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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Allocates $50 Million from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund to Schools and Colleges Across the Commonwealth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Baker-Polito Administration Allocates $50 Million from Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) to MA Schools, Colleges

BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration announced today it will allocate more than $50 million in federal CARES Act funds to benefit education in elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities. The funding from the federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund will improve early literacy, expand remote learning opportunities, and cover costs associated with reopening certain schools and colleges, as well as boost financial aid for college students in greater need of financial assistance.

As part of the federal CARES Act, governors in each state were granted a share of discretionary dollars to ensure continuity of educational services during the COVID-19 crisis. The Baker-Polito Administration previously allocated nearly **$1 billion** (https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/press-release-dese-releases-initial-back-to-school-guidance) in federal funds to help municipalities, school districts, and colleges and universities in the Commonwealth address COVID-related expenses.

The funding announced today will support the following initiatives:

- Up to $10 million for early literacy programs that provide extra help to students through Grade 3, aimed at remediating learning loss children may have experienced since schools closed in March, as well as accelerate reading skills of children in high-need communities;
- Up to $7.5 million to expand access to online courses, including advanced placement, early college or dual enrollment courses;
- Up to $25 million to cover COVID-related expenses associated with reopening colleges and universities, as well as certain non-public elementary and secondary schools. Funds will be allocated based on the number and percentage of low-income students these schools enroll;
- Up to $2.5 million in financial aid for low-income college students attending public colleges to ensure they can cover emergency expenses to continue their education;
- And up to $5 million set aside in an emergency reserve fund.

“Our administration is committed to supporting every student in our schools as districts and universities prepare for the start of the school year**,” said Governor Charlie Baker.** “This $50 million investment represents flexible funding that can be used for a variety of critical resources for schools and colleges as they begin to reopen and bring kids back into the classroom, especially in our most vulnerable communities.”

“These additional resources will help us target funding to support schools and colleges recover from effects of the pandemic,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** “Our administration looks forward to our continued collaboration with school officials statewide on how to best support the safe return to classrooms this fall.”

“Besides supporting financial stability and continuity of service in both K-12 and higher education, this plan will give more students access to high-quality online learning opportunities,” **said Education Secretary James Peyser.**

“We know districts will need more funding this year than in a typical school year, and I am pleased to see this money added to the financial support that is already on its way to districts,” **said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley.**

“At a time of great uncertainty for those of us in higher education, this investment in our public colleges and universities and most especially, in our underserved students, will help ease the financial burdens associated with COVID-19 and lay the groundwork for a productive fall semester,” **said Carlos E. Santiago, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education.**

Funding announced today builds on the nearly $1 billion previously allocated to schools, childcare programs, colleges, and universities.

- In June, the Baker-Polito Administration **announced** (https://mailchi.mp/doe.mass.edu/press-release-dese-releases-initial-back-to-school-guidance) the allocation of approximately $200 million from the Commonwealth’s federal Coronavirus Relief Fund for costs related to reopening public schools.
- Other funding sources to support school reopening include:
    - $500 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund previously allocated to cities and towns.
    - $194 million in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund grants.
    - $45 million to support the reopening of childcare programs serving low-income children.
    - $19 million for special education residential schools.
    - $25 million in federal funds for a matching grant program to help school districts and charter schools close technology gaps that inhibit remote learning.

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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While Massachusetts' students rank first in the nation on many educational measures, the Executive Office of Education strives to strengthen the foundations of education reform, empower schools and educators, and develop pathways to college and careers so all students in the Commonwealth can succeed, regardless of their zip code

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