*****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

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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:** | October 8, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Update on School District Ventilation Improvements |

As students and educators are back in-person with COVID-19 still a public health concern, there is substantial interest in what school districts are doing to improve air quality within their buildings to make them healthier and safer. While the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) does not have an exhaustive or complete picture of the improvements taking place in every school building across the Commonwealth, we have evidence to suggest that many districts, including our largest districts, have used, and/or plan to use, federal relief funding to improve air quality in their buildings.

**Analysis**

Since early in the pandemic, DESE has been consulting with Professor Joseph Allen, Associate Professor at Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Deputy Director of Harvard’s Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health, who conducted several webinars for school and district leaders and administrators about school building ventilation and ventilation on school buses. Dr. Allen noted that portable air purifiers were an effective way to improve air quality within classrooms. As a result, DESE used COVID relief money to purchase 12,376 air purifiers for any district, education collaborative, or approved special education school that made a request (list provided at end of memo). Many other districts made purchases of their own for air purifiers, using state, local, and/or federal funds.

Aside from air purifiers, DESE staff have reviewed federal ESSER-I ($194 million) and ESSER-II ($735 million) grant applications to determine how many districts are using the federal relief funds to improve air quality in buildings. While we do not have data on what districts spent or plan to spend with local and state dollars, or on how many school buildings are included, DESE staff found that a majority of districts are using federal relief funds to implement a variety of improvements, including:

* Overhauling entire HVAC systems
* Recommissioning existing HVAC systems
* Upgrading filters, fans, air handlers, compressors, and other HVAC components
* Upgrading HVAC control systems to modern, digital versions
* Installing new windows and/or doors to allow for more fresh air
* Adding ventilation to bathrooms
* Assessing air quality and HVAC system quality/performance
* Purchasing and installing portable air purifiers
* Purchasing and installing U/V air cleaners

Furthermore, as of this writing, DESE has not yet received the majority of ESSER-III grant applications from districts (due in October). If the first two federal relief applications are any indication, one might expect many districts to plan to use ESSER-III funds ($1.66 billion) for similar improvements to their air quality systems.

Air Purifiers Purchased by DESE in 2020 and 2021

In 2020 and 2021, DESE purchased air purifiers for any district, education collaborative, or approved special education school that requested them, in any quantity.

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| **District or School Name** | **Type** | **Air Purifiers** |
| Abby Kelley Charter School | Public School District | 40 |
| Academy Of the Pacific Rim Charter School | Public School District | 25 |
| Alma del Mar Charter School | Public School District | 10 |
| Barnstable Public Schools | Public School District | 600 |
| Baystate Academy Charter School | Public School District | 42 |
| Belchertown Public Schools | Public School District | 5 |
| Bellingham Public Schools | Public School District | 5 |
| Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School | Public School District | 23 |
| Boston Public Schools | Public School District | 5,000 |
| Boston Renaissance Charter | Public School District | 20 |
| Bourne Public Schools | Public School District | 80 |
| Bristol-Plymouth Regional Voc/Tech School District | Public School District | 20 |
| Chicopee Public Schools | Public School District | 250 |
| Christa McAuliffe Charter School | Public School District | 10 |
| City on a Hill Charter School | Public School District | 6 |
| Dartmouth Public Schools | Public School District | 200 |
| Dennis-Yarmouth Public Schools | Public School District | 150 |
| Duxbury Public Schools | Public School District | 30 |
| East Bridgewater Public Schools | Public School District | 5 |
| East Longmeadow Public Schools | Public School District | 30 |
| Easthampton Public Schools | Public School District | 100 |
| Everett Public Schools | Public School District | 550 |
| Fairhaven Public Schools | Public School District | 100 |
| Fall River Public Schools | Public School District | 10 |
| Franklin Public Schools | Public School District | 650 |
| Gloucester Public Schools | Public School District | 10 |
| Grafton Public Schools | Public School District | 200 |
| Hadley Public Schools | Public School District | 25 |
| Hampshire Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 15 |
| Hancock Public Schools | Public School District | 2 |
| Hill View Montessori Charter School | Public School District | 65 |
| Holliston Public Schools | Public School District | 70 |
| Lee Public Schools | Public School District | 90 |
| Libertas Charter School | Public School District | 10 |
| Lincoln Public Schools | Public School District | 160 |
| Longmeadow Public Schools | Public School District | 100 |
| Lowell Public Schools | Public School District | 50 |
| Lynnfield Public Schools | Public School District | 125 |
| Mansfield Public Schools | Public School District | 20 |
| Marblehead Community Charter School | Public School District | 20 |
| Marshfileld Public Schools | Public School District | 30 |
| Martha's Vinyard Public Schools | Public School District | 153 |
| Medfield Public Schools | Public School District | 10 |
| Mendon-Upton Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 300 |
| Mohawk Trail Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 87 |
| Mystic Valley Regional Charter School | Public School District | 165 |
| Narragansett Public Schools | Public School District | 74 |
| Nashoba Public Schools | Public School District | 250 |
| Nauset Public Schools | Public School District | 250 |
| New Heights Charter School | Public School District | 25 |
| North Reading Public Schools | Public School District | 200 |
| Oxford Public Schools | Public School District | 150 |
| Palmer Public Schools | Public School District | 4 |
| Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Lawrence | Public School District | 17 |
| Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Springfield | Public School District | 18 |
| Phoenix Charter Academy - Chelsea | Public School District | 18 |
| Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School | Public School District | 25 |
| Quabbin Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 58 |
| Quaboag Public Schools | Public School District | 25 |
| Randolph Public Schools | Public School District | 380 |
| River Valley Charter School | Public School District | 38 |
| Seekonk Public Schools | Public School District | 80 |
| Shawsheen Valley Regional Voc/Tech School District | Public School District | 20 |
| Shrewsbury Public Schools | Public School District | 75 |
| Silver Lake Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 75 |
| Somerset-Berkeley Public Schools | Public School District | 30 |
| Southern Berkshire Public Schools | Public School District | 30 |
| Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional Public Schools | Public School District | 45 |
| Spencer-E Brookfield Public Schools | Public School District | 12 |
| Swampscott Public Schools | Public School District | 60 |
| Swansea Public Schools | Public School District | 20 |
| Tantasqua Regional & Union 61 Public Schools | Public School District | 50 |
| Wachusett Public Schools | Public School District | 59 |
| Wayland Public Schools | Public School District | 12 |
| West Bridgewater Public Schools | Public School District | 6 |
| West Springfiled Public Schools | Public School District | 5 |
| Whitman-Hanson Public Schools | Public School District | 25 |
| Winthrop Public Schools | Public School District | 25 |
| Woburn Public Schools | Public School District | 10 |
| Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech | Approved Special Education School | 46 |
| Learning Prep School | Approved Special Education School | 15 |
| May Center School for Autism and Developmental Disabilities | Approved Special Education School | 45 |
| N.E.A.R.I. School | Approved Special Education School | 10 |
| RFK Academy School | Approved Special Education School | 20 |
| Solstice School | Approved Special Education School | 10 |
| Bi-County Regional Education Center | Collaborative | 37 |
| Cape Cod Collaborative | Collaborative | 40 |
| CAPS Collaborative | Collaborative | 22 |
| Central Massachusetts SPED Collaborative | Collaborative | 70 |
| CREST Collaborative | Collaborative | 67 |
| EDCO Collaborative | Collaborative | 20 |
| READS Collaborative | Collaborative | 25 |
| South Coast Educational Collaborative | Collaborative | 50 |
| Southeastern MA Educational Collaborative | Collaborative | 40 |
| Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative | Collaborative | 20 |