**From:** DeLorenzo, Lee E (DESE) <Lee.Delorenzo@mass.gov>   
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2020 10:13 AM  
**To:** Charter Leaders (DOE) Charter Business (DOE) Charter Trustees   
**Cc:** Bagg, Alison (DESE) Hopkins, Alyssa (DESE) Laghetto, Joanna (DESE)   
**Subject:** Charter School Update, 5/22/2020

Dear Charter Leaders, Business Managers and Board Chairs,

I hope this message finds you healthy and safe. Thank you for your continued leadership during these times. It was good to see many of you over Zoom during the last few weeks.

This update includes newly posted information on the charter school application and expansion cycle as well as upcoming opportunities to join meetings or webinars. Also included are slides from the recent annual report webinar.

Please continue to [reach out to us with](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/contactbytopic.html) your questions. With your input and inquires, we are able to make better decisions and provide guidance that you need. We will be sending a survey next week to assess your PPE needs, please keep an eye out for that survey.

Best to you all,

Alison

## Information on 2020-2021 Charter School Application and Expansion Cycle

Instructions and deadlines for the upcoming 2020-2021 [charter application](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=app2) and [expansion](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/?section=requests) cycle are posted online, including [estimates on the availability of seats](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/app/nss-projections.xlsx) for new charter school growth and the [2020 lowest 10 percent ranking](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment/CapIncrease/). The Department will accept charter applications and charter expansions for most communities, with the exception of those districts that are near, at, or approaching net school spending caps, such as Boston, Lynn, Malden, Randolph, Salem, Somerville, and Springfield.

***Due to the uncertain impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on a number of factors, estimates for the availability of seats are subject to significant change.***Seat estimates are made available to assist applicants in planning for the submission of a charter application or charter expansion but do not guarantee the number of seats available for award in any district during the 2020-2021 cycle. The actual number of seats that may be available for award in any district in any particular year cannot be predicted with certainty and is dependent on several factors, including district enrollment, district spending levels, student enrollment for existing charter schools, and changes in the net school spending (NSS) caps of individual districts. The availability of seats in any district is subject to change and, in this year, we anticipate those changes may be significant. Due to the uncertain impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, applicants should expect significant variation in the number of projected seats available for award once state and local budgets are finalized, which may not be until well into FY2021. The Department will discuss adjustments to projections with all schools seeking expansions or new charter(s) when updated FY2021 net school spending is available.

**New Charter School Application Process:**

Boards of trustees that currently hold the charter(s) of school(s) that have undergone one successful renewal; are not presently under conditions or probation; and are identified as in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations are eligible to participate in a one stage charter application process. Charter schools that do not meet all of these parameters may consult with the Department regarding their unique circumstances and eligibility.

Existing boards of trustees are required to submit a letter of intent **no later than 12 noon on July 1st** to notify the Department of their plans to apply for a new charter. If required, proven provider review and determinations occur over the summer with a final application due October 23rd.

**Amendments to Enrollment, Grade Span, and/or Charter Region:**

If you intend to request changes to your charter school maximum enrollment, grade span, or charter region, please ensure that you follow the instructions in the Department’s [Amendment Guidelines](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/amendmentguidelines.docx) (published May 2020). Instructions for expansion requests involving enrollment or grades have **minor additions**. Requests for the expansion of existing schools are due **no later than 12 noon p.m. on July 30th.**  

If you are unsure whether the type of growth envisioned by the existing school would require participation in the charter application or charter amendment process, please consult with Alyssa Hopkins.

* Any and all questions about the [availability of seats](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/app/nss-projections.xlsx), [lowest 10 percent ranking](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment/CapIncrease/), the [charter application process](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=app2), or the [charter amendment process](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/?section=requests) should be directed to Alyssa Hopkins at [Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov](mailto:Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov).

## 2020-2021 School Year Schedule Considerations: Charter Amendments

We have received several inquiries regarding prospective charter amendments for the length of the 2020-2021 school year. As a reminder, in April, Commissioner Riley amended the terms of every school’s charter related to the length of the school year to permit all charter schools to operate in alignment with all current and future executive orders related to school closure. This action by the commissioner will apply to the 2020-2021 school year if an executive order is in place.

Due to the significant uncertainty at this time about the 2020-2021 school year, the Department is discouraging schools from submitting prospective schedule amendment requests that may be addressed by a future executive order. The Department appreciates the unique concerns of charter schools with school schedules that exceed the 180-day requirement and will support all charter schools in addressing the unique challenges of the next school year, including a coordinated and nimble approach to charter amendment requests prompted by factors related to COVID-19. Requests will be accepted throughout the 2020-2021 school year if a charter amendment is required**.** Similar to years when weather emergency closures exceed the required five days built into school calendars, the Department will treat all temporary schedule amendments for the 2020-2021 school year as extraordinary circumstances. The Department will review the status of state-wide planning in July to provide updated guidance for schools with 180+ school days.

* Contact Alyssa Hopkins at [Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov](mailto:Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov) if you have any questions about charter amendments.

## Meetings Next Week: Local and Regional Transportation Reimbursement and Vendor Contract Payments

Please join either one of the two Zoom meetings scheduled for next Wednesday or Thursday. We will provide information and guidance about FY20 local and regional transportation reimbursements as well as vendor contract payments.

**Wednesday, May 27th at 2:00pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/97238931657?pwd=Umh2OWpBMlNNRndsRVVnT1pHK2w2UT09>

Meeting ID: 972 3893 1657 Password: 660824

        US Toll-free 888 475 4499 Meeting ID: 972 3893 1657

**Thursday May 28th at 10:00am**

<https://zoom.us/j/97098869866?pwd=SU9MbFJselNhNkdHcDc5cWdRYitEQT09>

Meeting ID: 970 9886 9866 Password: 428335

        US Toll-free 877 853 5257 Meeting ID: 970 9886 9866

* Contact [Joanna Laghetto](mailto:Joanna.C.Laghetto@mass.gov) if you have any questions.

## CARES Act/ESSER RFP Available and Upcoming Webinars (June 3 and 10)

The ESSER RFP is now posted at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2021/113/> for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). This grant, authorized under section 18003 of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), provides districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had and continues to have on elementary and secondary schools.

The RFP includes district allocation amounts, as well as the application workbook and other resources and instructions needed to apply for this grant. Districts may choose one of two possible deadlines to submit their ESSER application:

**Option 1: Apply by Monday, June 15, 2020 for funds for FY20**: Applicants that intend to obligate any funds in FY20 (The FY20 period of availability is March 13 through June 30, 2020.) should submit by this deadline.

**Option 2: Apply by Wednesday, July 1, 2020 for funds for FY21**: Applicants that do not intend to obligate any funds in FY20 but instead plan to begin using these funds for FY21 costs should submit by July 1 (The FY21 period of availability is July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.).

*Unless applicants have FY20 COVID-19-related expenses from March 13, 2020 through June 30, 2020, they should submit under Option 2 for an FY21 start.*

The [ESSER page](http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/) of the federal grants section of DESE’s website has information and resources on these funds, including a [Quick Reference Guide](http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/qrg-113.docx) *(download)*that details allowable costs and other important information.

Our **Federal Grants Office will hold two (same) 90-minute webinars in June**to provide more detailed information on ESSER funds and the application process. Participants must register in advance. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the webinar. **Please register for only one session by clicking the link next to the date**: 

* 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 3rd:  <https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_J11R2sorRd-zi-CCj--GLA>
* 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 10th: <https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZdkpbzLiQrmdSBwEaUqJGw>

## [COVID-19 Information and Resources](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/)

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| **Recent Updates** |  |
| **05/20/2020 1:15pm** | [ACLS: Moving Assessments Forward, Assessment Policy Change due to COVID-19](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/acls.html) |
| **05/19/2020 2:30pm** | [MTEL Testing Centers closings due to COVID-19](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/mtel-notice.html) |
| **05/19/2020 11:50am** | [CIS: Remote Learning Webinar Schedule (Word) — Updated](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/learn-at-home/cis-supporting-remote-learning.html) |
| **05/18/2020 10:20am** | [SPED: Additional Resources (Excel) — Updated](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html#state-resources) |

[**Recent On the Desktop Messages**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html)

* High School Graduation Guidelines — May 21, 2020*(attached)*
* [New SOA Plan Deadline — May 14, 2020](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0615new-soa-plan-deadline.docx)
* [Return to School Working Group — May 14, 2020](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0514return-to-school-working-group.docx)
* [Remote Learning Survey — May 13, 2020](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0513remote-learning-survey.docx)

## Annual Report Webinars

Attached to this update are the slides from the Annual Report Webinar Zoom presentation with embedded links. If you are interested in watching the webinar, please view the recording here:   
<https://zoom.us/rec/share/3ulJJb72rnJOXK_xr0PSSJUAQ7_laaa8g3Qa_vZfzeuH3tGcai--dLx4JjuNNto> Password: 3r+.4Ev!

* As always, please reach out to [charterschools@doe.mass.edu](mailto:charterschools@doe.mass.edu) or your OCSSR contact if you have questions about completing the [2019-20 Annual Report](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=annual).

*Sent by Lee.*

*Be well!*

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| --- | --- |
| **Lee E. DeLorenzo**  Project Coordinator  **W1** 781-338-3227 | **W2** 781-338-3224  [Lee.DeLorenzo@mass.gov](mailto:Lee.DeLorenzo@mass.gov)  *Pronouns: she, her, hers* | [Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/)  Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148  [Web](http://www.doe.mass.edu/) | [Twitter](https://twitter.com/maschoolsk12) | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsDESE/) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/MassachusettsESE) | [Newsletters](http://www.doe.mass.edu/resources/newsletter-signup.aspx) |