*****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:**  | May 19, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Update on Action Steps to Support Schools, Students, and Families |

Since our meeting on April 26, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department or DESE) has continued to inform districts of new developments related to COVID-19 and to support schools and districts as they navigate teaching and learning during the pandemic.

In light of the increased mental health needs districts are reporting to us, we have been offering districts professional development opportunities and resources related to mental health. We are collaborating with Thriving Minds, a partnership between BRYT (Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition), the Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium, and the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy) on topics like school avoidance, leveraging school-based mental health staff, and establishing a school mental health team. We have been sharing these opportunities and others through the Commissioner’s Weekly Update.

To respond to districts’ ongoing need for staff in a variety of roles, we are working with MassHire to hold a virtual statewide education job fair on Wednesday June 15. We have also worked with the Registry of Motor Vehicles to recruit more people to become licensed to drive school vehicles.

As always, we continue to share the positive case numbers that districts report to us, and the DESE Rapid Respond COVID-19 Help Center remains open and available for consultation with districts and schools.

Attachments:

* [Commissioner’s Weekly Update](https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/commissioners-weekly-update-5-9-22-mental-health-resource-on-school-avoidance-school-nurse-day-leveraging-mental-health-staff?e=e54ceaa84b) – May 9, 2022
* [Commissioner’s Weekly Update](https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/commissioners-weekly-update-4-25-22-board-to-meet-early-college-grant-statewide-job-fair?e=e54ceaa84b) – April 25, 2022
* [Commissioner’s Weekly Update](https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/commissioners-weekly-update-4-19-22-pd-provider-registry-serving-all-hair-types-crush-covid-community-of-practice?e=e54ceaa84b) – April 19, 2022