*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | December 8, 2020  |
| **Subject:** | Update on COVID-19 Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families  |

Since our meeting on November 24, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE/Department) has continued to inform districts of new developments related to COVID-19 and to support schools and districts as they serve students during the pandemic.

In November, the Department of Public Health issued updated quarantine guidance for those who have been exposed to COVID-19. The update permits individuals to leave quarantine earlier if they meet specific conditions, and DESE posted an [updated Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios document](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/) to reflect this change.

The Department’s language acquisition and special education teams collaborated to provide supplemental guidance and recommendations to help schools and districts provide [equitable access to learning for English learners with disabilities](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/ele/elswd-remote-guidance.docx) *(download)* during in-person, hybrid, and remote learning.

Continuing our collaboration with Professor Joseph Allen from Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health, DESE invited districts to webinars with Professor Allen on risk reduction strategies for school buildings (offered twice) and school transportation.

The Department continues to provide and sponsor a variety of professional learning opportunities to help educators serve students in remote, hybrid, and in-person settings. Workshops and webinars include how to [build student engagement](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/5957750/Registration-Form) in any learning model (from DESE’s [Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning](https://kaleidoscopecollectiveforlearning.org/)), supporting parents (one of several workshops DESE sponsored through [LearnLaunch’s Building Blocks of Equitable Remote Learning](https://equitableremotelearning.org/what-we-offer/ma-workshops/)), and [technology tools for health and physical education](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6055964/Technology-Tools-for-Health-and-Physical-Education).

The Department continues to look for ways to help districts get needed technology to students. Recently, this included sharing news of offers like [T-Mobile’s Project 10Million](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/remote-learning/?section=resources#view-list), which will bring nearly 42,000 hotspots to Massachusetts schools and districts this school year.