these requirements**. Any deviation from offering full-time, in-person instruction five days a week to all students requires a waiver request.

Examples of possible waiver requests (where districts and schools must make a compelling case that they must take an incremental approach to implementation):

1. Schools and districts that have been primarily in a fully remote model all year can submit a waiver if they need additional time to return all students to full-time, in-person instruction (for instance seeking first to return in a hybrid model, before proceeding to full in-person instruction later in this school year). **Districts must include a timeline and date in which all students within a phase would have access to full-time, in-person instruction this school year.**

2. Schools that operate with a grades K-4 configuration, with grade 5 in another school building, can submit a waiver to delay implementation of full-time, in-person learning for grade 5 at those buildings until the middle school phase begins.
3. In very limited circumstances, waivers may be considered for operational constraints and feasibility issues, on a temporary basis. Schools and districts considering submitting a waiver for issues related to facilities and space constraints should review the “Implementation Planning” section of this document as well as DESE’s facilities and operations guidance. If districts and schools are still in need of support, please email SLTsupport@mass.gov. We will set up consultations, including onsite, with districts to assess how they can implement these requirements. **These consultations with DESE will be required before the Commissioner will approve any waivers in this area.**

Waivers will not be granted for districts that indicate they cannot return to in-person learning due to space constraints or feasibility issues but are maintaining a physical distancing standard in classrooms of greater than three feet. Districts must also have completed an **updated survey of families** with the information about those students have elected to return to in-person instruction and those who have elected to learn remotely.

In addition, in those limited circumstances where a is granted a waiver, the **waiver will be time limited. All districts and school should expect that they will need to change their models to move closer to full-time, in-person learning five days per week.**

Finally, if districts can bring some – but not all – of their schools back to full in-person learning within a given phase (e.g. four out of six elementary schools), they should proceed with a full return for those schools and submit a waiver to continue working on plans for the others.

4. Other requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

As noted in earlier sections of this document, schools have been open for in-person learning safely, even in communities with high prevalence, with adherence to required COVID-19 mitigation strategies. In addition, COVID-19 case rates across the Commonwealth have decreased significantly since January 2021, with the vast majority of communities now in yellow, green, or gray. **As such, for the elementary phase of this plan, we do not anticipate granting waivers for reasons of high community prevalence of COVID-19.** We will work closely with health officials and local communities to monitor the case rates in schools following the implementation of the elementary school phase as we plan for subsequent phases.

Waiver duration: Waivers will be approved for a limited time only. All requests for waivers must include a timeline in which all students within a phase would have access to full-time, in-person instruction this school year (i.e., identify the week full-time, in-person instruction would begin).

Any request for a waiver should be addressed from the district or school leader (e.g., superintendent or executive director) to the Commissioner and submitted by email to SLTsupport@mass.gov.

In order for districts and schools to receive a timely response prior to the respective elementary and middle school implementation dates:

- Elementary school waiver requests must be submitted to DESE by Monday, March 22, 2021 at 5pm, and
- Middle school waiver requests must be submitted to DESE by Monday, April 12, 2021 at 5pm.

Districts may also submit waivers for the elementary and middle school phases together, by the elementary school deadline. The Department will respond to waiver requests on a rolling basis, and we encourage districts to submit as soon as possible. **Districts and schools will receive a response within five business days of submitting a waiver request.**

The request must include the following information:

- Identification of the district or school(s) requesting the waiver;
- Description of the specific requested waiver, including the physical distancing standard used in the district, the results of the family survey regarding the number of students who would be returning in-person vs. learning remotely, and the timeline in which all students within a phase would have access to in-person, full-time instruction this school year;
- Rationale for the request, including a full description of the circumstances justifying the request;
- Point of contact and phone number.

Looking Ahead

Returning all students to the classroom full-time this school year is a crucial step to stem student learning loss. At the same time, we must also focus on recovery and acceleration, especially for students most in need of intensive support. Plans for recovery and acceleration must initially focus on near-term efforts in 2021, including enhanced student supports this spring, opportunities for summer learning, and planning for a strong start to the fall. However, given pervasive student needs and the availability of significant financial resources across several fiscal years, we must ultimately craft a plan for multi-year recovery efforts.

Later this spring, we will release further information related to summer recovery and acceleration and fall planning. DESE intends to provide the following resources and supports, among others:

- **Spring:** DESE will provide student supports this spring in key areas, including increased mental health supports, FAFSA completion, and support for seniors who did not meet the Competency Determination.
- **Summer:** DESE will stand up robust summer school programming and academic interventions, which will include a state-wide acceleration academy program with a focus on “gateway grades.” DESE will select key grades and focus areas (e.g. early literacy, middle grades math), and work with districts to provide a multi-year opportunity for students to attend an academy program this summer. In addition, DESE will support districts in identifying high-quality programs to serve students in other grades. For planning purposes, DESE recommends that summer programs, including extended school year programs, be provided in-person for all student groups.
- **Fall:** DESE anticipates a full in-person return across all grade levels. We will work with districts and schools to ensure a focus on teaching grade level content, with appropriate scaffolds for all learners. We will also support districts in meeting the needs of the whole child, including mental and physical health, in addition to accelerated instruction and extra help in core academic subjects. More guidance on fall planning will be forthcoming.
 - As we stated last spring heading into the 2020-21 school year, DESE discourages retaining students at the prior grade level. This includes students of first grade age whose parents/guardians may have kept them home from kindergarten this year; these students

should be placed in the first grade in the fall, even if they chose to remain unenrolled for kindergarten.

In addition, we remain committed to the Commissioner's *Our Way Forward* plan, which will support our post-COVID-19 instructional focus and strengthen teaching and learning statewide. This includes promoting deeper learning through engaging and relevant performance tasks and revamping student assessment through our innovative science assessment pilot program.

We have much work ahead to support the return to full-time, in-person school for all students and begin the process of recovery and acceleration. We commend your efforts and look forward to partnering with district and school leaders, school committees, educators and school staff, families, and other stakeholders on behalf of students.

¹ "District" shall mean a municipal school department or regional school district, acting through its school committee or superintendent of schools, a county agricultural school, acting through its board of trustees or superintendent/director, any other public school established by statute or charter, acting through its governing board or director. 603 CMR 27.02.

² DESE's Fall Reopening Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0625fall-reopening.docx> (download)

³ The Memorandum of Understanding between DESE, MTA, AFT-MA, and BTU is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0727mou.docx> (download)

⁴ Zimmerman KO, Akinboyo IC, Brookhart A, et al. (2021). Incidence and secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 infections in schools. *Pediatrics*. Available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2021/01/06/peds.2020-048090.full.pdf>

⁵ Fricchione, M. J., Seo, J. Y., Arwady, M. A. (2020). Data-Driven Reopening of Urban Public Education Through Chicago's Tracking COVID-19 School Transmission. Available at https://journals.lww.com/jphmp/Abstract/9000/Data_Driven_Reopening_of_Urban_Public_Education.99206.aspx

⁶ Falk, A., Benda, A., Falk, P., Steffen, S., Wallace, Z., Hoeg, TB. (2020). COVID-19 Cases and Transmission in 17 K-12 Schools. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7004e3>

⁷ Gillespie, D., Meyers, L., Lachmann, M., Redd, S., Zenilman, J. (2021). The Experience of Two Independent Schools with In-Person Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic. [Preprint]. Available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.01.26.21250065v1.full.pdf>

⁸ Schoeps, A., Hoffmann, A., Tamm, C., Vollmer, B., Haag, S., Kaffenberger, T., Ferguson-Beiser, K., Kohlhasse-Griebel, B., Basenach, S., Missal, A., Hofling, K., Michels, H., Schall, A., Kappes, H., Vogt, M., Jahn, K., Barnighausen, T., Zanger, P. (2021). COVID-19 Transmission in Educational Institutions August to December 2020, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany: A Study of Index Cases and Close Contact Cohorts. [Preprint]. Available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.04.21250670v1.article-info>

⁹ National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). (2020). COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education Care Services. Available at https://www.ncirs.org.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/COVID-19%20Transmission%20in%20educational%20settings%20in%20NSW%20Term%203%20report_0.pdf

¹⁰ World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19. Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/considerations-for-school-related-public-health-measures-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

¹¹ American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry. Available at <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools>

¹² Booth, W. (2020). Two Meters? One Meter Plus? Social Distancing Rules Prompt Fierce Debate in U.K. *The Washington Post*. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/covid-social-distancing-one-meter-plus/2020/06/22/7614418a-afe0-11ea-98b5-279a6479a1e4_story.html

¹³ Ismail, S., Saliba, V., Bernal, J. L., Ramsay, M., & Ladhani, S. (2020). SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission in educational settings: cross-sectional analysis of clusters and outbreaks in England. *Public Health England. The Lancet*. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30882-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30882-3/fulltext)

- ¹⁴ Link-Gelles, R., DellaGrotta, A., Molina, C., Clyne, A., & Brandy, U. (2020). Limited Secondary Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Child Care Programs – Rhode Island, June 1 – July 31, 2020. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6934e2.htm>
- ¹⁵ Brooks, J.T., Butler, J.C., (2021). Effectiveness of Mask Wearing to Control Community Spread of SARS-CoV-2. JAMA Insights. Available at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2776536>
- ¹⁶ Larosa, E., Djuric, O., Cassinardri, M., Cilloni, S., Bisaccia, E., Vincente, M., Venturelli, F., Giorgi P. R., Pezzotti, P., Bedeschi, E., the Reggio Emilia COVID-19 Working Group. (2020). Secondary Transmission of COVID-19 in Preschool and School Settings in Northern Italy After Their Reopening in September 2020. Available at <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.49.2001911>
- ¹⁷ Falk, A., Benda, A., Falk, P., Steffen, S., Wallace, Z., Hoeg, TB. (2020). COVID-19 Cases and Transmission in 17 K-12 Schools. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7004e3>
- ¹⁸ Schoeps, A., Hoffmann, A., Tamm, C., Vollmer, B., Haag, S., Kaffenberger, T., Ferguson-Beiser, K., Kohlhasse-Griebel, B., Basenach, S., Missal, A., Hofling, K., Michels, H., Schall, A., Kappes, H., Vogt, M., Jahn, K., Barnighausen, T., Zanger, P. (2021). COVID-19 Transmission in Educational Institutions August to December 2020, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany: A Study of Index Cases and Close Contact Cohorts. Available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.04.21250670v1.article-info>
- ¹⁹ Chu, D.K., Akl, E.A., Duda S., Solo K., Yaacoub S., Schunemann H.J. et al. (2020) Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)
- ²⁰ Brown School of Public Health, Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, & New America. (2020). Strategies for Pandemic Resilience in the Face of High Community Spread. Available at <https://globalepidemics.org/2020/12/18/schools-and-the-path-to-zero-strategies-for-pandemic-resilience-in-the-face-of-high-community-spread/>
- ²¹ The Public Schools of Brookline. (2021). Evidence of Scientific Consensus In Support of Reduction of 6-Foot Distancing Parameters. Available at https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907509/Centricity/Domain/25/Evidence%20of%20Scientific%20Consensus_Reduction%20of%20Distancing%20Parameters_2.18.21.pdf
- ²² February 28, 2021 physician letter. Available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2021/2021-03/item1b.2-2021-0228physician-letter.pdf>
- ²³ Study forthcoming. Polly van den Berg, MD; Elissa M. Schechter-Perkins, MD, MPH; Rebecca S. Jack, MPP; Isabella Epshtein, MPP; Richard Nelson, PhD; Emily Oster, PhD; Westyn Branch-Elliman, MD, MMSc., (2021). SARS-CoV-2 Cases in Students and Staff in Massachusetts with Variable Distancing Policies. Infection control plans for Commonwealth school districts with any in person learning were collected, with universal masking for students in grade 3 and higher and universal masking for staff mandatory. 243 districts were included, comprising 520,129 students and 6,227,765 student learning weeks, and 97,679 staff and 1,313,532 staff learning weeks. SARS-CoV-2 cases in students and staff in districts with in-person learning with different distancing policies were compared.
- ²⁴ COVID-19 Response Reporting is available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>
- ²⁵ See footnotes 12-19.
- ²⁶ Centers for Disease Control. Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation (2021). Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>
- ²⁷ More information about the emergency license provision for educators is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/licensure/emergency-license-extended.html>
- ²⁸ Commissioner’s Weekly Update, February 22, 2021. Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/commissioners-weekly-update-2-22-21-board-to-meet-gsa-student-leadership-council-info-session-on-expanding-stem-ap-access?e=583fc2bc03>
- ²⁹ More information about the high school internship program is available at: http://www.massconnecting.org/default.asp?entity_id=516
- ³⁰ The Remote Learning guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/return-to-school/2020-0724remote-learning-guide.docx> (download)
- ³¹ At the meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on June 30, 2020, the Board adopted amendments to the [Student Learning Time regulations, 603 CMR 27.00](#), on an emergency basis. The Commissioner reduced the 180 day and student learning time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year to 170 days and 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools). The summary of the amendments is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2020/2020-06/item1b.docx> (download)
- ³² The DESE COVID-19 health protocols is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>.
- ³³ Updated Guidance on Interpreting DPH COVID-19 Health Metrics is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/interpreting-dph-metrics.html>

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- ³⁴ The documents referenced in this section specifically and throughout the document (e.g., fall reopening guidance, facilities and operations guidance, updated transportation guidance, etc.) can be found on the COVID-19/On the Desktop section of the DESE website: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html>
- ³⁵ Information on social stories is available at: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>
- ³⁶ DESE's Fall Reopening Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0625fall-reopening.docx> (download)
- ³⁷ DESE's Facilities and Operations Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722facilities-operations-guide.docx> (download)
- ³⁸ DESE's updated Transportation Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722transport-guide.docx> (download)
- ³⁹ Additional information for school health offices is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-for-school-health-offices/download>
- ⁴⁰ DESE's Facilities and Operations Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722facilities-operations-guide.docx> (download)
- ⁴¹ DESE's Facilities and Operations Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722facilities-operations-guide.docx> (download)
- ⁴² DESE's Facilities and Operations Guidance is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722facilities-operations-guide.docx> (download)
- ⁴³ Schoeps, A., Hoffmann, A., Tamm, C., Vollmer, B., Haag, S., Kaffenberger, T., Ferguson-Beiser, K., Kohlhasse-Griebel, B., Basenach, S., Missal, A., Hofling, K., Michels, H., Schall, A., Kappes, H., Vogt, M., Jahn, K., Barnighausen, T., Zanger, P. (2021). COVID-19 Transmission in Educational Institutions August to December 2020, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany: A Study of Index Cases and Close Contact Cohorts. Available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.04.21250670v1.article-info>
- ⁴⁴ Gillespie, D., Meyers, L., Lachmann, M., Redd, S., Zenilman, J. (2021). The Experience of Two Independent Schools with In-Person Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Available at <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.01.26.21250065v1.full.pdf>
- ⁴⁵ Zimmerman KO, Akinboyo IC, Brookhart A, et al. (2021). Incidence and secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 infections in schools. Pediatrics. Available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2021/01/06/peds.2020-048090.full.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ Ismail, S., Saliba, V., Bernal, J. L., Ramsay, M., & Ladhani, S. (2020). SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission in educational settings: cross-sectional analysis of clusters and outbreaks in England. Public Health England. The Lancet. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30882-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30882-3/fulltext)

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING Draft Minutes

Virtual Public Meeting

February 8, 2021

To attend: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

7:00 p.m.

To preregister for Public Comment (required):

https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3_oKJYv2QPqXDc1hPnloBQ

(pre-registration must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting, see memo)

Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Amy Krishnamurthy (7:10 pm), Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang
Members Absent: Ginny Kremer, Nora Shine
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. Call to Order (7:00)

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

She noted that the meeting was being conducted remotely via a Zoom webinar with the following members in attendance via zoom: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, John Petersen, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang and herself. Ginny Kremer and Nora Shine were absent. Amy Krishnamurthy would arrive shortly. Per Remote Participation policy, BEDJA, all votes were done by roll call. The Chair stated that the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

In an ongoing effort to make meeting as secure as possible, members of the public were asked to view the meeting using acton tv's youtube channel (found at the top of the agenda). Those who wished to comment during the meeting, were asked to register 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting using the link also found at the top of the agenda.

a. Chairperson's Welcome - Tessa McKinley

i. Review of Suspension of Public Participation Policy BEDH

Because members voted to suspend this policy at the previous meeting, they were required to review it. There was consensus that the suspension continue.

NEW: Revised Public Participation process for this meeting (memo)

b. ABRHS Student Rep Update – next meeting

c. Public Participation -

Although 3 members of the public had registered, no one chose to speak.

Because 3 emails were received from the public via the process used at the previous meeting for participation, Adam read each comment for up to 3 minutes.

d. **Superintendent's Update – Peter Light**

i. **ABRHS Principal Finalists Memo**

Three finalists for the Principal position were announced and hopefully a decision will be made by the end of the week. Special Education Director interviews are being planned. The search had been extended. Mr. Light confirmed that there will be no change to our one ABA PreK class. There will be an impact next year on the other PreK classes whose schedule is consistent with the elementary schools'. He wished all a Happy Lunar New Year!

2. **PRESENTATIONS**

a. **ABRHS Thespian Troupe 5552 (National Honor Society of Theatre)**

Jessica Harms and 3 students: Sabina Li, Ira Mukherjee and Halley Friedman shared the group's work and thanked the Committee for their continued support.

3. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

a. **Consent Agenda - VOTE - Tessa McKinley**

i. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 1/21/21 – **VOTE**

ii. Recommendation to Approve Gift of \$2,063.06 from Lifetouch National School Studios to the RJG Jr High School for student activities - **VOTE**

Amy Krishnamurthy moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call**: to approve the consent agenda with gratitude.

YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Tso, Wang

b. **Superintendent's Recommended FY22 Budget - Peter Light, Dave Verdolino**

i. **FY21 Second Quarter Financial Report** (See *OPEB material in FYI)

Dave reported a projected estimated budget surplus at the end of June 2021 of \$361,886. He noted that the \$500,000 contingency is built into this number and covers the revenue deficit. (See grand total on last page) Some additional FY21 covid relief came in after the materials were done. It will cover the minimum aid (\$160,000) that we did not get. A small amount might come from ESSR2. It is too early in the year to predict some of these numbers with any certainty.

ii. **FY22 Recommended Budget Presentation and Discussion**

1. Budget Subcommittee Update - *Adam Klein*

2. Acton Leadership Group Update -*J. Petersen/A. Krishnamurthy*

3. Boxborough Leadership Forum - *Tessa McKinley*

Mr. Light began by telling the Committee that the Administration is looking for their input on the adjustments made to the proposed budget leading up to their first vote on the Preliminary Budget scheduled for February 11th. The previous proposal included a 3.73% increase from the prior year, a 4.39% increase in the Acton assessment and a 5.97% increase in the Boxborough assessment. The revised budget for discussion includes a 3.17% increase and assessment changes of 3.46% and 5.02%.

Items discussed included: level-service budget, difference between the budget and the assessments, the financial impact of the school budget on the communities, and levers to moderate impact to the Towns (reduce budget vs. increase use of reserves). (slides 41 – 44)

Comments from the Committee included:

- Does the budget include no remote learning and doing pool testing? PL: correct but we know there will be some remote so with so many unknowns, we have to plan to pivot if needed.
- Will the remainder of the FY21-23 ESSER Two grant (\$319K) be applied to the FY23 budget? PL: Yes, but the summer program is still being finalized and the cost of pool testing this year.
- Why are we level funding E&D, just to lower the assessments? In the past it has been very targeted. Reserves policy DK is a target.
- If EDCO's termination will be costly to the District in FY23, we need to plan for it.
- Because a Remote Learning Program (RLP) shouldn't be needed in FY23, we should consider it a one-time expense and appropriate to fund with E&D.
- State and federal funding due to covid is a wild card.
- Acton Leadership Group (ALG) can manage a 3% increase or less in Acton's assessment, but anything more will be very difficult.
- Staffing should not be the first place we look to cut. Because we have funded OPEB so consistently, we should consider funding it less, or the Capital Plan.
- Another member agreed that a long term liability like OPEB could handle a reduction in funding better than a long term unknown risk like EDCO.
- Because we run such a highly efficient top district, it's very difficult to identify places to cut. Teachers should be the last place to consider.
- Our 13% OPEB funding is excellent and a reason for our AAA bond rating and the long term implications. Once you start decreasing funding, it is hard to go back.
- Several members agreed with a 3% increase or below for Acton.
- Due to Acton being at the levy limit, discussion needs to start with the assessments and be sure everyone understands that part.
- Students' social/emotional needs will be huge in the future due to the pandemic. Nothing should be done to hurt that, including educational staff cuts.

Mr. Light concluded that there is much agreement and the Administration will do their best with what they know are the needs and limits.

c. ~~*Pandemic School Planning – Update & Next Steps~~ – *next meeting*

d. **EDCO Collaborative** - *Peter Light*

Note: These two reports are posted with our January 21st meeting materials.

- i. Recommendation to Request that the EDCO Board Initiate Termination Proceedings - **VOTE** - *Peter Light*

For the second consecutive year, the auditor noted substantial doubt that EDCO could continue based on ongoing financial concerns. The Administration recommended a vote for EDCO to initiate termination proceedings. As discussed in executive session at the previous meeting, last year's audit was concerning but most districts agreed to stay with the collaborative. There is no clear path forward at this time however because financial risks are mounting as time goes by. EDCO is meeting on Wednesday and termination proceedings should be considered but member districts need to vote. We currently have one student, a senior, in the program. It was a difficult decision given how many great programs and resources EDCO has offered over the past 50 years, but the situation is not improving. The proposed motions were reviewed by our district's counsel.

John Petersen moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call**: to request that the EDCO Board Initiate Termination Proceedings pursuant to Article IX of the EDCO Articles of Agreement. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Tso, Wang)

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call**: that the District will provide written notice to the EDCO Board of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's intention to withdraw from the EDCO Collaborative effective July 1, 2022 pursuant to Article X of the EDCO Articles of Agreement. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Tso, Wang)

e. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**

- i. **Policy** - *Diane Baum (meeting on 1/27/21)*

- 1. Meal Charge Policy (new), File: EFD - First Read
- 2. Commitment to an Inclusive and Representative District Workforce (new), File: GBAA - First Read

Diane reviewed the two new policies and asked for comments by Friday prior to the next subcommittee meeting. Members were very appreciative of the time and thought that has gone into the Inclusive Workforce proposed policy as it was a year ago that it first was introduced. Marie Altieri and Dawn Bentley were thanked in particular for their efforts. Tessa thanked Diane for her part in moving this important new policy forward. Mr. Light agreed.

- ii. **Capital Improvement Subcommittee** - John Petersen – *next meeting*
- iii. **Health Insurance Trust** - John Petersen - *next meeting*
- iv. **Statement of Warrants & Recommendation to Approve – VOTE**

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call**: See memo

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Tso, Wang)

f. **FYI**

4. **ADJOURN**

At 10:01 p.m. Kyra Cook moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call** to adjourn. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Tso, Wang)

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS (via zoom):

ABRSC: February 11 (Preliminary FY22 Budget VOTE) at 7:00 p.m.
Packet to be posted on Monday, February 8
March 4 (Comprehensive Budget & Program Presentations) at 7:00 p.m.

Next Community Coffee with the Superintendent & ABRSC Chair via zoom:
March 3rd 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

- a. **Thank You to Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories for \$100 gift to enrich math/science student programs at the Jr High**
- b. **FY22 Budget Schedule, voted 11/19/20**
- c. **Acton 2021 Annual Election Calendar**
- d. **Boxborough 2021 Annual Election Calendar & Candidate's Checklist**
- e. **FY21 ABRSC Operating Protocols, voted 1/21/21**
- f. **2021-2022 ABRSD School Calendar, voted 1/21/21**
- g. **CASE Collaborative Support and Resource Pages and Flyer (1/22/21)**
- h. **Suicide Prevention Training** - Click here [QPR Training Flyer](#) for details and to sign up online. Next one: Feb 24 at 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- i. **EDCO Collaborative FY20 Annual Report and Audit Report**
(posted separately with ABRSC meeting materials for January 21, 2021)
- j. [This Month in the Division of Open Government, January 2021](#)
- k. **Invitation from the Boys & Girls Club of Assabet Valley**
- l. **Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Annual Portfolio Review, Presentation of GASB 74/75 Results, Middlesex County Retirement System (MCRS) Actuarial Valuation and Review as of 1/1/20**

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Virtual Public Meeting

To attend: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

February 11, 2021

7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

8:30 p.m. *Executive Session

To preregister for Public Comment (required):

https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Xl4DKB8BQuOts6sCqMaigg

(pre-registration must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting, see memo)

Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah (7:05 p.m.), Diane Baum (9:15 p.m.), Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy (7:04 p.m.), Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang

Members Absent: Diane Baum

Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. Call to Order

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

She noted that the meeting was being conducted remotely via a Zoom webinar with the following 10 members in attendance via zoom: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah (to arrive soon), Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy (to arrive soon), John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang and herself. Diane Baum was expected later. Per Remote Participation policy, BEDJA, all votes were done by roll call. The Chair stated that the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

a. Chairperson's Welcome - Tessa McKinley

- i. Review of Suspension of Public Participation Policy BEDH
- ii. Current Public Participation process for this meeting

In an ongoing effort to make meetings as secure as possible, members of the public were asked to view the meeting using Acton tv's youtube channel (found at the top of the agenda). Those who wished to comment during the meeting, were asked to register 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting using the link also found at the top of the agenda. After confirmation, they would be sent a zoom attendee link to use for the meeting.

Adam Klein noted that the current procedure satisfies the public participation policy (currently suspended) and moved that the policy be reinstated and the procedures be added. John Petersen seconded the motion.

It was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: in support of the motion.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

b. **ABRHS Student Rep Update - Rhik Mazumder**

Rhik shared his thoughts about the advisory that has been added to the hybrid program as part of the State requirement. He felt like it was an interruption to people's schedules and not very helpful. He would prefer an added study period. He also noted how exhausting all the screen time is for students this year.

c. **Public Participation**

Scott Smyers read the remainder of a citizen's email that was shared at the previous meeting but was cut off at 3 minutes. He felt it was important for all to hear the conclusion. Adam Klein read an email from the Social Justice Task Force of Acton Congregational Church voicing appreciation to the Committee. Nora Shine read a statement regarding the mascot decision.

d. **Superintendent's Update – Peter Light**

Mr. Light announced that Joanie Dean will be the next Principal of the High School.

2. **PRESENTATION**

a. **RJGJHS Social Action Club - Sara Karp, Sneha Iyer**

Students Sara Karp and Sneha Iyer presented a statement from the Junior High's Social Action Club denouncing the "hate-filled acts" that occurred at the recent School Committee meetings. The letter was signed by 380 students. (Names were not included on the posted letter due to student privacy.) Kyra Cook and Evelyn Abayaah-Issah were deeply honored by this gesture and thanked the students.

3. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

a. **Consent Agenda - VOTE - Tessa McKinley**

- i. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 2/8/21 – **VOTE** (*next meeting*)
- i. Recommendation to Approve Donations to the Student Assistance Fund - **VOTE** - Peter Light

Adam Klein moved, Kyra Cook seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to approve the donations to the Student Assistance Fund with gratitude. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

This was especially appreciated given the terrible apartment fire that had just occurred in Boxborough.

b. **Pandemic School Planning - Update & Next Steps - Peter Light**

Mr. Light presented Spring 2021 Return to School Considerations, including survey data, in an effort to gather initial feedback around goals and the planning process. He covered: the current vaccine rollout plan, pooled and rapid testing, and the stakeholder perception survey done in February with families, staff and educators. Planning considerations – educational, operational and other (DESE, medical advisories, and families' commitment to the in-person model) were mentioned.

Members discussed the timelines presented: aggressive, moderate, conservative and staggered. Comments included:

- Consider the most aggressive timeline that is appropriate, prioritizing our youngest and special education students.
- There is also concern about getting older students (high school) back in.
- The Remote Learning Program will continue all year unless there is capacity and families want their children to return.
- A moderate timeline may be better. The risk is improving now.
- Is there a plan to keep kids engaged if they are out on quarantine? (This is in progress.)
- The evolving nature of the plans is appreciated, and students should return asap, but we need to be sure the day to day school operations can be managed appropriately with an aggressive timeline. (The shift back to school is coming and the administration knows it will mean more work, as well as another shift when students return again in the fall.)
- It's important to get students off their screens and back in school but it is contingent on a perception of safety. What if many students are positive but asymptomatic and when they return we have many more that need to quarantine?
- A member "honored the urgency" to have children return, but also the teachers' safety. She hoped as many as possible could be vaccinated.
- Attention must be paid to students' mental health and safety when they return. She asked what experts are saying, and specifically about 3 feet of distancing. Mr. Light agreed, but reiterated that they have still had no cases of in-school transmission. It has mainly been within families and some cases with hockey players recently.
- Could we be creative and think about bringing in special education students first? Students in quarantine have had a especially tough time.
- Transportation is a complicated issue in all of these shifts.
- How are changes in sports decided? This involves the MIAA, EEOC and Dept of Public Health. Sports engage kids and Steve Martin and his coaches have done a great job.
- Extracurricular activities are extremely important to older kids' health.

c. **Recommendation to Approve ABRSD Preliminary FY22 Budget - VOTE -**

Peter Light, Dave Verdolino

Mr. Light and Mr. Verdolino presented their recommended budget, including \$48,000 of additional deferred expenses and \$100,000 of additional E&D usage from what was proposed at the meeting on February 8th. Reserve usage would then total \$1,245,000 of E&D, \$200,000 of Transportation Stabilization and \$150,000 of Capital Stabilization for a grand total of \$1,595,000. This would put the increase at 2.90%, Acton assessment increase at 2.97% and the Boxborough assessment increase at 4.64%.

John Petersen reported that the Acton Leadership Group met that morning to review the revenues and expenses of the ABRSD and Town of Acton based on

current budget information. Their objective is to complete the ALG plan prior to the final school budget vote on 18 March. The current ALG spreadsheet shows a gap between revenues and expenses which, after incorporating planned use of reserves, is approximately \$1 million. In the current spreadsheet the Acton school assessment increases by 3.21% (including new debt).

The gap between revenues and expenses must be closed either by reducing expenses or by increasing reserve use. ALG consensus is that there will be no operational override in FY22. There remains considerable uncertainty about the level of federal revenue that will flow to Town and School in FY21 and FY22. If additional federal funding occurs, this will improve FY21 financials and/or FY22 projections or both.

Comments included:

- Reductions are appreciated but there is concern about expanding the use of E&D without knowing how it can be replenished in the future. It was agreed that this should not become a habit.
- Reducing the budget by using reserves sets up the same problem the next year, but worse. FY23 will be challenging.
- It would take a cut of approximately \$700,000 to get Boxborough's assessment below 4%. Small adjustments would even be good.
- Acton Fincom member Christine Russell stated that she felt good about this budget process.

Adam Klein moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: That the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District regular operating budget for the fiscal year of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 be preliminarily set at **\$99,719,222**, (an increase of 2.90%) and that budget would be funded by member towns to be preliminarily assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Regional Agreement and amendments thereto as follows:

Acton \$67,534,818 (an increase of 2.97%) and

Boxborough \$12,685,190 (an increase of 4.64%);

Offset by use of E&D Reserve in the amount of **\$1,245,000**;

With the remainder accounted for by other sources of revenues to be detailed in the final budget vote.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

d. **EDCO Collaborative Update - Peter Light**

- i. Recommendation to Terminate EDCO Collaborative as of June 30, 2022
- **VOTE** - Peter Light

At the meeting on February 8th, the School Committee voted to request that the EDCO Board initiate termination proceedings to limit financial liability to the District. The EDCO Board met on February 10th and voted unanimously to initiate the proceedings. Each member district must now vote to terminate the

Collaborative as of June 30, 2022. A majority of member districts must vote in favor of termination in order to proceed.

Adam Klein moved, Kyra Cook seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to terminate the EDCO Collaborative as of June 30, 2022. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

e. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**

John Petersen reported that at their recent meeting, the Health Insurance Trust voted to increase rates 7% for next year, which was higher than expected. He also reported that the Capital Subcommittee affirmed the FY22 budget numbers that have been used, although there are concerns about out years, particularly with respect to the Capital Stabilization fund.

f. **FYI**

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** (*Note: Diane Baum arrived at the executive session.*)

At 9:15 p.m., Tessa stated the need for an executive session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. She stated that the Committee would not return to Open Session.

Adam Klein made the motion. Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously **VOTED by roll call** to enter the executive session. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS (via zoom):

ABRSC: March 4 (Comprehensive FY22 Budget & Program Presentations) at 7:00 p.m.
March 18 (Open FY22 Budget Hearing) at 7:00 p.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

- a. **FY22 Budget Schedule**, voted 11/19/20
- b. **FY21 School Committee Meeting Schedule**
- c. **Acton 2021 Annual Election Calendar**
- d. **Boxborough 2021 Annual Election Calendar & Candidate's Checklist**
- e. **Suicide Prevention Training** - Click here [QPR Training Flyer](#) for details and to sign up online. Next one: Feb 24 at 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Gates Elementary School

75 Spruce Street, Acton, MA 01720

978-266-2570 gates.abschools.org

Date: February 23, 2021

To: Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee
Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools

From: Lynne Newman, Principal of Paul P. Gates Elementary School

RE: Gift from O'Connor Studios

Dear Peter,

We would like the School Committee to accept a gift of \$865.49 from our school photographer - O'Connor Studios. This gift is given to support student activities.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Lynne Newman

/Enclosure

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Feb. 26, 2021

Contact: Jordan Mayblum

Phone: 617-993-0003

Email: jordan@jgpr.net

Statement of EDCO Interim Executive Director Cyndy Taymore

BEDFORD -- EDCO Collaborative Interim Executive Director Cyndy Taymore wishes to provide the following statement regarding the status of the organization:

"The EDCO Collaborative has informed its 16 member districts that it has voted to dissolve the Collaborative by mid-2022 due to insurmountable financial barriers. The board voted to initiate dissolution on Feb. 10.

"For 50 years EDCO has served primarily as a professional development organization, offering a wide range of professional learning opportunities for educators in its member districts. These include networking and collaboration opportunities, diverse courses covering such topics as multicultural education, the inclusion of students with disabilities, ways to address the academic achievement gap, engaging students through remote education and much more.

"EDCO also provides special education and alternative education programs for students with disabilities and at-risk youth, and services paid for through a variety of state and federally funded programs.

"The move toward dissolution is the result of myriad complex factors, including increasingly challenging financial conditions brought on by the growing costs of maintaining our operations, as well as decreased enrollment in professional development and academic programming.

"Steps have been taken to reduce costs, such as running at reduced staffing levels, but this has simply not been enough. The COVID-19 pandemic, while by no means the catalyst for EDCO's financial hardship, has created additional challenges that ultimately

cannot be overcome.

"Upon the dissolution of EDCO, districts have been informed, as per the governing documents of the organization, that any outstanding debts will pass proportionally to each member district, as well as former member districts. There are a number of issues that must first be fully understood and resolved before the final cost of dissolving the collaborative can be determined.

"We are committed to transparency in keeping all of our stakeholders, including districts and the communities they serve, informed as we navigate this process. Between now and March 30, as required by the collaborative's bylaws, member districts' school committees will vote on the proposed dissolution."

###

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FY21 Projected Operating Cost Deficit
(\$1,105,783)

**Assessment Costs for Each Member District to Clear Projected FY21
Remaining Deficit**

<u>Member District</u>	<u>FY21 Assessment Rate</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Acton-Boxborough	7.50%	\$82,933.73
Arlington	7.85%	\$86,803.97
Bedford	5.74%	\$63,471.94
Belmont	6.91%	\$76,409.61
Brookline	8.98%	\$99,299.31
Carlisle	3.31%	\$36,601.42
Concord	4.24%	\$46,885.20
Concord-Carlisle	3.79%	\$41,909.18
Lexington	8.72%	\$96,424.28
Lincoln	3.36%	\$37,154.31
Lincoln-Sudbury	3.96%	\$43,789.01
Newton	12.28%	\$135,790.15
Sudbury	4.65%	\$51,418.91
Waltham	7.64%	\$84,481.82
Watertown	5.70%	\$63,029.63
Weston	5.37%	\$59,380.55

The above assessments are only estimates and are subject to change. EDCO Collaborative may need to revise the estimates depending on the responsibility and contribution of prior member districts for the EDCO Collaborative's liabilities and depending on other circumstances that arise or of which EDCO Collaborative learns of after creation of the estimate.

EDCO ESTIMATED FY22 Closing Costs			
<p><i>Note: All costs are estimated at this time</i></p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <p>All operations are discontinued</p>			
Tasks	Notes	Range of Potential Costs	
Financials - Business Management Costs Post Closing	Costs of management of EDCO financials (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022). Business Office Management by TMS Assumes all financial management completed by June 30, 2022. If FY22 audit required additional costs will need to be applied	\$96,000.00	\$96,000.00
Staff Payroll Costs	Executive Director and staff to close out operations in FY22	\$399,301.00	\$268,333.00
Health Insurance	Retirees and staff	\$260,000.00	\$183,000.00
Non-Employee Insurance	D&O Policy Claims Made Policy - One year coverage for extensions on the Claims Made policy to cover Employment Practices Liability Coverage (FY22 and after Close)	\$91,550.00	\$42,000.00
Facility Costs	Utilities and Services	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
HR Access - Harpers Payroll	Fee for access to payroll system for FY22 and up to one year after closing date. After a year any payroll reports or documentation would have to be requested from Harpers Payroll	\$2,500.00	\$1,500.00
Financial tools - Infinite Visions	Fee for access to accounting system for FY22 and one year after closing date.	\$32,000.00	\$10,000.00
Retiree Health Insurance	OPEB Obligation -	\$1,100,000.00	\$0.00
Employee Vacation Payout	Upon termination of active employee contracts, vacation time will need to be paid out	\$232,588.05	\$232,588.05
Audit	FY21 and FY22 Audits	\$70,000.00	\$20,000.00
Legal Fees	Estimated Legal Fees, FY22 / Retainer fee to handle inquiries and/or issues post closing	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00
Website Costs	Cost to have EDCO website hosting and domain name renewed for 10 years	\$750.00	\$750.00
Moving and Disposal Costs for all EDCO sites	Cost to move and/or dispose of all EDCO assets as directed by EDCO Board	\$50,000.00	\$25,000.00
Line of Credit	Repayment of Rockland Trust Line of Credit	\$485,000.00	\$485,000.00
Cost of termination of lease	Cost of breaking lease at 36 Middlesex Turnpike (payout fy22 to end of lease...6/30/2029) + cost to return (return to usage)	\$4,798,338.00	\$0.00
Property Taxes	Property Taxes - approx 29,000 per quarter	\$928,000.00	\$0.00
ESTIMATED TOTAL		\$8,566,027.05	\$1,369,171.05
Assessment Costs for Each member District to Clear FY22 Closing Costs			
	<u>FY21 Assessment Rates</u>	<u>Range of Potential Assessment</u>	
Acton-Boxborough	7.50%	\$642,452.03	\$102,687.83
Arlington	7.85%	\$672,433.12	\$107,479.93
Bedford	5.74%	\$491,689.95	\$78,590.42
Belmont	6.91%	\$591,912.47	\$94,609.72
Brookline	8.98%	\$769,229.23	\$122,951.56
Carlisle	3.31%	\$283,535.50	\$45,319.56
Concord	4.24%	\$363,199.55	\$58,052.85
Concord-Carlisle	3.79%	\$324,652.43	\$51,891.58
Lexington	8.72%	\$746,957.56	\$119,391.72
Lincoln	3.36%	\$287,818.51	\$46,004.15
Lincoln-Sudbury	3.96%	\$339,214.67	\$54,219.17
Newton	12.28%	\$1,051,908.12	\$168,134.20
Sudbury	4.65%	\$398,320.26	\$63,666.45
Waltham	7.64%	\$654,444.47	\$104,604.67
Watertown	5.70%	\$488,263.54	\$78,042.75
Weston	5.37%	\$459,995.65	\$73,524.49
<p><i>The above assessments are only estimates and are subject to change. EDCO Collaborative may need to revise the estimates depending on the responsibility and contribution of prior member districts for the EDCO Collaborative's liabilities and depending on other circumstances that arise or of which EDCO Collaborative learns of after creation of the estimate.</i></p>			

Assessment Costs for Each Member District to Clear FY21 Operating Cost Deficit and FY22 Closing Costs

	<u>FY21 Assessment Rates</u>	<u>Range of Potential Assessment</u>	
Acton-Boxborough	7.50%	\$725,385.75	\$185,621.55
Arlington	7.85%	\$759,237.09	\$194,283.89
Bedford	5.74%	\$555,161.90	\$142,062.36
Belmont	6.91%	\$668,322.07	\$171,019.32
Brookline	8.98%	\$868,528.54	\$222,250.87
Carlisle	3.31%	\$320,136.91	\$81,920.98
Concord	4.24%	\$410,084.75	\$104,938.05
Concord-Carlisle	3.79%	\$366,561.60	\$93,800.76
Lexington	8.72%	\$843,381.84	\$215,815.99
Lincoln	3.36%	\$324,972.82	\$83,158.46
Lincoln-Sudbury	3.96%	\$383,003.68	\$98,008.18
Newton	12.28%	\$1,187,698.27	\$303,924.36
Sudbury	4.65%	\$449,739.17	\$115,085.36
Waltham	7.64%	\$738,926.29	\$189,086.49
Watertown	5.70%	\$551,293.17	\$141,072.38
Weston	5.37%	\$519,376.20	\$132,905.03

The above assessments are only estimates and are subject to change. EDCO Collaborative may need to revise the estimates depending on the responsibility and contribution of prior member districts for the EDCO Collaborative's liabilities and depending on other circumstances that arise or of which EDCO Collaborative learns of after creation of the estimate.

EDCO COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS*

Academic Programs

The North Crossing Academy Therapeutic Day Program (NCA) offers a range of services for students in grades 6-12 who are diagnosed with clinical mental health emotional issues that adversely impact their daily performance in the classroom academically as well as socially and emotionally. NCA offers a comprehensive Therapeutic Day School Program that provides educational instruction to students with unique academic, emotional, and social challenges by offering a highly structured therapeutic environment while maintaining academic integrity.

The EDCO/NCA 45-Day Assessment Program serves students in grades 6 – 12 who are referred by their school districts for an in-depth analysis of learning, social, emotional and/or behavioral needs. Curriculum guidelines are obtained from the students' home schools and lessons are designed to keep the students current in academic subjects.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, in collaboration with Newton Public Schools, provides students with academic and social emotional learning in both integrated and self-contained settings. Students enrolled in general education courses receive instruction from a general education teacher with supplemental aids and services as determined by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Self-contained classes, geared towards individualized small group instruction, are taught by certified Teachers of the Deaf. All students have access to the full-range of academic and extra-curricular offerings at both F.A. Day Middle School and Newton North High School in addition to EDCO sponsored activities.

Students in the academic programs above will be assigned new placements by the sending districts responsible for their IEPs.

EDCO Youth Alternative (EYA) provides a full academic program, along with counseling and related support services, for students who have dropped out, are significantly at risk of dropping out, or are several years delayed in earning a high school diploma. These students require a more supportive environment than a large, traditional high school can offer. The program is funded by the City of Boston and Department of Labor through the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, along with the Boston Public Schools. Students at EYA enjoy small, accredited classes in regular high school subjects with the goal of attaining a BPS high school diploma.

Students in the EYA are all Boston students. Boston Public Schools has several alternative programs to which they may be assigned. Boston Public Schools can also seek a new partner to manage the program if they chose. The contract with BPS expires June 2021.

Professional Development Programs

IDEAS builds upon EDCO's mission to support member and non-member districts as they focus on culturally proficient schools and classrooms. IDEAS offers professional learning opportunities to school districts as they work to enhance the anti-racist and inclusive practices identified in Standards II and III of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Model Teacher Rubric. In addition, IDEAS works with districts and organizations to develop a range of professional development opportunities in cultural proficiency, consultation about curriculum and developing culturally proficient classrooms and schools, affinity group

meetings for educators of color, and conferences for middle and high school students to help shape diversity initiatives.

We will work with IDEAS to find the program a new “home.” At this time three organizations have indicated interest in IDEAS.

EDCO’s Educator Leadership Institute (ELI) is a licensure program preparing teachers and administrators for Principal/Assistant Principal PreK-8 or 5-12. Upon completion of the coursework, ELI endorses the cohort of candidates to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for licensure.

Candidates may also choose to receive a Master’s Degree in partnership with Fitchburg State University.

Similarly, we will help ELI find a new partner. Two organizations are interested in ELI.

The McSwiney Center for Professional Learning provides professional learning programs, networking opportunities, and special projects to assist member school districts in strengthening their curriculum and instruction.

The McSwiney Center program goals are developed by district representatives on EDCO’s Program Advisory Committee in concert with EDCO staff to address current issues and needs across the collaborative.

The McSwiney Center has experienced declining enrollment over the past two years. Many districts have developed their own comprehensive professional learning programs. In addition, other districts have entered into regional collaborations to offer PD together in order to be more cost efficient.

Grant Programs

The New England High School Equivalency Program (NE HEP) is grant funded through the Office of Migrant Education of the US Department of Education since 2016. The program supports migratory and seasonal farm workers in preparing and testing for the GED or high school equivalency test (HiSET). The program works with graduates to achieve improved employment, post-secondary education, or training. NE HEP serves students in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine through a joint collaboration between EDCO, the University of Vermont Extension Program, World Education Inc., and with the support of the Migrant Education Programs in each of the four states.

The HEP contract with EDCO expires June 30, 2021. We have encouraged the program director for HEP and the program director for the Migrant Education Project to explore options that would benefit the students in both programs.

EDCO’s Habilitative Services Program at Wrentham Developmental Center (WDC) provides therapeutic services to over 208 adult residents with intellectual disabilities, through a grant awarded by the Department of Developmental Services. The Habilitative Services provided by the team include adapted physical education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and orientation and mobility. Through these services, the team provides residents significant opportunities for improved health, safety, recreation, and leisure throughout the year.

The contract with Wrentham expired December 31, 2020 but was extended for six months due to COVID-19. The RFP for a new contract has been posted. The Department of Developmental Services will choose another organization in accordance with procurement regulations. We are encouraging other collaboratives to bid on the contract.

The Special Education Surrogate Parent (SESP) Program appoints trained volunteers to act as special education decision-makers for students who have no parent or legal guardian. These students typically reside in a variety of living situations that may include residential schools, group homes, hospitals or pediatric nursing homes, state institutions, diagnostic placements, and shelters. The SESP Program works in partnership with the Massachusetts Federation for Children with Special Needs, which is responsible for volunteer recruitment, training, and support.

SESP is in the first year of a five-year grant. We will work with SESP, the Federation, and DESE to transfer the grant to an appropriate partner.

The Experienced Directors of Special Education Institute is a grant-funded program in partnership with Teachers 21. The program provides professional development to Special Education administrators.

This grant expires June 30, 2021.

The IEP Improvement Project is intended “to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities by providing guidance, technical assistance, and tools on equitable processes to school and district professionals, families, and students so that all students with disabilities have meaningful access to the curriculum frameworks and life of the school.” As the grant recipient, EDCO staff manage the project in collaboration with DESE staff.

The grant expires on June 30, 2021.

*The programs listed are those programs currently running. Other programs and services listed on the website ceased to run at the end of the 2019-20 school year or were suspended due to COVID-19 for this year.

File: FF - NAMING DISTRICT FACILITIES

The Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee believes naming or renaming a school building, structure, space, property, program or other District asset (hereafter referred to as a "Facility") is a matter of significant importance, one that deserves the most thoughtful attention of the School Committee and the Administration, and one that is an unusual occurrence or event. Further, the Committee believes it should not be influenced in its decision by personal prejudice, favoritism, political pressure or temporary popularity.

Any request to name a Facility must be brought before the School Committee for approval.

If a suggestion or petition to name or to dedicate a Facility, is brought forth to the School Committee, the School Committee will first decide whether the naming or renaming of that Facility is necessary and/or appropriate. If the decision to move forward with the naming is made, the School Committee will convene a screening committee pursuant to procedure FF-R.

In the naming of a Facility, if the name of a person is to be used, the following criteria will be applied in the selection of a person(s) to be so honored.

1. A person, living or dead, for whom a public school facility may be named must have made significant contributions to education of the youth of the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. Evidence of such contributions may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Unusually effective and dedicated service to or on behalf of the youth in the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
- Persistent efforts to sustain a high quality system of public education for all youth and to improve programs and services for these young people
- Demonstrated understanding of the essential nature of public education in the furthering of our democratic form of government.

2. Said person should be one who is retired, deceased or has provided service to the community in excess of 15 years. A request may not be submitted sooner than three years following the death or retirement of the individual to be so honored. This requirement may be waived by a unanimous vote of the School Committee.

3. The nominee must otherwise be worthy of the honor of having a school facility named for her/him. Evidence of such attributes could include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Superior levels of performance in strengthening and supporting Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
- Community service
- Effective citizenship
- Seminal ideas or research
- Excellent character and general reputation

4. The School Committee may revoke the name of a Facility.

The Superintendent shall prepare procedures for the naming of Facilities that are consistent with this policy.

CROSS REF.: FFA, Memorials

Approved: 5/18/2017

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

File: FF-R - NAMING DISTRICT FACILITIES

1. The School Committee will announce the convening of the Screening Committee and the reason therefore. It will then announce the deadline for submitting proposed names of the relevant Facility to the Screening Committee.
2. Nominations must be submitted in writing.
3. Nominations should be submitted with answers to the following questions:
 - a. What is the reason you are suggesting the person/name? (See the criteria in the policy statement.)
 - b. Why is this a good name for the facility?
 - c. What is the biographical/other information about this person that will assist in making a decision?
 - d. Are the relevant timeframes from Paragraph 2 of policy FF met?
4. The School Committee will establish a Screening Committee consisting of representatives of the various interest groups in the community. The role of the Screening Committee is to review and evaluate the suggested names and make a recommendation to the School Committee.

Reviewed: 5/18/2017

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Meal Charge Policy DRAFT

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee is committed to the emotional well-being of students and realizes it is important to make sure students are fed a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day regardless of their Food Service account balance.

We are committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school district, as Food Services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The provisions of this policy pertain to school meals only. The School District will provide a meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money or who have a negative balance on their account.

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

LEGAL REFS: MGL 71:72; USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017

CROSS REF: Student Fees, Fines and Charges, Policy JQ

First Read: 2/4/2021

Acton-Boxborough Food Service Department Charge Procedures

The ABRSD Food Services Department is committed to the emotional well-being of students and realizes it is important to make sure students are fed a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day regardless of their Food Service account balance.

The Food Service Department has established the following charge procedure in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments", Attachment B, Item 5, Bad Debt.

Families can check account balances at any time by logging into their student account on www.schoolcafe.com or by calling the Food Service Department at 978-264-4700 x3221.

Account Limits:

- Students in grades K-12 may not exceed a negative balance of \$20.00.
- Students who have a negative account balance will not be permitted to purchase a la carte items.

Notification:

- The District will notify families when their account reaches a positive balance of \$5.00 or less each Sunday through an automatically generated email via BrightArrow to the parent/guardian of the student.
- If a student's account is negative, they will still be able to purchase breakfast and/or lunch. However, they will not be able to purchase any "a la carte" snacks or beverages until the balance has been paid.

Adult Employees:

- Adult employees must maintain a positive balance in their Food Service account.

Restriction on Accounts:

- A parent may call the Food Service Department at any time to place a restriction on a student's account for a la carte items. They may also use Schoolcafe to set up restrictions.

Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF):

- When a check is returned to the Treasurer's office for NSF, the Food Service Department will call to inform the parent. The District will accept payments for the NSF check (in addition to any fees) in the form of cash, cashier's check, or money order, payable to *Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Food Services*. Or we accept a credit card payment using SchoolCafe.

Students who Withdraw from the District:

- When a student withdraws from the District, the Food Services Department will issue a refund or transfer the funds to a sibling's account.
- If the student has no siblings and their balance is greater than \$5.00, the Food Services Department will attempt to contact the parent to obtain an address to send a refund check.
- If the balance is less than \$5.00 and the family has not requested a refund, the balance is transferred to a donation account.
- Families must submit a written request or send an email to receive a refund of any monies remaining in their account.

Students who are Graduating:

Parents have the following options:

- 1) Transfer the balance to a sibling
- 2) Donate the balance to a family in need
- 3) Request a refund (in writing or via email)

Balances Owed at the End of a School Year:

- All accounts must be settled at the end of the school year. One week prior to the end of school, the Food Services Department will notify all households of low balances. Any balance that is below zero will need to be paid in full.
- Families can check account balances at any time by logging into their student account on www.schoolcafe.com or by calling the Food Service Office at 978-264-4700x3221.
- In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-87, ABRSD will charge back any outstanding debt at the end of the school to the District's General Fund.

January 28, 2021

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

COMMITMENT TO AN INCLUSIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

Every student deserves to learn from educators and leaders who collectively reflect a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and life experiences. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District is committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce. As such, the District prioritizes recruiting, hiring, and retaining certified educators and leaders from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, genders, individuals who are differently-abled, those who identify as LGBTQ+, and educators who are anti-racist and who prioritize and value diversity, equity, and inclusion. For the purposes of this policy, “candidate from an underrepresented racial or ethnic group” shall mean any candidate whose racial or ethnic makeup is underrepresented relative to the District’s staff, typically including but not limited to: African American/Black, Asian, including Southeast Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan Native, and two or more races or ethnicities, when one or more are from these categories.

ABRSD adheres to the principle of providing equal opportunity of employment by taking positive actions to counter bias and inequity resulting in the under-representation of racial, ethnic, linguistic and gender groups, individuals who are differently-abled and those who identify as LGBTQ+ in particular job classifications.

We believe that by building a more inclusive and representative workforce, all students will have better outcomes and be more prepared for an increasingly diverse world. The District prioritizes an inclusive working environment, values different backgrounds, cultures, and identities of all individuals, and embraces the differing perspectives, experiences, and skills that a diverse workforce will add to the quality of the educational experience for every student.

In order to accomplish these important goals, the district will take the following actions:

1. All hiring committee members will participate in anti-bias training
2. Intentionally diversify hiring committees
3. Develop questions that are culturally sensitive and that determine each candidate’s experience with DEI and anti-racist work
4. Recruit and interview candidates of color and candidates from under-represented groups
5. Form an affinity group for our educators of color
6. Prepare an annual report to the School Committee providing data about efforts to recruit and hire diverse candidates

First Read: 3/19/2020

Second Read: 2/4/2021

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Approved: TBD

REF: ABRSC Policy AC Non-Discrimination
ABRSC Policy GCE and Procedure GCE-R Professional Staff Recruitment, Selection,
and Appointment

SEE NEXT PAGE ~~CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL~~

~~Review and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving faculty and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.~~

~~Under the direction of the Superintendent, the faculty and administration will regularly evaluate the curriculum and recommend modifications of practice and changes in curriculum content as well as the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.~~

~~Instructional materials appropriate to support the teaching of the curriculum must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints. Faculty will be involved in the selection of instructional materials. Final decisions will rest with school and district administration.~~

~~The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District curriculum will be consistent with the state curriculum frameworks.~~

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E
 603 CMR 26:05

~~Approved: 3/19/15~~

~~(Combines Policies IGA, IGD, IJ, IJJ and IJK)~~

REVISED CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

(Combines Policies IGA- Curriculum & Instructional Materials and IJL- Library Materials Selection & Adoption.)

In support of the vision of the District, the ABRSC believes that curricular and instructional materials should inspire our community of learners. Contemporary life consists of rapid social change, technological development, and the expansion of knowledge. As a public school district, we must respond by continual adaptation and development of the curriculum to meet the needs of its students. Curriculum development is a collaborative enterprise that involves staff and district and school leaders utilizing their professional expertise and gathering input from parents/guardians/caregivers, and our community.

The District and its schools will regularly review and evaluate its curricula and instructional materials. When necessary, the District will modify its curriculum content and courses across our instructional program to achieve the following:

- Alignment of the curriculum with the State frameworks, as well as our District's stated goals for teaching and learning.
- Curriculum and materials that are inclusive and culturally responsive. When curricular materials are used that *don't* meet these standards, the purpose shall be to support students in analyzing materials for bias and teaching students to think critically about materials that they are presented.
- Ongoing educator sensitivity to changing conditions that may require curricular shifts or updates.
- Continuous evaluation and revision of all curriculum and materials to ensure that they meet the needs of students.

The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will collaborate with district and school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and other staff members to implement a curriculum that will prepare students for post-secondary opportunities.

Selection of Curriculum and Instructional Materials

Instructional materials should be selected to enrich, and support the educational program and student needs. When selecting materials, District and school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and other staff members should utilize their professional expertise and gather input from parents/guardians/caregivers and our community as needed

Students should have access to a wide range of educational materials in a variety of formats that enrich and support the curriculum and meet their needs. Materials shall provide students an opportunity to develop analytical skills.

Final decisions about curricular materials rest with District and school leaders.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E

603 CMR 26:05

[Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule](#)

CROSS REF: Policy AC *Nondiscrimination*
 Procedure IGA-R-1 *Selection Criteria for Curriculum and Instructional Material*
 Exhibit IGA-E *Teacher Checklist: 7 Forms of Bias to Consider*
 Policy IGD *Adoption of New Programs and Courses of Study*

First Read: March 11, 2021

Approved: TBD

SEE NEXT PAGE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

Instructional materials should:

- foster the knowledge and intellectual and reflective skills students will need to thrive in an increasingly complex world (Long Range Strategic Plan 2011-2016, Goal #2)
- not discriminate as outlined in the Notice of Non-Discrimination policy AC
- allow for sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of all students

Approved: 3/19/15

REVISED SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

Through its careful choices of curriculum and instructional materials, the District strives to foster a sense of moral and civic responsibility within each student. We want our students to be able to place themselves within and connected to a larger community. As such, students should have access to a wide range of educational materials in a variety of formats with a diversity of appeal that enrich and support the curriculum, and meet their needs. Consistent with the recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the District should assess all educational materials for their ability to be inclusive and culturally responsive.

Curriculum and instructional materials should:

- represent differing viewpoints of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
- provide students an opportunity to develop analytical skills.
- be assessed for their ability to include content and language that reflects the diversity of the student population.
- provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors, artists, designers, etc. of multiple cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.
- stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, and aesthetics.
- foster an appreciation of cultural diversity in the United States and throughout the world.
- include a variety of flexible resources and formats so all students can access them in accordance with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.
- incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from a variety of authoritative sources.
- have favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional staff.
- meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format.
- undergo regular review and assessment based on factors that include, but are not limited to: material age, condition, accuracy of information, student needs, curricular alignment, bias and/or stereotyping.
- meet the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule ("COPPA") standards and student privacy will be a consideration in the use of all digital tools and resources.
- aim to be free from marketing and advertising that is directed at children, intrusive, or manipulative.

CROSS REF:

- Procedure IGA-R-2 *Reconsideration of Instructional Resources*
- Exhibit IGA-E-1 [Teacher Checklist: 7 Forms of Bias to Consider in Instructional Materials](#)

File: IGA-R-2

NEW! RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity, which are defined as follows:

- **Religion** - Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.
- **Ideologies** - Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.
- **Profanity/obscenity** - Materials should be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

All requests to reconsider instructional resources must be directed first to the building principal. The school receiving a complaint regarding a learning resource will try to resolve the issue informally. The principal or designee will explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of the resource (*ABRSC Procedure IGA-R-1*).

If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, the principal will direct them to the District website to complete the online [Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials](#). The questioner should file the request form with the Superintendent or designee.

Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will convene a committee to review the request to remove or reconsider materials. No questioned materials will be removed pending a final decision.

Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration of a learning resource, the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will appoint a review committee that includes at least the following members:

- Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
- School Administrator
- Library Media Specialist or library-related materials/resources (or Digital Media Coordinator for digital materials/tools) for instructional technology-related materials/tools
- Educator
- Other District staff/persons with related professional knowledge or expertise, if needed

The review committee will review the challenged resource for alignment with the principles of selection outlined in *IGA-R-1 Selection Criteria for Curricular and Instructional Materials*.

The review committee will:

- Examine the challenged resource;
- Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource;
- Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context;
- Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the broader educational program; and
- Prepare a written response within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 calendar days.

The decision of the review committee is binding across the District. Final decisions about curricular materials rest with the Superintendent or designee. If the Superintendent or designee determines that the questioned material will be retained, the District will not convene a review committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years.

CROSS REF:

Policy IGA *Curriculum and Instructional Materials*

Exhibit IGA-E-1 [*Teacher Checklist: 7 Forms of Bias to Consider in Instructional Materials*](#)

Exhibit IGA-E-2 [*Digital Tools Criteria Checklist*](#)

NEW! ADOPTION OF NEW PROGRAMS AND COURSES OF STUDY

The School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the District.

The Superintendent will have the authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Superintendent shall inform the School Committee of new programs or courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in curriculum, instructional content, and/or approach.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.c. [71](#), [§1](#)

CROSS REF: Policy IGA *Curriculum and Instructional Materials*

Approved: TBD

ELIMINATE (combining with IGA-R) SELECTION OF LIBRARY BOOKS/MEDIA

Procedures for Selection

~~In selecting materials for purchase, the librarian/media specialist, teachers, or administrators concerned evaluate the existing collection and consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids. In specific areas, these procedures will be followed:~~

- ~~1. Gift materials are judged by basic selection standards and are accepted or rejected by these standards.~~
- ~~2. Multiple items of heavily used or outstanding materials are purchased as needed.~~
- ~~3. Worn or missing standard items are replaced systematically.~~
- ~~4. Obsolete items or those no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection.~~
- ~~5. Sets of materials and materials acquired by subscription are examined carefully and individually and are purchased only to fill a definite need.~~

Request for Reconsideration of Library/Media Materials

~~A parent or other citizen of the school district may request a reconsideration of a particular book or audiovisual item by filling out a REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY/MEDIA MATERIALS.~~

~~When a complainant demands that a book or audiovisual item be removed from the library shelves, the following procedure is to be followed:~~

- ~~1. The complainant will meet with the Principal. If at the conclusion of this meeting the complainant is still not satisfied, he/she will complete the form entitled "Request for Reconsideration of Library/Media Materials" and submit the form to the Principal of the school concerned.~~
- ~~2. A review board will be set up by the Principal consisting of the Principal, the media coordinator or librarian, and as many others as the Principal deems necessary to be drawn from the teachers, curriculum specialists, media assistants and parents.~~
- ~~3. This review board will make a recommendation to the Principal as to the proposed action.~~
- ~~4. The Principal will make a decision following consideration of the recommendation of the Review Board.~~
- ~~5. If a complainant does not receive satisfaction from the Principal, he/she should be advised to appeal his/her case to the Superintendent of Schools. If still unsatisfied, he/she should appeal to the School Committee.~~



BOXBOROUGH TOWN CLERK

29 Middle Road, Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719

Phone: (978) 264-1727 • Fax: (978) 264-3127

emarkiewicz@boxborough-ma.gov

ELECTION CALENDAR 2021

Annual Town Meeting: Monday, May 10

Annual Town Election: Tuesday, May 18

Monday, January 11: Nomination papers for elected town offices available from town clerk's office. Offices to be on the 2021 town ballot are as follows:

Moderator, one-year term: 1 seat

Selectman, three-year term: 2 seats

School Committee, three-year term: 1 seat

Planning Board, three-year term: 1 seat

Library Trustees, three-year term: 2 seats

Board of Health, three-year term: 1 seat

Constable, three-year term: 1 seat

Tuesday, March 30: Last day to file nomination papers with the Board of Registers/Town Clerk in order to be on the ballot for the May 18 Town Election. Papers are due in the Town Clerk's office by 5:00PM. A minimum of 28 signatures is required.

Thursday, April 15: Last day to withdraw name from nomination for town office.

Tuesday, April 20: Last day to register to vote for Annual Town Meeting and the Town Election. The Town Clerk's office will be open from 9:00AM-Noon on that day. Voter registration will continue at the Boxborough Police Station, 520 Mass. Ave., from Noon-8:00PM. Residents can also [register online](#) until midnight.

Monday, May 10: Annual Town Meeting begins at 7:00PM. Location TBD

Tuesday, May 22: Annual Town Election, Boxborough Town Hall, 29 Middle Road. Polls will be open from 7:00AM-8:00PM.



TO: Peter Light, Superintendent
FROM: Dawn Bentley, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DATE: March 4, 2021
RE: FYI- Dunkin' Mask Donation

The District has received an extremely generous donation of 300 KN-95s, valued at approximately \$360, from the Acton Dunkin' franchise owned and operated by the Pesce family. We intend to distribute these masks to students and their families who receive meals on Wednesdays through our Food Services Department.

Please share this gift to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee for public recognition of the generous donation.

Thank you.



Raymond J. Grey Junior High School
16 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720-2995
(978) 261-4700 x3303 FAX (978) 261-4343
Andrew Shen, Principal

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Distr
James Marcotte, Assistant Princi
Catherine Boege, Assistant Princi
David Lawrence, Assistant Princi

Date: March 1, 2021

To: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools,
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

From: Andrew Shen, RJ Grey JHS Principal


Re: Gift from Qiang Qiu/VMware Foundation

Dear Peter,

We would like the School Committee to know that we have received a corporate gift of \$50.00 from VMware Foundation. This is an employee educational donation from Qiang Qiu, father of Leyan Qiu on 7 Blue. These funds are to be used to enrich math and science student programs.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,



Andrew Shen

/encl.

[View this email in your browser](#)



This Month in the Division of Open Government February 2021

Good afternoon,

We are writing to share updates from the Attorney General's Division of Open Government.

Included in this month's edition:

- [Training Opportunities](#)
- [Guidance Spotlight: Hybrid Meetings](#)
- [Recent Open Meeting Law Determination Highlights](#)

Please pass along the information below to your constituencies and to anyone else who might be interested.

As always, you are welcome to contact us at [\(617\) 963-2540](tel:6179632540) or OpenMeeting@mass.gov with any Open Meeting Law questions.

The Division of Open Government is currently working remotely. We request that all correspondence, including Open Meeting Law complaints, public body responses, and requests for review, be sent by email whenever possible.

In partnership,

Training Opportunities

Wednesday, March 1, 2021 9:30am EST

Click here to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8289480258137855246>

Tuesday, March 23, 2021, 6:30pm EST

Click here to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1669070059182613007>

Thursday, April 15, 2021, 9:30am EST

Click here to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8747587380339431695>

Unable to participate in a live training?

Training videos, which feature similar content as live trainings, are available on our website.

Visit: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-meeting-law-training-videos>.

Guidance Spotlight: Hybrid Meetings

GUIDANCE SPOTLIGHT: HYBRID MEETINGS

This month we discuss hybrid meetings under the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. By "hybrid," we refer to meetings where all or some of the public body's members attend the meeting in person while requiring the general public to access the meeting remotely through adequate, alternative means, a practice that we have concluded is permissible in accordance with the Executive Order.

When posting notice for a hybrid meeting, the notice must make clear how the *public* is to access the meeting. The purpose of a meeting notice is to inform the public of how it may access a meeting, so even if the public body will gather in person, the notice should clearly state how and where the public may access the meeting. In fact, including on the meeting notice a physical address where the public body will gather may be confusing if it suggests that the public may attend the meeting at that physical location. If a physical location will be included on the notice, the notice should make very clear whether the public may attend at that location, or is required to access the meeting remotely. The notice must also include the meeting access information (e.g. Zoom link, teleconference line, streaming location, etc.), or clear instructions for how to obtain the access information.

Finally, we recently determined in OML 2020-159 (Fall River Conservation Commission) that a public body may invite certain individuals to attend a meeting in person even though the general public is required to access the meeting virtually. We acknowledge that, in some instances, allowing direct participants who have a matter on the agenda to attend a meeting in person with the public body members (for example, to

the meeting remotely. Therefore, if a public body meets in person in a location that is essentially closed to the public but wants to invite certain individuals to attend the meeting in person while providing adequate, alternative access to other members of the public, the body should act in accordance with a set policy that will meet the Open Meeting Law's goals of transparency and requirements for accessibility.

Recent Determinations Regarding Hybrid Meetings

- **OML 2020-100:** Section (1) of the Executive Order allowing public access through adequate, alternative means is independent from Section (2), which allows members of the public body to participate remotely. A public body may choose to meet in person while requiring the public to access the meeting through adequate, alternative means.
- **OML 2020-159:** A public body may invite specific individuals to attend a meeting in person even though the general public is required to access the meeting virtually, so long as the public body does not act arbitrarily in distinguishing between who may attend in person and who must view the meeting remotely.

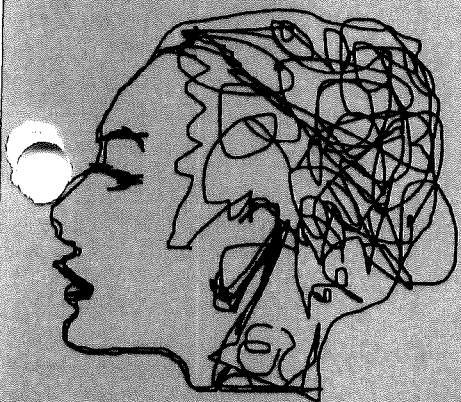
Recent Open Meeting Law Determination Highlights

OML 2021-17 – Violation found where technical problems rendered a portion of the public body's meeting inaccessible to the public accessing the meeting remotely and the public body did not adjourn the meeting, but instead continued and then posted a video recording of the meeting to a website after the fact. Under the Governor's March 12 order, "adequate, alternative means" of access must allow the public to follow the public body's proceedings in real time. If technical problems prohibit real-time access to a meeting, the public body should recess until the technical problems are resolved, or if the problems cannot be resolved quickly, the public body should adjourn the meeting.

OML 2021-9 – No violation found where the public body amended its meeting notice within 48 hours of the meeting to add unanticipated topics. Meeting notices must include a list of the topics the chair anticipates 48 hours in advance will be discussed at the meeting. When a new topic that was unanticipated arises, a public body may amend its meeting notice to include that topic.

Open Meeting Law determinations may be found at the Attorney General's website, <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>





WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE?

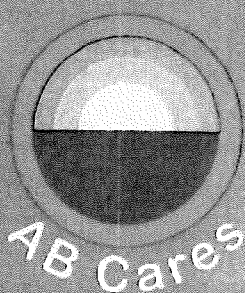
YOU NEVER KNOW
WHEN YOU MAY BE
CALLED UPON TO
HELP.

PLEASE JOIN US IN
SAYING YES TO
SAVING A LIFE.

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
teaches three simple steps anyone can
learn to help save a life.

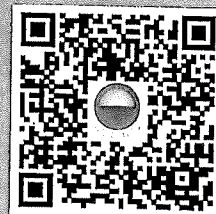
As a QPR-trained Gatekeeper you will learn to:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Know how to offer hope
- Know how to get help and save a life



We are unable to record QPR training sessions.

To sign up for one of the QPR sessions listed below,
scan the QR code or click here: bit.ly/ABQPR.



ONLINE Training Dates and Times:

Wednesday, December 9, 2020.....7:00pm-9:00pm

Tuesday, January 5, 2021.....7:00pm-9:00pm

Wednesday, February 24, 2021.....1:00pm-3:00pm

Thursday, March 25, 2021.....7:00pm-9:00pm

Monday, April 26, 2021.....10:00am-12:00pm

Wednesday, June 2, 2021.....7:00pm-9:00pm

AB CARES IS A COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATIVE EFFORT THAT SEEKS TO PREVENT
SUICIDE ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN AND SUPPORT ALL WHO ARE IMPACTED BY SUICIDE.