



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

## On the Desktop - April 24, 2020

### Further Guidance on 2019-2020 School Year Requirements

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, and Collaboratives,

We continue to receive inquiries about the requirements for this school year. Please keep in mind that given the significant disruption to school, the focus should not be on the minimum requirements for districts but on how we can best keep teaching and learning going for students' benefit. With the Governor's recent order closing school buildings for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year, we offer the following updated guidance.

**Recognizing that local remote learning plans were still being developed during the first week of ordered school closures, every district is expected to go to at least its previously scheduled 185<sup>th</sup> day. However, if the district continued remote learning during vacation days on April 21-24, the district is expected to go until its previously scheduled 181<sup>st</sup> day. A reminder: districts can always decide to go longer.**

A school committee or relevant executive board may file an appeal of the 185<sup>th</sup> day school end date to the Commissioner if they can demonstrate that their remote learning model was fully functional during the week of March 16 or can present other exceptional circumstances. Those appeals should be directed to Associate Commissioner Helene Bettencourt, [Helene.H.Bettencourt@mass.gov](mailto:Helene.H.Bettencourt@mass.gov). Helene can be reached by phone at 781-338-3120.

People have also asked when the school year can end for **high school seniors**. Under the Student Learning Time regulations, [603 CMR 27.05](#), seniors may be released up to 12 school days before the school's regularly scheduled closing date (i.e., the date that would have been the 180<sup>th</sup> school day). Even as districts are continuing remote teaching and learning through day 181 or 185, they can maintain the originally scheduled release date for seniors, as long as it is no more than 12 school days before what would have been day 180 for the current school year.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner