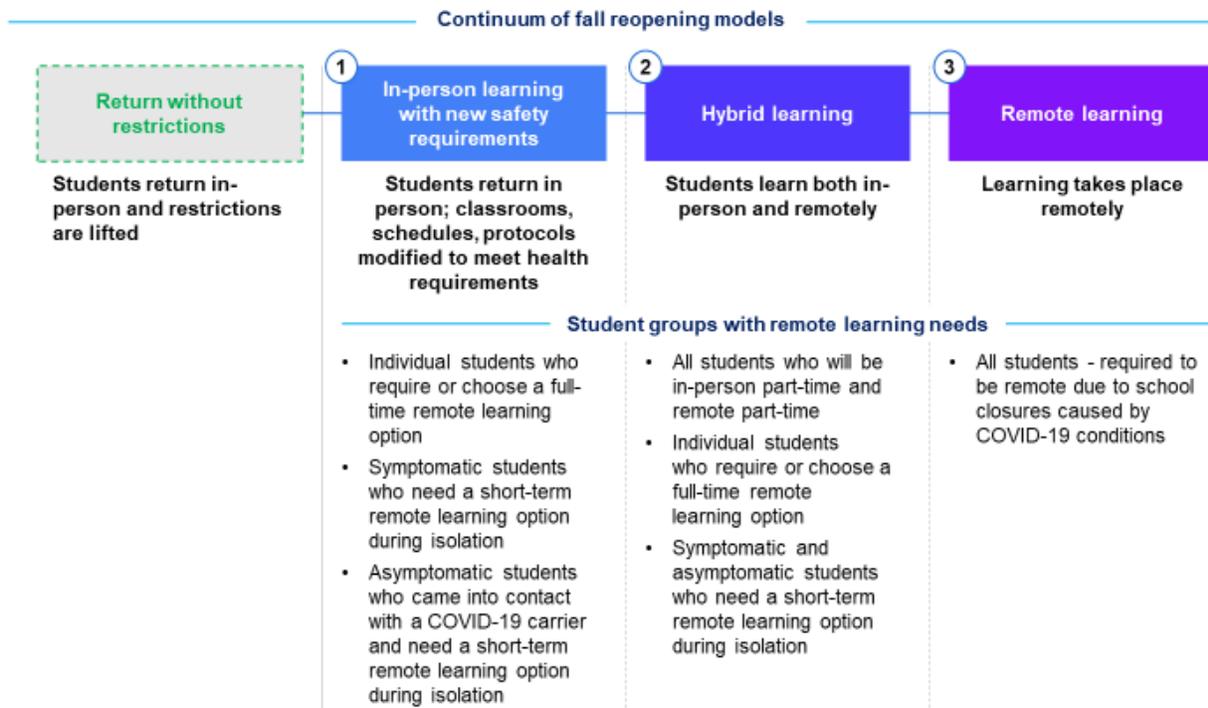




Remote Learning Supplemental Information and Resources

Updated: August 31, 2020

Building off of the [Remote Learning Guidance for Fall 2020](#), issued on July 24, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is issuing supplemental information and resources to **support districts and schools in refining and finalizing their remote learning plans and preparing for the start of the school year.**



As demonstrated in the chart above, regardless of a district’s or school’s reopening model – in-person learning with new safety requirements, hybrid learning, or fully remote learning – all schools will be providing remote learning to some extent. **This document provides recommendations, resources, and examples for remote learning across three critical areas:**

1. High-quality curriculum and instructional materials

Strong curricular materials are —critical and powerful tools, especially during this uncertain time. Districts that have coherent, high-quality curriculum have been able to pivot more easily and have seen more coherence among teachers during the pandemic. They help teachers [align their expectations to state standards](#) designed to keep students on track for success while providing guidance on how to tailor instruction to individual students’ needs. They are engaging, challenging, and culturally-relevant. Additionally, compared to other popular interventions, upgrading learning materials is [highly cost-effective](#).



The Department has compiled a number of resources to support districts in selecting and using high-quality curriculum and instructional materials and in supporting teachers to bring them to life, especially in hybrid or remote learning environments.

See [Appendix 1](#) for high-quality curriculum resources and [Appendix 2](#) for supplemental virtual content recommendations.

2. Organizing student schedules for structured learning time

All students, including those learning remotely, must receive at least the minimum amount of required instruction for the 2020-2021 school year:

- 850 hours for elementary schools, or 5 hours per day over 170 days
- 935 hours for secondary schools, or 5.5 hours per day over 170 days

Throughout the school day and week, students learning remotely should experience a combination of instructional activities, such as: live, synchronous instruction; small group or individual academic support; and asynchronous, independent work time; and have access to teachers or staff members at a regularly scheduled time to monitor ongoing progress and needs. With family input, schools should create and adhere to a consistent schedule of synchronous and asynchronous learning time for each child.

During asynchronous periods, schools should provide clear expectations for what students should be working on, what they need to submit, and when any assignments are due. Schools should take into consideration student and family schedules and allow for flexibility for students to complete asynchronously assigned tasks based on family schedules (such as in the evenings, on the following day, or at the end of a week). Students and families should clearly understand how attendance will be taken, how they will receive feedback on work completed asynchronously, and how they will be evaluated (such as grades).

Whether they are engaging in synchronous or asynchronous work, students learning remotely should have access to rigorous, relevant content; spend time in a range of content areas, including specials and enrichment; and have opportunities to exercise their voice and choice in activities.

Recommendations related to time ranges for student learning in different content areas can be found in [Appendix 3](#). Special considerations for Grades 9-12 are highlighted in [Appendix 4](#). Sample schedules can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

3. Organizing educator time to maximize time with students

For districts and schools operating an in-person or hybrid learning model, educators and staff members may be stretched across multiple learning environments, limiting their ability to directly engage with all students at all times. In these cases, it may be necessary for a district or school to supplement live teacher instruction and support with asynchronous, student-directed content. In these scenarios, it is recommended that:



- Students have opportunities to connect with adults from school as often as possible but at least once a day, for both relationship-building and academic support.
- Schools provide as much synchronous instruction and/or direct support as possible.
- Teachers provide regular, targeted, individualized or small-group instruction to students who are not meeting grade-level standards or who need additional support.

Districts and schools that are operating fully remotely are not limited by the same staffing constraints that in-person and hybrid models may experience. In this model, it is recommended that:

- Educators provide direct services to students for a comparable amount of time as they would typically provide in person, with students receiving direct instruction, support, or having access to a teacher for the majority of the scheduled school day.
- Schools and districts maximize the use of all educators to support students, including teaching or co-teaching a class, working with students individually or in small groups, facilitating independent work time, hosting advisory or office hours, providing feedback on student work, meeting with students and families, etc.
- Educators incorporate a variety of instructional activities, including those that allow students to move away from or turn off their screens and those that include physical movement, reading, writing, and working with physical materials.

For additional information on structuring student teacher time, refer to [Appendix 5](#).



Appendix 1: Resources and Support for High-Quality Curriculum and Instructional Materials (Updates for Option 2 in Fall Remote Learning Guidance, pg. 11)

Resources and Available Support to Districts

- [**CURATE \(Curriculum Ratings by Teachers\)**](#), convenes panels of Massachusetts educators to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials to Massachusetts standards as well as accessibility for students and usability by teachers. Reviews result in the publication of [user-friendly reports](#) that help districts cut through the noise in the curricular materials marketplace for [ELA](#), [math](#), and [science](#). Curricular materials rated as “meets expectations” qualify for a statewide [master service agreement](#), making them easier for districts to procure.
- The [**Evaluating & Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials for ELA, Math, and Science Network**](#) supports district teams to engage in a recommended four-phase process to select high-quality instructional materials for ELA, math, and/or science in any K-12 grade span. This [Quick Reference Guide](#) provides an overview of this recommended process. *If your district is considering high-quality instructional materials as part of its long-term continuous learning and/or Student Opportunity Act plan*, then consider joining this network, which combines three in-person differentiated sessions with monthly personalized virtual support. To apply, click [here](#). For more information, please contact the content-specific person:
 - ELA, Woodly.Pierre-Louis@mass.gov
 - Math, Ian.T.Stith@mass.gov
 - Science, Nicole.Scola@mass.gov

High-Quality Instructional Materials and Remote Instruction

- DESE’s [Center for Instructional Support](#) is offering a **five-part online module series** that reviews key instructional practices and provides tips and strategies for remote teaching aligned to the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice and the MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA/Literacy, Math, History/Social Science, and Science. Registration is coming soon. Questions: Claire.J.Abbott@mass.gov
- [EdReports](#) is releasing “[Instructional Materials Technology Information Templates](#)” from publishers to help local schools and districts better understand the digital design and capabilities of their instructional materials and to empower districts with information to select materials that will work best given technological capabilities and instructional vision.



- The [Collaborative for Student Success](#) is publishing adjustments that the highest rated curriculum publishers (defined by a “green” rating by EdReports) will be making for the 2020-21 school year. [Publications](#) focus on adjustments to curriculum scope and sequence, use of the materials in hybrid and remote settings, and support for students and families.
- The [Council of Chief State School Officers \(CCSSO\)](#) is sharing [recommendations](#) for high-quality materials (based on EdReports or the [Louisiana Department of Education](#) reviews) that support all district contexts and include free resources (open education resources).

Appendix 2: Supplemental Virtual Content Resources (Update for Option 3 in Fall Remote Learning Guidance, pg. 12)

While it is recommended that districts and schools select high quality, comprehensive curriculum and instructional materials through the resources listed in Appendix 1, there are many resources available that provide supplemental virtual content that educators can incorporate in a way that builds upon their current curriculum, enhances student engagement, voice, and choice, and that meets specific needs for delivering instruction remotely. Below is a list of vetted virtual content resourcesⁱ for various grade spans and subject areas.

GRADES K-2 Supplemental Virtual Content Resources	
Daily learning experience	Resources and notes for teacher planning
Reading foundational skills	Flyleaf EVERFI Heggerty
Engaging with complex text and writing	CKLA EL Education Great Minds In K-2, this should entail read-aloud with discussion and response to text.
Independent reading or listening	Epic Rivet Stories Podcast Local libraries’ digital lending services
Math	Great Minds Khan Academy ST Math ZEARN Math

GRADES K-2 Supplemental Virtual Content Resources	
Daily learning experience	Resources and notes for teacher planning
Science, Technology and Engineering or History and Social Science	C3 Inquires KidCitizen Mystery Science NSTA Daily Do Next Generation Science
Arts and physical education	BrainPop Jr. (Music) Carle's Art Studio (Visual Art) PBS (Theatre) PBS (Dance)
Exploration and play	<p>Young children learn through exploration and play, such as building with blocks, exploring nature, pretend play, and games. Schools should support students in grades K-2 to learn through play at home and can provide resources such as:</p> #AtHomewithFCRR family reading games Boston Children's Museum Play and Learning Activities

GRADES 3-5 Supplemental Virtual Content Resources	
Daily learning experience	Resources and notes for teacher planning
Reading foundational skills	Florida Center for Reading Research
Engaging with complex text and writing	CKLA EL Education Great Minds
Independent reading or listening	Epic Rivet Local libraries' digital lending services
Math	Great Minds Khan Academy ST Math ZEARN Math
Science, Technology and Engineering	Mystery Science Next Generation Science NSTA Daily Do
History and Social Science	C3 Inquires KidCitizen
Arts and physical education	NAEA's Remote Learning Toolkit (Visual Art) PBS (Theatre) PBS (Dance) Smithsonian Folkways (Music)

GRADES 6-8 Supplemental Virtual Content Resources	
Daily learning experience	Resources and notes for teacher planning
ELA/Literacy	CommonLit EL Education Great Minds
Math	Carnegie Learning Great Minds Khan Academy Illustrative Math: Kendall Hunt , LearnZillion , McGraw-Hill ST Math
Science, Technology and Engineering	Concord Consortium Next Generation Science NSTA Daily Do
History and Social Science	C3 Inquires Facing History iCivics Stanford History Education Group
World languages, digital literacy and computer science, and/or electives	Code.org Digital Citizenship
Arts and physical education	Citizen DJ (Music/Theatre/Media Arts) NAEA's Remote Learning Toolkit (Visual Art) PBS (Theatre) PBS (Dance) Smithsonian Folkways (Music)
Independent reading	Project Gutenberg Local libraries' digital lending services

Appendix 3: Suggested Time Ranges for Student Learning

The embedded time ranges included in the charts below do not require or prescribe a specific schedule, nor an amount of synchronous or asynchronous learning time. Some synchronous time is critical for learning as well as for community connection and engagement. Synchronous learning is also necessary for some specialized services. However, the exact balance of synchronous and asynchronous instruction will vary depending on reopening models, available staffing, and other school-specific considerations.

The suggested time ranges provide guidance for educators to plan daily learning experiences for students, which may incorporate less time in one area some days, and more time other days. **Schools must ensure scheduled activities meet the minimum structured learning time**



requirements each day, as using the minimum recommended time ranges listed for each experience may not achieve this requirement.

GRADES K-2 Recommended time ranges for fully remote learning	
Daily learning experience	Suggested time for students to engage
Morning Meeting/ Community Time	15-20 mins
Reading Foundational Skills	15-30 mins
Engaging with Complex Text and Writing	30-60 mins
Targeted Literacy Instruction	15-30 mins
Independent Reading or Listening	20 mins+
Math	60 mins
Science, Technology and Engineering or History and Social Science	30-60 mins
Arts and Physical Education	30-50 mins
Exploration and Play	As much as possible incorporated throughout the day

GRADES 3-5 Recommended time ranges for fully remote learning	
Daily learning experience	Suggested time for students to engage
Morning Meeting/ Community Time	15-20 mins
Reading Foundational Skills	15-30 mins
Engaging with Complex Text and Writing	40-60 mins
Targeted Literacy Instruction	20-30 mins
Independent Reading or Listening	30 mins+
Math	60 mins
Science, Technology and Engineering	30-50 mins
History and Social Science	30-50 mins
Arts and Physical Education	30-50 mins

GRADES 6-8 Recommended time ranges for fully remote learning	
Daily learning experience	Suggested time for students to engage
Community Circle/ Advisory	15-45 mins
ELA/Literacy	45-50 mins
Math	45-50 mins



Science, Technology and Engineering	45-50 mins
History and Social Science	45-50 mins
World Languages, Digital Literacy and Computer Science, and/or Electives	45-50 mins
Arts and Physical Education	45-50 mins
Independent Reading	30 mins+

Alternatively, middle schools may consider remote “block scheduling” with longer amounts of time dedicated to each subject and a rotation of subjects by semester. Similar to block scheduling in-person instruction, addressing fewer subjects with more time dedicated to each may be preferable because it could simplify communications, reduce the number of teachers working with any given student, and allow students to focus and go deeper into learning in a smaller number of content areas each semester.

To enact “remote block scheduling,” schools may consider doubling the time ranges for certain subjects and offering those subjects to students over alternating semesters. For instance, a sixth grade class may use the following “remote block schedule”:

Classes in Quarter 1	Classes in Quarter 2
ELA/Literacy (50 mins daily)	ELA/Literacy (50 mins daily)
Math (50 mins daily)	Math (50 mins daily)
Science (100 mins daily)	History / Social Science (100 mins daily)
World Language (100 mins daily)	Computer Science (100 mins daily)
Arts and Physical Education (50 mins daily)	Arts and Physical Education (50 mins daily)

Appendix 4: Special Considerations for Grades 9-12

High school schedules differ from those of younger students in that coursework completion and grading “fuels” a high school transcript that is used to provide information and give access to opportunity for post-secondary life in college and career. Also, in high school, courses are typically taken just once, and that content will not be repeated in their educational career.

Thus, it is critical that high school students receive schedules based on their individual credit and course content needs.

Students should enroll in courses according to the school’s normal requirements and processes, with the goal of mastering grade-level skills and building college and career readiness. School officials, in counsel with the student and reflecting on that student’s skills and priorities, should design a full and appropriate schedule for each individual student. Then the student should receive remote instruction and coursework for each of those courses commensurate with what they would have received in person. While high school schedules are much more varied than



schedules at other educational levels, schools should assure that students are accessing the skills and knowledge detailed in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for their grade level. In cases where schools have limited teaching staff to support remote courses (such as for particular courses), districts may consider purchasing individual courses with certified educators provided, such as through a partnership with Commonwealth Virtual Schools ([download](#) for additional information).

Schools and districts should also consider student agency throughout the scheduling process. High school students should have an opportunity to plan for their academic, personal/social, and career success through an individual planning process such as [My Career and Academic Plan \(MyCap\)](#). This may include scheduled time with school counselors and other engaged educators to meet the needs of college and career planning in both a group and individual setting.

Actual time on learning and synchronous time on learning may differ greatly for different students, particularly students who are able to work independently to meet the grade level standards of their coursework, such as through asynchronous coursework like Florida Virtual School or Edgenuity ([download](#) for additional information). Students in Chapter 74, Perkins, Innovation Pathways, early college, and other specialized programs may also have very variable schedules to meet the requirements of that programming.

Below is an example schedule utilizing a block format that could be adapted for remote instruction but would vary depending on individual student credit and coursework needs.

	A Block	B Block
30 mins	Advisory	Advisory
90 mins	Math	ELA
30 mins	Office Hours / Independent Work	Office Hours / Independent Work
60 mins	Lunch / Office Hours / Independent Work	Lunch / Office Hours / Independent Work
90 mins	Science	Social Studies
90 mins	Elective 1	Elective 2

The schedule above could be used for both synchronous and asynchronous courses and instruction. Students may participate in synchronous instruction with district/school-provided teachers for each course, or they may navigate courses independently with regular check-ins and support through an assigned teacher (such as during office hours or scheduled individual check-ins). **Districts should ensure each student engages in daily interaction with an educator and peers for both social connection and academic support.**



Appendix 5: Sample Schedules

The illustrative examples presented in this section highlight key considerations related to teaching capacity, use of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and structuring of screen time to be developmentally appropriate for the student. For districts and schools operating in-person or hybrid learning models, teachers will require more flexibility to leverage asynchronous learning while maximizing opportunities for student support and feedback. On the other hand, teachers serving fully remote districts and schools will need to determine different ways to use on- and off-screen time to design a full day of teacher-directed and -facilitated instruction.

Example A | Sample Elementary Schedule: Mostly Synchronous Blocks

The schedule below consists of 5 hours of structured learning time that is directed and facilitated by a teacher and 2.5 hours that require synchronous screen time. It demonstrates one way structured learning time, screen time considerations, and teacher-directed and -facilitated time may be organized on a given day. As students progress in age and self-direction, schedules may incorporate more independent practice or self-directed study, with a teacher “on screen” and available to help. **This schedule may be most relevant for districts and schools operating a fully remote model, where teachers are available to provide direct services to students for a comparable amount of time as they would typically provide in person.**

Time	Elementary Student Schedule	Screen Time Considerations
30 mins	Community Circle	Fully synchronous for community building but incorporates 15 mins of non-screen reflection/writing, meditation/relaxation, physical movement, etc.
60 mins	ELA	Consists of: 10 mins of synchronous instruction, discussion, guided practice 40 mins of small group or independent practice (off screen, with teacher on screen and available for support) 10 mins of share out/wrap up/closing
60 mins	Science/Social Studies (Rotation)	Consists of: 10 mins of synchronous introduction 35 mins of lab activity/reading/writing (off screen, with teacher on screen and available for support) 10 mins of synchronous discussion

		5 mins of wrap up/closing
60 mins	Flex (Recommended: Lunch/Play/Break/Independent Work)	Off screen
60 mins	Math	Similar to ELA block
60 mins	Specials	Teacher directs/monitors instruction and activities but builds in as much movement and non-screen-based work as possible
30 mins	Enrichment/Small Group Instruction (Rotation)	Student has options for enrichment days, which may include a screen and non-screen-based activity; small group instruction is mostly synchronous
30 mins	Facilitated Independent Reading and Class Closing	Teacher directs/monitors reading, is available for questions, and supports students individually; students are mostly off-screen

Example B | Sample Elementary Schedule: Synchronous + Asynchronous Blocks

The schedule below also consists of 5 hours of structured learning time that is balanced between synchronous or other teacher directed time and self-directed, asynchronous time. It demonstrates one way structured learning time can be organized and communicated when incorporating more asynchronous periods. **This schedule may be most relevant for districts and schools operating an in-person or hybrid model and that need to supplement live teacher instruction and support with asynchronous, student-directed content.**

Times in blue are synchronous – Students are expected to log on and participate at the same time, though they may not necessarily be engaged in “screen time” through the entire block. As demonstrated in Example A, this time should include activities that allow students to move away from or turn off their screens, and that include physical movement, reading, writing, and working with physical materials.

Times in green are asynchronous – Students are expected to work independently on assignments during this time. While it may be helpful to provide students and families with a proposed consistent schedule and structure, such as the one outlined below, they should have flexibility to move times around and complete assignments according to the family’s schedule.

Times in gray are optional/flexible – Students and families should use this time as they see fit for their individual schedules. Optional activities can be included as suggestions, but this time does not constitute structured learning time.

	Monday	Materials and Assignments
30 mins	Morning Meeting	Format: Synchronous Materials: None

		Directions: Click here to join
30 mins	Visual Art	Format: Asynchronous/Independent Materials: paper, pencil, crayons Directions: Click here to view assignment and to submit your work (due at end of week)
60 mins	ELA	Format: Synchronous for 30 mins followed by asynchronous for 30 mins (independent work) Materials: Class book, paper, pencil/pen Directions: Click here to join and see assignment
15 mins	Individual Teacher Check-In	Format: Synchronous Materials: Weekly Schedule and Goal Sheet Directions: Click here to join
60 mins	Science	Format: Synchronous Materials: Lab kit #2 materials Directions: Click here to join
60 mins	Lunch / Flexible Time	Format: Independent
30 mins	Flexible Time	Format: Independent
30 mins	Small group reading	Format: Synchronous Materials: Reading workbook Directions: Click here to join
60 mins	Math	Format: Synchronous for 30 mins followed by asynchronous for 30 mins (independent work) Materials: Math workbook, paper, pencil/pen Directions: Click here to join and see assignment
30 mins	Enrichment (optional)	Format: Asynchronous, Optional Materials: Varies – see each option for details Directions: Click here to see activity options and directions for submitting work
30 mins	Independent Reading	Format: Asynchronous Materials: Independent reading book and log Directions: Submit reading log here

Example C | Sample Synchronous + Asynchronous Weekly Schedule

The sample weekly schedule below expands upon the daily schedule in Example B and demonstrates how a blend of synchronous and asynchronous time may be spread across the course of the week so that students have opportunities to receive direct, live instruction and individual support in addition to several sections of asynchronous work. **This schedule may be most relevant for districts and schools operating an in-person or hybrid model and need to supplement live teacher instruction and support with asynchronous, student-directed content.**



Times in blue are synchronous – Students are expected to log on and participate at the same time, though they may not necessarily be engaged in “screen time” through the entire block. As demonstrated in Example A, this time should include activities that allow students to move away from or turn off their screens and that include physical movement, reading, writing, and working with physical materials.

Times in green are asynchronous – Students are expected to work independently on assignments during this time. While it may be helpful to provide students and families with a proposed consistent schedule and structure, such as the one outlined below, they should have flexibility to move times around and complete assignments according to the family’s schedule.

Times in gray are optional/flexible – Students and families should use this time as they see fit for their individual schedules. Optional activities can be included as suggestions, but this time does not constitute structured learning time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30 mins	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
30 mins	Visual Art (Rotating Specials)	Music	PE	Music	PE
60 mins	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
15 mins	Individual Teacher Check-In	Break / Flexible Time	Break / Flexible Time	Break / Flexible Time	Break / Flexible Time
60 mins	Science	Science	History/SS	History/SS	Science
60 mins	Lunch / Flexible Time	Lunch / Play	Lunch / Flexible Time	Lunch / Play	Lunch / Flexible Time
30 mins	Flexible Time	Small Group Math Practice	Flexible Time	Small Group Math Practice	Flexible Time
30 mins	Small Group Reading	Flexible Time	Small Group Reading	Flexible Time	Small Group Reading
60 mins	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
30 mins	Enrichment (opt)	Enrichment (opt)	Enrichment (opt)	Enrichment (opt)	Enrichment (opt)
30 mins	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Individual Teacher Check-In



¹ *Disclaimer: Reference in this document to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm, or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Our office is not responsible and does not in any way guarantee the accuracy of the information in other sites accessible through links herein. DESE may supplement this list with other services and products that meet the specified criteria. For more information contact: Jacquelyn.m.gantzer@mass.gov.*