**From:** DeLorenzo, Lee E (DESE)
**Sent:** Monday, April 13, 2020 6:07 PM
**To:** Charter Leaders (DOE) Charter Business (DOE) Charter Trustees
**Cc:** Bagg, Alison (DESE) <Alison.W.Bagg@mass.gov>
**Subject:** Charter School Update, 4/13/2020

Dear Charter Leaders, Business Managers and Board Chairs,

We continue to thank you for your leadership during these unique times. I have been speaking with leaders across the state over the past weeks and am humbled by the ingenuity and dedication displayed by the charter sector. Please continue to outreach to us with questions or suggestions. Over the next week or so, staff from our office will reach out to see how you are doing, what resources you need in order to implement your remote learning plan, and what questions you have for us. We will not be able to answer your questions in the moment, but will gather inquiries and requests to better provide whatever resources we can.

The best way to [be in touch with us remains over email](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/contactbytopic.html).

Be safe and healthy. We are sending you our very best.

Alison

## Schedule Amendments Granted for all Commonwealth and Horace Mann Charter Schools

Commissioner Riley has aligned the minimum length of the school year for all charter schools to be the same as public school districts (180 days) and has removed any requirement to submit an amendment to document this change. The Commissioner’s memorandum to this effect is attached. Charter schools will report their total number of days of instruction for 2019-2020 in their Annual Reports and will report the number of "in person" days as well as the number of "remote learning" days.

## 180 Day School Year Requirement Reminder

### Required Number of School Days

Commissioner Riley has updated [DESE's guidance about the requirement for 180 days of school](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/180day.html) to provide relief to districts and charter schools. This policy applies to the current (2019-2020) school year only. *(Note: The Department will continue to revisit this guidance if the situation warrants it.)*

1. All days lost to health, weather, or safety emergencies between the **first day of the school year and March 15** must be made up by rescheduling full school days to ensure a 180-day school year.
2. All days lost to health, weather, or safety emergencies between **March 16 and June 1** must be made up to ensure a 180-day school year or until the district has reached **its previously scheduled 185th day, *whichever comes first*.** If all five snow days have been used prior to this point, the district is not required to scheduled additional school days.
3. Districts will not be expected to make up any days lost to health, weather, or safety emergencies that occur **after June 1.**

**The longest that any school district will be required to go is its scheduled 185th day. No schools will be required to be in session after June 30.** Please note: remote learning days do not count as school days toward the 180 day requirement.

### April Vacation

The Department received questions about whether charter schools should keep their planned April school vacation week this year (the week of Patriots' Day, April 20) or use that four-day school week to continue the remote learning plan they have put in place. Each charter school board of trustees establishes the annual school calendar, consistent with state standards outlined in the [Student Learning Time regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html?section=all) and commitments made in the school's charter. The board of trustees **may adjust** the school calendar to meet the needs of its community. **This is a local decision.** For charter schools considering using part or all of the April vacation week to provide continuity of learning for students, please note that Patriots' Day is a statewide legal holiday. Schools cannot operate on state or federal holidays, including professional development days for staff.

If a charter school continues to provide remote learning program for students from April 21 to 24, the charter school is not required to go beyond its previously scheduled 181st day. Charter schools that maintain the April vacation week as a school vacation will be expected to resume their remote learning program on April 27 and conclude the school year no earlier than the previously scheduled 185th day.

* Please contact Director Alison W. Bagg if you have any questions about this guidance.

## MCAS COVID-19 Information

This spring’s regular administration of grade-level MCAS tests for students in grades 3-10 has been **canceled.**

* [On the Desktop: Cancellation of MCAS for Spring 2020 ](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0410mcas-soa-budgets.docx) — April 10, 2020

## Site Visit Edits and Follow-up for Data Requests

OCSSR staff may begin to reach out to school leaders to engage in ongoing work (data requests or site visit report edits). We have been given the green light to begin this outreach. If you do not have the time or capacity to engage with us on this work, please [let us know](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/contactbytopic.html) and we will give you the time you need to take care of your students, families, and community.

# Tips for Safe Videoconferencing

# Commissioner Riley’s most recent On the Desktop shares a link to **Tips for Safe Videoconferencing**. See the attached PDF or visit the [Attorney General’s Office to see the most recently released a memo](https://www.mass.gov/news/ags-office-issues-tips-for-safe-video-conferencing-during-covid-19-pandemic) on **video conferencing safety**.

# MA Charter Schools COVID-19 Information and Resources

We encourage all charter schools to continue to check the [Department’s main COVID-19 webpage](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/) for updates during this emergency. The OCSSR is also [posting](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/) guidance, resources and updated information related to Massachusetts charter schools during the COVID-19 outbreak. You can access the charter school COVID-19 website from the [Departments main COVID-19](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/) page and select “Charter Schools” ([MA Charter Schools COVID-19 Information and Resources](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/)). This webpage now includes a charter school remote learning page. More information about sharing plans and resources is below.

[**Charter School Remote Learning**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/charter/remote-learning.html)

We will continue to build on our [charter school remote learning webpage](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/charter/remote-learning.html) and share how other charter schools are continuing to provide learning for students during this time. If you would like to provide ideas and resources to other schools and would like to be a part of this list, then please share your plans and resources to **Dissemination Specialist****Esther Jeong** at esther.jeong@mass.gov.

We hope you find the information on these new websites helpful to you and your school community. If you have any questions on who to contact in the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, feel free to reach out to charterschools@doe.mass.edu and your email will be directed to the appropriate staff member.

Be well.

-Lee DeLorenzo