



ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"The mission of the Abington Public Schools is to provide all students with relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community."

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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March 11, 2020

Dear Students and Families Participating in the Planned Peru Trip,

As a result of the United States Center for Disease Control and the State Department, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and Health Secretary Marylou Sudders, Commissioner of Education Jeffery Riley and the Abington Health Agent Marty Golightly's recommendation to avoid all nonessential travel outside of the United States, I regret to inform you that the trip to Peru has been postponed.

Although you may personally feel the risk to yourselves is small, health officials and authorities have unanimously and clearly made this recommendation to protect not only you but also the general population from the spread of COVID 19 or Coronavirus as best as possible.

Mrs. Daisy has been in touch with EF and she is currently trying to reschedule for the mid to the end of June in an effort to avoid the most schedule conflicts. EF has said they are rescheduling April trips for any time between July 1 and December 31 at no extra cost. The group has been added to the list for June with no guarantees. If unable to go in June, the aim will be for late July once the Australia trip returns. Ideally, keeping the entire group together would be best, but we also understand that people have prior commitments in the summer. If anyone is unable to attend the rescheduled date, you will be given a voucher for the price of the trip (minus the \$95 non-refundable deposit, the \$165 insurance cost and the \$50 manual pay fee, if applicable) to be used at a future date before September 30, 2021. Vouchers are transferable to other students, parents or teachers in the Abington district. All of this is being done to provide you with the maximum available benefit while balancing safety during what is truly a global crisis.

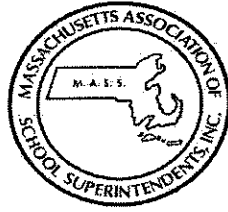
As we progress, the situation will be continually reassessed based on any additional guidance that becomes available to us. It is a difficult decision to postpone or cancel these trips as I know the amount of planning and excitement that comes with international travel. In the interim, all will continue to advocate on your behalf in order to provide whatever benefit we can. Our latest attempt at advocacy on your behalf is attached.

Please feel free to email Karin Daisy with any questions. The parent meeting scheduled for March 18 has also been postponed. Once there is a new travel date from EF, the meeting will be rescheduled.

Sincerely,

Peter Schaffer
Superintendent of School

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS
36 MIDDLESEX TURNPIKE, BEDFORD, MA 01730



March 11, 2020

Kate Berseth
President, EF Educational Tours
Executive Vice President, EF Education First
Two Education Circle
Cambridge, MA 02141

Ms. Berseth:

We write to you, collectively, as Massachusetts superintendents whose districts believe strongly in the power of travel to positively impact our students' lives. Each of our districts has chosen to partner with EF Education First as we know you are a company that shares this belief, and who is generally responsive to our student and district needs. However, EF's current response to the COVID-19 health crisis is testing these partnerships as the options being presented to students and families whose trips are being canceled are insufficient.

We understand and acknowledge that the current health crisis is presenting a challenge not only to EF's business, but to that of travel companies around the world. We remain hopeful, as you do, that the current health crisis will pass and that trips will be able to resume by the beginning of next school year. In the meantime, however, we have been advised by the Governor's office to cancel all international trips from now through the end of June 2020. As public officials whose primary responsibility is the safety and security of the students in our care, we must follow this advice.

While we appreciate that EF is offering to reschedule trips through their Peace of Mind program, or to offer full, transferrable travel vouchers for canceled trips, these options are only realistic solutions for our underclassmen. There are Grade 12 students and their families across this Commonwealth who have worked multiple jobs and saved for years in order to travel with their trusted peer groups and teachers. For these seniors, they have already had their dream of a travel experience taken away by the current health crisis. EF's current offer of a fifty percent cash refund (minus non-refundable costs) is an insufficient response for these students.

While EF must be responsible to its financial health as a company, it must also demonstrate that same responsibility to the clients that it serves. Each of us wants to be able to continue our partnerships in the future with EF so that our students can continue to explore the world and have their lives changed for the better. As such, we implore you to identify better cancellation options that will support our students and their families.

Respectfully,

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