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Commissioner

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MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents,
Leaders of Special Education Schools, Collaborative Leaders, and Leaders of
Private Schools

From: Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner

Date: June 5, 2020

Subject: Guidance on Required Safety Supplies for Re-Opening Schools

With key health metrics continuing to improve in the Commonwealth and the Governor's four-part overall economic reopening plan underway, this short guidance document is focused on one important aspect of re-opening schools: key safety supplies.

This is another piece of school re-opening guidance that we are continuing to issue on a rolling basis. As you know, yesterday evening, we released initial guidance for summer programs. More comprehensive guidance on special education programs will come early next week. And final summer school guidance as well as initial guidance on fall re-opening will be released in the coming weeks.

We are issuing this guidance on key safety supplies now so that districts can begin the ordering process for critical items that may be harder to procure and/or have longer potential delivery times. In this document, we provide specific information that will allow districts and schools to make these key safety purchases as soon as possible.

Below, we outline required supply items and initial recommended ordering quantities for the first 12 weeks of school based on our best estimates at this time. We also detail the support that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and partner state agencies can provide to assist you with your acquisition work.

This guidance has been informed by consultation with state agency partners, professionals in the preparedness field, and district and school leaders. We will provide updated guidance as needed.

Overview of Current Health and Safety Guidelines

We are operating with the best information we have as of early June about how to maintain the health and safety of our students and staff in any in-person school programs and limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Based on federal and state guidance and recommendations available at this time, safely re-opening schools will require that the following components are in place:

Staying home if sick: As part of the social compact of re-opening, students and staff must stay home if they are feeling sick or have any symptom associated with COVID-19. This means that schools will need to have enhanced protocols in place for managing staff and student absences.

Face coverings and masks: Students and staff must wear face coverings or masks, with exceptions only for those students or staff for whom it is not safe to do so due to age, medical conditions, or other considerations. In cases in which face coverings or masks are not possible, social distancing of 6 feet is required, unless not feasible due to the personal situation. Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks. Schools must have backup disposable masks available for students who need them. Staff may choose to wear their own mask or one provided by the school.

Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing: All students and staff must engage in frequent handwashing, including upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing or sneezing, and before dismissal. Protocols must be established for effective handwashing in which individuals use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content can be used.

Maintaining 6 feet of separation at all times: All students and staff must maintain a social distance of 6 feet to the greatest extent possible. Desks must be spaced at least 6 feet apart and facing the same direction, and protocols must be developed to maintain this distance when students are entering and exiting the building and moving through the school (including to and within restrooms) when feasible.

Isolation and discharge protocols for students who may become ill during the day: Schools must develop protocols for isolation and discharge of students who become sick during the school day. A specific room must be maintained for students with COVID-19 symptoms that is separate from the nurse's office or other space where other ailments are treated.

Smaller, isolated groups of students assigned to one teacher: Successfully implementing 6 feet of social distancing will require significantly smaller class sizes and reduced staff-to-student ratios. Furthermore, where feasible, programs should isolate individual groups of students with one consistently assigned teacher, and groups should not mix with other students or staff. At this time, group sizes are restricted to a maximum of 10 students, with a maximum of 12 individuals, including students and staff, in each room.

Regular cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and disposal protocols: Schools will need to undertake new protocols and routines to ensure that facilities and surfaces are regularly cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected in accordance with health and safety guidelines and that hazardous materials are disposed of properly.

Entry screening and other facility operations: While additional information about symptom screening and other facility operations will be provided in the coming weeks, after discussions with the COVID-19 Command Center's Medical Advisory Committee, it is not recommended to temperature check students at entry due to the significant number of both false positive and false negative results.

Specifically for this document, we used the following basic assumptions to develop the required supply items and initial recommended ordering quantities:

- Students will bring their own face coverings or masks to school, but schools will have a backup supply of masks on hand for students who do not have them, or if their masks become otherwise not useable during the school day.
- Schools will provide face coverings or masks for all teachers and staff who do not bring their own.
- Students and staff will engage in frequent hand sanitizing.
- Custodians will need to be equipped with appropriate masks, gloves, and a proper waste disposal medium.
- Nurses and health providers will need additional specialized supplies to properly isolate and discharge suspected COVID-19 positive students.

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list of all COVID-19-related supplies. Schools will need to consider additional supply categories – such as hand soap and building cleaning supplies – for which they may need to increase current purchasing quantities. However, these items are not the focus of the lists below, as we are not aware of any supply constraints that would limit the ability of districts or schools to purchase these items on typical timelines.

Purchasing Responsibility

It is each school district's responsibility to acquire the supplies needed to safely and responsibly re-open their school buildings consistent with forthcoming state guidance. The Department will provide technical assistance on ordering the types and volume of supplies outlined in this document, facilitate access to suppliers on state contracts, and offer a dedicated help desk.

The Department's issuance of the federal Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund (ESSER), <http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/>, provides districts with immediate access to grants to fund the cost of supplies.

Required Long Lead Time Supplies and Volumes

The Department is providing the following required supply list with initial recommended volumes to enable school districts to calculate their individual school needs for an initial 12-week operating period. The replacement rate for the listed items is based on informed estimates from our subject matter experts. Districts should plan to measure actual usage rates during the first 30 days of building operations and adjust their reorder levels accordingly.

DISPOSABLE MASKS

Initial recommended quantities per 100 individuals per group per school

Group	Quantity per 100 per group	12-week Supply at 100% Attendance	12-week Supply at 50% Attendance	12-week Supply at 25% Attendance	Assumptions
Students	100 masks per week	1,200	600	300	1 disposable mask per week per student (to supplement the cloth masks provided by parent/guardian).
Teachers and other staff	500	6,000	3,000	1,500	5 disposable masks per week per teacher.
School nurses and health providers	1,000	12,000	6,000	3,000	10 disposable masks per week per school nurse.

MATERIALS FOR STAFF MEMBERS WHO MAY BE IN HIGH-INTENSITY CONTACT WITH STUDENTS OR HANDLING WASTE MATERIALS

*Initial recommended quantities calculated per 1 staff
(e.g. nurses, custodians, and some special education teachers and other staff)*

Item	1-week Supply for 1 Staff	12-week Supply	Assumptions
Disposable Nitrile Gloves	10	120	10 pairs disposable nitrile gloves per week, per staff.
Disposable Gowns	10	120	10 disposable gowns per week, per staff.
Eye Protection	2	n/a	2 re-usable eye protection per staff total.
Face Shields	2	n/a	2 reusable face shields per staff total.
Waste Disposal Medium	1	n/a	1 unit per staff total.
N-95 Ventilating Masks* <i>Note: N-95 masks are recommended only if staff will be in contact with a suspected COVID-19 positive case and/or performing aerosol-generating procedures</i>	10	120	10 N-95 masks per week, per staff.

*KN-95 Ventilating Masks can be substituted for N-95 masks if they have been tested for filtration effectiveness (MDPH Comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidance, May 21, 2020)

BUILDING SUPPLIES

Item	1-week Supply for one building	12-week Supply at 100% Attendance	12-week Supply at 50% Attendance	Assumptions
Hand Sanitizer	1/3 gallon/classroom	4 gallons/classroom	2 gallons/classroom	1/3 gallon of hand sanitizer per classroom, per week at 100% attendance.
Disposable Nitrile Gloves	20	240	240	20 disposable nitrile gloves (pair) per week, per custodial staff member at 100% attendance.
Waste Disposal Medium	1	n/a	n/a	1 disposal medium per school building.

These items and volumes are based on current existing federal and state guidance (see links below), with support from DESE's consulting experts.

- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/comprehensive-personal-protective-equipment/download> (*download*)
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/eea-covid-19-cleaning-of-restrooms-best-practices-5-18-20/download> (*download*)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

DESE/OSD State Purchasing Assistance

As we work to integrate our K-12 return to school guidance with the Commonwealth's overall multiphase reopening plan, DESE and the Operational Services Division (OSD) are committed to providing support to districts in their acquisition of required supplies.

Use of State Contracts: The Operational Services Division can support K-12 public education purchasing needs by providing guidance and access to OSD's Statewide Contracts (SWCs). To assist in these efforts, a [comprehensive list of vendors](#) (*download*) and the PPE supplies they sell is posted on mass.gov and the [COMMBUYS homepage](#). The SWC vendors are a great resource for supplies and equipment. Utilizing state contracts is normal business practice for our municipal colleagues, but should questions arise on how to access vendor quotes, DESE and OSD staff are available to provide assistance.

The Operational Services Division will continue its work with SWC vendors to understand their supply chains so they are ready to fulfill supply orders from individual public buying entities. The supplies schools will need continue to be in demand from all sectors, and OSD is taking steps to enable buyers to find stock from one of the many SWC vendors able to provide these products.

The Department and OSD are in the process of setting up other possible forms of acquisition support. This includes the concept of DESE aggregating individual district orders and executing a "Big Buy" order, with districts responsible for paying for their individual order.

More information about how districts can join the Big Buy will be released no later than Wednesday, June 10. If districts do not wish to participate in the Big Buy, we urge you to move forward and place your key supply orders immediately.

Available Technical Assistance: The [OSD Help Desk](#) is available to answer questions, help buyers access the SWC vendor list, and advise them on where to find specific products. In addition, Jonna Willis, DESE Procurement Director, is available to support districts with questions. You may contact her at Jonna.T.Willis@mass.gov.

Reference Materials for Supplies Purchasing

- [List of SWC vendors](#) (*download*) on mass.gov and on COMMBUYS.com. The list identifies SWC vendors that are able to fulfill needed supply orders. The list will be updated weekly.
- Here is a link to [supply guidance](#) to ensure buyers understand the products and their intended uses.