



From the Desk of the Superintendent

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For timely updates and information.... Twitter: @MaldenPublic Website: maldenps.org

Malden Public Schools now facing new developments arising due to COVID-19

Gov. Baker orders school buildings closed for remainder of school year; DESE Commissioner Riley introduces new guidance for phased Remote Learning

Governor Charlie Baker, on April 21, issued an emergency order extending the closure of all public and private schools through the end of the school year, and the closure of all non-emergency childcare programs until June 29, 2020 in an effort to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth.

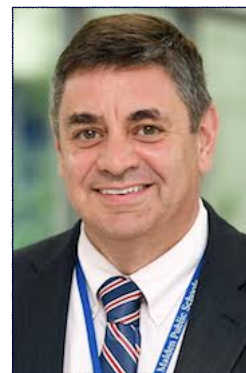
On Friday, April 24, Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Commissioner Jeffrey Riley released additional guidance on remote learning that builds on the initial guidance released on March 26, with a deeper focus on two areas:

- Further defining the recommended elements of a quality remote learning program, including a focus on teaching the content standards most critical for student success in the next grade level, and
- Encouraging districts to move all students towards successful engagement in remote learning, with a focus on addressing fundamental needs. More on Remote Learning inside on Pages 2,3,7

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all,

It is my sincere hope and wish that you, your loved ones and all those close to you are safe and healthy as we continue to face these unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in ways we could not have ever imagined just a few short weeks ago. Like our colleagues statewide, we of the Malden Public Schools have had to meet many new challenges, accepting and making a number of hard decisions on behalf of our school community. Through it all, as I have stressed from the very start of this crisis, any and all responses to these challenges are made with one priority: The safety and well-being of our students and their families. In a **Letter to the Malden School Community**, included inside this communication, I have addressed many points and details related to our updated response and programming with relation **See P.6**



Superintendent Oteri

Supt. Oteri outlines sustained progress of Remote Learning Plan for Malden School Committee; Stresses equity, accessibility

Malden Public Schools staff focuses on supporting the social-emotional health of students and their families, within an educational balance

By Steve Freker

For the Malden Public Schools

Remote learning has become the new reality for Malden students and those around the world due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Malden Public Schools Supt. John Oteri told the members of the Malden School Committee at its recent meeting that Malden students are meeting, and often exceeding, the expectations of connecting with students and engagement in the Remote Learning Program. Supt. Oteri relayed an illuminating statistic in sharing an anecdote with the members. “I was participating in a statewide task force and some others there were talking about how they were connecting with students,” the Superintendent said. “I told them about our numbers at the Salemwood School, where we have over 1,100 students and our staff had personally connected with all but nine kids. They were blown away.” Almost immediately, MPS Director of Guidance Erin Craven chimed in, “But we got those nine, since!” “Good job!” a School Committee member exclaimed.



With the initial closing of school buildings until May 4 and the subsequent announcement that schools would remain closed through the end of the school year (June 19), Remote Learning has become the norm for Malden Public School students and most around the world

Remote Learning and Accessibility By the Numbers:

—At latest count, Malden Public Schools (MPS) has a population of 6,703 students, with over 1,800 in Grades 9-12 and nearly 5,000 in Grades PreK-8 Every H.S. student in Grades 9-12 is assigned a loaner Chromebook laptop device
—From March 29-April 3, to address families without access to a device, MPS distributed over 750 loaner Chromebooks to Malden families —For families without home internet access, MPS has purchased Wifi “hotspots” to be activated in their homes
—From May 7-12, MPS, with the assistance of a community volunteer group, will be delivering over 600 more Chromebooks to families at their homes

Ward Three School Committee member, Jennifer Spadafora had initiated the discussion of Remote Learning, and asked about the success rate of connecting the lines of communication between MPS staff with students and their families. “We’re very pleased with the progress our staff has made,” Guidance Director Craven said. “We have been very successful in all of our grade levels. At the high school level, we have seen a 99% connection rate. *See P.8*

Superintendent Oteri's *Letter to the Malden School Community*

Dear Malden School Community

I want to thank you for your continued support during this pandemic. We are all navigating these uncharted waters together. These are extraordinary times and we will pull together as a school community to help make Malden stronger. As we have seen in the past six weeks, this situation is fluid and we are constantly making adjustments to our plans. During this time, two words may help you understand how we are working with our school community: patience and safety. Many of you are trapped at home and looking for answers. It may look like things are not moving quickly on the outside; however, I can assure you that inside our team, we are going very fast. Please be patient and understand that the decisions we make are made with safety as the first priority.

As we heard on Tuesday, April 21, Governor Baker extended the closure of all schools in Massachusetts through the end of the school year. For Malden, our last day of Remote Learning will be Friday, June 19, which was the scheduled 185th day of the school year. Using the suggestion of DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley, School Districts would not be required to go beyond the 185th day of the school year. During the press conference announcing the school closure, Commissioner Riley also noted that the next phase of remote learning will follow. Late Friday evening, April 24, DESE released the new guidelines. We expect to receive further communication from DESE early next week. When we receive that guidance and direction of the next phase of remote learning, we will then begin to work on that plan.

We will aim to have the plan ready by May 8, but please keep in mind that there are multiple steps involved in the process: writing the actual draft, vetting the proposal with several groups for feedback, scheduling discussions with union representation, and sharing with the School Committee, all of which must be completed before sharing it with staff and the larger learning community. In the meantime, the current Remote Learning Plan is still in place and resumes on Monday, April 27. Activities for the week of April 27th were developed and shared with teachers before the April break, so we are ready to go on Monday.



We know that access to technology is needed now more than ever. In early April, we distributed over 750 Chromebooks to families who lacked a device. This is in addition to the over 1,800 that are already part of a 1:1 initiative in Malden High School. We surveyed families, created appointments, secured and labeled devices, and had over a dozen administrators don protective gear to distribute these devices over four days. The priority was to families who needed technology at home and did not have it. We are very proud that we have over 2,500 devices out in the hands of our students.

We realize that there are some families who did not sign up at the first round of Chromebook distribution. We have offered a second and final distribution of Chromebooks. Currently we are surveying and capturing information of families who may still need a device. By the middle of next week, we will have a new survey for families who need a Chromebook. We will be delivering these Chromebooks instead of doing a pick-up distribution. The delivery is made possible due to many Malden volunteers of the Malden Neighbors organization and some community partners. Deliveries will take place between May 7 and May 12. We are very thankful for our volunteers to assist in this. This will be the last opportunity to request a Chromebook, so please make sure you fill out the online request form at our website: www.maldenps.org.

We also are aware that some families lack Wifi connectivity. The state is aware of this and is trying to leverage their influence with internet providers to provide free hotspots. There are several free hotspots in Malden. We will be looking to see what we can do *See Page 10*

Here in Malden... and across the nation, we salute our Lunch Heroes, who continue to distribute much-needed meals to our students



The Malden Public Schools Food Service Dept. continues to provide free meals (Breakfast & Lunch) at two sites: Malden High @ Ferry St. entrance/ CVS & Salemwood School, 529 Salem St. DAILY from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Both sites are DRIVE-UP and both meals may be received at once. Children do not have to be present @ pickup.

Why Teachers are like Mountain Goats

There are Five Reasons why teachers will get through the coronavirus crisis

By Susan Ward

Courtesy of tes.com

In education we often talk about how change is the only constant, but this is taking change to whole new extremes. The steady, dependable rhythm of school life has been obliterated, pretty much overnight. The well-worn furrows of daily routine have been exterminated. We are grappling with change at every possible level, amidst a wider climate of despair, disbelief and fear.

We are running childcare centers, upskilling ourselves in new technology, delivering home learning in its many forms, reaching out to families we know desperately need us. All while trying to keep our own loved ones safe and our own heads above water. Teachers and school leaders could be forgiven for letting the rising white noise of panic overwhelm and just quietly stepping away.

But we won't, and I will tell you why.

1. **Teachers are mountain goats.** Yes, the ground has moved beneath our feet. The landscape has split apart like never before, tectonic plates shifting and recomposing in strange new ways. But we are good at staying on our feet when an unexpected canyon gapes open between us and what we want to achieve; we are well versed in pressing on. Finding new ways to get someplace when the well-trodden routes are blocked is our day job.
2. **Teachers are resilient.** We think our way around problems. When a student doesn't understand something, we look for solutions, other ways to explain. Lateral thinking is our friend. Giving up is anathema. Teachers and school leaders are hard-wired to not throw in the towel. We get up each and every time we are knocked down, square our shoulders and try again.
3. **Teachers are scrappy.** We hold on to things when other people let go. It is that terrier-like tenacity that lets us win over evasive families, make breakthroughs with the chair-throwers and the biters and the "I-hate-you-leave-me-alone" children that we know need us the most. Our bone-deep, stubborn refusal to quit is a skillset likely to come in handy right about now.
4. **Teachers deal in people.** Our currency is relationships and it is through this that we get amazing things done. The families and children we work with trust us to know what to do, to guide them when they feel lost. This trust doesn't happen overnight, but through a million kindnesses, a thousand times of being human when you could have shrugged and walked away. Those tiny,



Finding new ways to get someplace when well-trodden routes are blocked

incremental gains tip the balance in our favor, giving us the privileged position of being trusted to help in this time of greatest possible need. Our families are turning to us for help, and we will not look away.

5. **Teachers play the long game.** Ours is not a quick-win profession. Sometimes it takes months or years to see the impact of our work with a child or family. Sometimes we never see it. But we know our actions affect people's lives and the choices they make for years to come. This new and terrible crisis will pass, and when it does, people will remember how you made them feel when the days were darkest. Teachers are perfectly placed to offer a candle against the dark, its flame unwavering. What we do now will define us as a profession for a very long time to come. We know this and it gives us strength.

Wherever and whatever your contribution at this time of greatest need, know that it matters. Nobody has a blueprint for how to deal with this stuff, we are all just working it out as we go along. Just do the best you can.

Be kind to yourself and your colleagues, keep your families close, and lock arms with your school community - because in the end, it is patience and love that will see us through.

Susan Ward is deputy headteacher at Kingsland Primary School in Peebles, in the Scottish Borders, Scotland

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE: The #1 priority of our response to the crisis has been the safety & well-being of our students and their families and that will not change

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to the developments presented to us by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of our chief aims is ensure that all Malden Public Schools students have access to our Remote Learning Program as well as our staff of educators and administrators who are providing it. Learning is continuing and will continue in the Malden Public Schools, to the completion of the school year on June 19.

Through the course of this crisis so far, we have all been forced to make dramatic changes in our day-to-day lives and for the Malden Public Schools community, it has been an enormous task to switch from centuries of an established learning model to an entirely new concept, and entirely different set of parameters in just weeks. We know it has been hard and we know it can and will continue to be frustrating at times. Please know that there have been plenty of positives as well coming from the situation we now face. Our entire staff misses and loves our students and will continue to express this through their commitment to them and the Malden community for the remainder of the school year and beyond. Malden families, please reach out and use the many resources which are available to you. We will continue to keep you updated via emails and telephone calls to keep you informed as new developments arise. Stay safe and be healthy!

—Superintendent John Oteri

To our Parents and Staff: Please take advantage of updates and other information related to the COVID-19 crisis, detailed on Twitter (@MaldenPublic), and on our website (maldenps.org). Also, take advantage of these other valuable websites which offer access to many valuable resources both locally and nationwide:

www.cityofmalden.org

www.maldenneighbors.org

www.cdc.gov **Twitter: @MassDPH**

DESE Commissioner Riley addresses new guidance on Remote Learning for Mass. public schools

The following communication was addressed from DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley to Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, Collaborative Leaders, and Private School Leaders on April 21, the day Governor Baker announced school buildings would be closed for the remainder of the school year

Earlier today, Governor Baker announced that public and private schools (not including residential special education schools) will stay closed through the end of the school year. This is a necessary step to keep everyone as healthy as possible. Remote learning is even more important now, and we will issue additional guidance to public schools later this week.



Commissioner Riley

I know that we still have further to go to make remote learning work smoothly for all students, and we are working with various stakeholders to help get public school students the technological resources they need. We want to help you make remote learning as easy and successful as possible.

I view our response to COVID-19 as having four phases:

(Phase 1) The initial school closures, with a focus on students' and families' immediate needs, such as safety and food;

(Phase 2) The initial remote learning recommendations, when we did not know how long schools would be closed;

(Phase 3) The remote learning update that will come later this week, knowing that we will not return to school this school year; and

(Phase 4) Re-opening school, a process that we hope will happen in the coming months.

Today's announcement gives us additional time to go deeper on the implementation of phase 3, while also giving time to plan for phase 4 and consider what that will look like. When we have more information **See Page 10**

The Malden Public Schools: 'Our Diversity is Our Strength'

The Malden school district is ranked #1 as the most culturally diverse by *niche.com* in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with Malden High School rated the #1 most culturally diverse secondary education school overall. Throughout the district, all educators, administrators and students are unified in our stated mission to cherish and embrace our diversity, striving for excellence in the classroom and beyond.



Participating in sports and other fitness activities brings together children of many different cultures and countries of origin. Above, the Malden High School baseball program hosted a free, citywide instructional baseball clinic at the Salemwood School Fieldhouse, before the pandemic was declared, with some of the Future Tornadoes shown above, along with their present-day Malden High players, in back, volunteering their time as clinic coaches. Steve Freker Photo/ For the Malden Public

School Committee receives update of Malden Public Schools administration of Remote Learning plan and other COVID-19 responses

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“When anyone from our staff contacts a students at all grade levels the question is not ‘Have you done your work?,’ it is always ‘Are you OK?’,” said Ms. Craven, “That is the protocol we have embraced in the Malden Public Schools.”

Malden High School principal Chris Mastrangelo echoed this sentiment. “We are so grateful to our staff and administration team in their endless efforts to connect with our students. It’s been overwhelming for our kids and we’ve looked at this situation from all sides,” he said. “When we call our students is is never ‘Why didn’t you...? It’s ‘How can we help you? Our goal is to connect our students to resources that can help them get them and their families get through this crisis as best they can, while continuing their education.”

“Our connect rate has been remarkable,” Supt. Oteri added,”and we have taken great care with our approach to Remote



For the second time this year (and second time, ever) on Monday, May 4, the Malden School Committee conducted its regular meeting remotely. This time, the meeting was able to allow public comment time, which included a prepared “thank you” message from Malden Education Association (MEA) President Deb Gesualdo noting Teachers Appreciation Week. *Steve Freker Photo/ For the Malden Public Schools*

Learning with a heightened sense of awareness to social-emotional health. “People are stressed. They are trapped in their homes and it is having an effect. There’s enough stress out there and we did not want to have a timeline-driven program. We want to allay fears and this is something all of our staff is aware of. The (state DESE) Commissioner has

been very strident on this as well.” Supt. Oteri said the stress caused in these times could manifest itself as well during the expected reopening of the schools this fall. “This crisis will have an effect when we return. PTSD will be a factor. This is something for which we all have to prepare. Until then we will continue to support our students and their families.”

Malden Public Schools Mission Statement

Malden Public Schools is a place where students are encouraged to follow their dreams and become well rounded members of our community. The Malden Public Schools prepare students to be independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners who: Work hard; Respect others; Cherish our diversity; Seek challenges; Discover and Develop their individual talents; Strive for academic excellence; and look to Demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Malden Public Schools graduates are prepared to be active participants in our economy and democracy.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MALDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FAMILIES with SNAP (Food Stamps) Benefits
... COVID-19 Emergency Monthly Supplements now available

**EMERGENCY SNAP SUPPLEMENTS
FOR ALL SNAP BENEFICIARIES**

All SNAP beneficiaries who get less than the maximum benefit for their household size will automatically get a supplement up to the maximum benefit.

1 PERSON HOUSEHOLDS WILL GET \$194

2 PERSON HOUSEHOLDS WILL GET \$355

Example: John receives the minimum SNAP benefit of \$16 each month. With the COVID-19 emergency supplement John will automatically receive an additional supplement benefit of \$178/mo to bring his total benefit up to \$194

**IF YOU ALREADY RECEIVE SNAP BENEFITS YOU WILL GET
THIS ADDED BENEFIT AUTOMATICALLY**

**IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP BUT NOT ENROLLED
YOU CAN STILL APPLY.**

CALL PROJECT BREAD FOR ASSISTANCE 1-800-645-8333

If Families are NOT on SNAP... they can apply NOW!

What if I do not get SNAP at the present time?

If you are low-income we encourage you to apply. If you are approved, you may also qualify for an extra SNAP payment. To apply:

- The fastest way to apply is to apply online/on your smartphone at DTAConnect.com.
- Go to Mass.gov/SNAP to print a paper SNAP application and learn where to send it.
- Call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 to apply over the phone

What if I need meals for my school age children?

While schools are closed, The Malden Public Schools district is providing FREE pre-packaged breakfast and lunch school meals for children. FREE meals may be picked up at Drive-Through locations at Malden High School in the Ferry Street/CVS parking lot OR at Salemwood School parking lot loop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from Monday through Friday. Children who get SNAP or are approved for free or reduced-price meals will get additional EBT benefits, likely in April and/or May.

A Letter to the Malden School Community

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to help with this as well.

We consult daily with our Public Health Department and with our Emergency Management Team in Malden. They are the experts in this pandemic and safety is the top priority of the Malden Public Schools. We will err on the side of safety. I know many of you are hoping to get into the school buildings (which have been sanitized) and retrieve personal belongings. We will not be able to do that until there is a relaxing of the restrictions in Malden. Hopefully we will be able to have people enter the buildings in June, but it will be a highly coordinated and strictly regulated process with our public health and safety partners. When we reach this point of re-entering the buildings to retrieve belongings we will notify you.

We know that there are many more questions than there are answers. We know that you are now entering your seventh week of being home, in many cases trying to work from home, trying to balance your time and your children's time on learning. We understand that this is difficult for you. It is difficult for us as well. In a few weeks, we switched hundreds of years of education to a new paradigm. We know it is not perfect. We also know that nothing will replace our traditional school. If there is a positive during this pandemic, it is that our educators entered the field because of a love of students. This unplanned six week absence has only reinforced to our staff that they are truly committed to, and sorely miss our students. Stay safe and healthy,

John Oteri
Superintendent of Malden Public Schools



We recognized Administrative Professionals Day in the month of April and SALUTE all of you in the Malden Public Schools! You keep our schools running!

COMMISSIONER'S LETTER Cont. from Page 6

on how we will safely reopen schools, we will share it. For now, I hope everyone will be sensitive to the range of emotions that may surface among families, students, and teachers and continue to help students with remote learning.

I appreciate all that you are doing to support learning and the well-being of your community during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION for the 2020-2021 School Year is now available online at Malden Public School website located at www.maldenps.org All forms, information available!