

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2107

January 25, 2022

Dear DESE Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for and solidarity with the courageous Boston Public School (BPS) student leaders who have organized and mobilized on behalf of their fellow students, educators and broader communities calling for stronger efforts to combat COVID-19 in schools, including remote learning flexibilities.

For nearly two years now, the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on our communities, particularly communities across the Massachusetts 7th Congressional District, and has unveiled and exacerbated many of our nation's most deeply entrenched inequities and disparities. In the midst of this unprecedented public health crisis, our young people have experienced unspeakable trauma, grief and loss. Across the nation, more than 167,000 children have lost a parent or caregiver due to COVID-19. This pandemic has exacerbated the longstanding mental health crisis among our children and we can and must center their voices and lived experiences as we do the work necessary to respond to this ongoing pandemic and lay the groundwork for a just and equitable recovery.

As you meet today to discuss the Commonwealth's efforts to support schools, students and families, I implore you to listen to the students who are speaking out and heed their calls for more aggressive action. Many of these students reside in multi-generational households where they fear for not only their health and safety but the safety of their elderly grandparents and immunocompromised loved ones. Many of these students work part-time jobs and help contribute financially to their household. These students have every right to be heard and their concerns taken seriously.

No student should have to fear for their health and safety in order to access an education and it is absolutely critical that policymakers at all levels of government do everything we can to provide students with the tools and resources necessary to safely learn and thrive.

Sincerely,



Member of Congress