



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

On the Desktop - May 14, 2020

Return to School Working Group

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

Thank you for your leadership and innovation in this unprecedented time. You and your staff have made heroic efforts to meet the needs of all students and families throughout this pandemic, and we appreciate your continued dedication.

We remain committed to supporting local leaders as we turn our attention to the coming months and decisions around when and how our state will reopen school buildings. Most of you already have some work underway at the local level to plan for this. We will be supporting you throughout this process by providing guidance.

We are announcing the creation of the Return to School Working Group to inform our decision-making and guidance.

The working group will include:

1. Robert Bardwell, Executive Director, Massachusetts School Counselors Association
2. Erica Brown, Chief of Policy and School Supports, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association
3. Dennis Condon, Needham Fire Chief, representing the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts
4. Elizabeth Dello Russo Becker, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (maaps)
5. Karen DeRoche, Membership Chair, Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association
6. Jon Evans, Superintendent, Keefe Regional Technical School in Framingham
7. Jeff Farnsworth, Hampden Police Chief, representing the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
8. Tara Gohlmann, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Buckingham Browne & Nichols School
9. Joanne Haley Sullivan, Executive Director, Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives
10. Jordan Healy, Student, Granby Junior Senior High School, representing the State Student Advisory Council

11. Beth Kontos, President, American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts
12. Glenn Koocher, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Committees
13. Barbara Malkas, Superintendent, North Adams Public Schools
14. Jack McCarthy, Executive Director, Massachusetts School Building Authority
15. John McCarthy, President, North Reading Transportation (NRT Bus)
16. Gina Mathews, Assistant Superintendent, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston
17. Merrie Najimy, President, Massachusetts Teachers Association
18. Richard Pearson, Associate Executive Director, Massachusetts School Administrators' Association
19. Samantha Phillips, Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
20. Tim Piwowar, Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools
21. Karen Robitaille, Director of School Health Services, Department of Public Health
22. Karen Rufo, Lexington Public Schools School Nurse Leader, representing the Massachusetts School Nurse Organization
23. Tom Scott, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
24. Anne Marie Stronach, Chief Operating Officer, Lawrence Public Schools
25. Lindsay Tucker, Associate Commissioner, Department of Public Health
26. Pat Tutwiler, Superintendent, Lynn Public Schools
27. Ken Wertz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Facilities Administrators Association

The group will help develop a K-12 summer and fall restart and recovery plan. This plan will include guidance on the following topic areas:

- Physical and virtual learning environments
- Teaching and learning
- Operations and business services
- Behavioral health and social and emotional learning

The working group held its first meeting on Thursday, May 7, and its initial focus will be on what programming might be possible this summer. We will share any announcements on that topic as they become available. Going forward, the working group will meet regularly to draft the restart and recovery plan for the next academic year. We anticipate sharing a draft with key stakeholders for feedback before the releasing a final document.

All stakeholders can check the COVID-19 section of our website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/> for information as it becomes available.

Thank you again for all that you do on behalf of students.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner