



*News from Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley & the  
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

## **On the Desktop - July 27, 2020**

### **Additional Staff Training Days this Fall**

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Assistant Superintendents,

Our educators and staff are essential to our preparations for a safe and successful fall school reopening. Following collaborative discussions with the teachers' unions, I am announcing today that school districts will have 10 additional days at the start of the 2020-2021 school year to prepare for the reopening of schools. The full memorandum of understanding with the DESE, the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, AFT-Massachusetts, and the Boston Teachers' Union is attached. It states that DESE and the unions have a shared commitment to the safety and well-being of students, families, and staff; they are collaborating to support a successful start to the school year; and they recognize the need to provide additional time for educators and staff to prepare for the start of instruction.

To provide sufficient training for educators and staff, I will reduce the 180 day and student learning time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year to 170 days and 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools), so long as districts begin providing instruction to students no later than September 16, 2020.

If a district is unable to meet the September 16, 2020 requirement, it may apply for a waiver. Any request for a waiver should be submitted by email to [reopeningk12@mass.gov](mailto:reopeningk12@mass.gov) no later than Friday, August 14, 2020 and must include a full description of the justification for the request.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
EDUCATION,  
THE MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION,  
THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, MASSACHUSETTS and  
THE BOSTON TEACHERS UNION

WHEREAS: The safety and well-being of students, families, and staff has been and continues to be our top priority as an educational community.


WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT-MA), and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) are working together collaboratively to support a successful start to the new school year.

WHEREAS: DESE, MTA, AFT-MA and BTU recognize and agree that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing additional time for our educators and staff to prepare prior to the start of instruction of students is important for a safe and successful fall reopening.

NOW, THEREFORE:

1. DESE agrees that school districts will have 10 additional days at the start of the 2020-2021 school year before instruction of students begins, to work with educators to prepare for the new school year.
2. The Commissioner will reduce the 180-day and student learning time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year to 170-days and 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools) so long as districts begin providing instruction to students no later than September 16, 2020. If a district is unable to meet the September 16, 2020 requirement, it may apply for a waiver.

For the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

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Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner

7/27/2020

Date

For the Massachusetts Teachers Association:

DocuSigned by:  
*Merrie Najimy*  
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Merrie Najimy, President

7/27/2020  
Date

For the American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts:

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*Beth Kontos*  
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Beth Kontos, President

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For the Boston Teachers Union:

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*Jessica Tang*  
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Jessica Tang, President

7/27/2020  
Date