



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000  
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Leaders of Approved Special Education Schools, and Collaborative Leaders  
**From:** Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner  
**Date:** August 6, 2020  
**Subject:** Feedback on Preliminary Fall Reopening Plans

---

Thank you for submitting your preliminary fall reopening plan. Five hundred and sixteen plans were reviewed for consistency with the [guidance](#) we have issued since June 25, 2020. Below, you will find a summary of trends seen across districts and schools along with a few additional reminders. Please submit your **final fall reopening plan** via [this link](#) and note that the deadline has been extended to August 14, 2020.

1. Many districts explained how their **feasibility study** on full-time, in-person learning informed their broader plan, including input from stakeholders to determine the reopening model. In the final plan, please include:
  - ✓ **Analysis of facilities:** A plan for in-person learning that meets minimum physical distancing (aim for six feet, with three feet as the minimum acceptable distance) and considers the use of alternative/external spaces to determine if in-person learning is feasible.
  - ✓ **Transportation:** Alternate modes of transportation to and from school and feasibility of modifications to boarding, seat assignments, and pick-up and drop-off protocols. For *approved special education schools*, please articulate your school's transportation plan in addition to the district's transportation plan.
  - ✓ **Communication:** Evidence of a plan for clear, streamlined, two-way communication with families.
2. Many districts noted the **baseline safety measures** for in-person and hybrid models and how to meet requirements for remote learning. In the final plan, please include:
  - ✓ **Health and safety:** Meet all health and safety standards in the DESE [guidance](#) documents.
  - ✓ **Remote learning:** Establish procedures for students whose families request a remote option, including a system for tracking attendance and participation, alignment to academic standards, and a clear and consistent policy for issuing grades. This includes addressing technology needs for access to instruction, both in terms of internet access and devices.
  - ✓ **Vulnerable student populations:** Provide details about prioritizing vulnerable students for in-person instruction, including students with disabilities and English learners.

3. Several plans included lunch, recess, and other non-instructional programming in instructional time. These activities do not count towards structured learning time. Unless a waiver is approved for modification of structured learning time, all final plans must:
  - ✓ **All models:** Meet the minimum day and hour requirements below, regardless of the reopening model (in-person, hybrid, or remote) and across student groups.
  - ✓ **Remote learning:** Provide remote learning for families that choose this option for their children and when a student must stay home for quarantine or isolation.
  - ✓ **Minimum student learning time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year:** 170 days and 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools).

**Other reminders:**

1. **Please submit your final fall reopening plan** via [this link](#) by August 14, 2020.
2. **Facilities support:** Consider a list of pre-qualified facilities vendors who can provide assessments of school buildings. The list was included in [the August 3 Commissioner's Weekly Update](#). Please note that other important information on learning and funding opportunities was also included in that document.
3. **Remote learning:** For remote learning models, we encourage districts and schools to develop a system for distribution of schedules and materials (i.e. books, technology) and build in time at the beginning of the year to host family and student orientation and training on remote learning and expectations.
4. **Noteworthy practices** from DESE's review of the preliminary reopening plans will be included as part of the Commissioner's Weekly Update on Monday, August 10.