



Texas Association of Community Schools

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**TACS Talks Zoom Meeting
with Sara Leon & Associates**

Friday, November 20, 2020

11:00 AM

November 19, 2020 Commissioner Call

This week, \$420 million more was approved to reimburse public schools as part of Operation Connectivity, independent of participation in the bulk purchase program. There is a webinar on Friday, November 20 at 9:30 AM, it will be recorded and posted if you miss it. This will give you more information on specific items you can get reimbursed for.

The CARES Act expires on December 30, 2020. There will be 3 short application windows; the first one ends December 1st. Based upon their assumptions, you should get a 75% reimbursement. The earlier you submit, the more likely it is you'll receive your reimbursement. The devices do have to be received by December 30, 2020 for Coronavirus Relief Funds to apply to them.

He also addressed the latest [To the Administrator Addressed correspondence posted on November 5, 2020](#) detailing procedures districts must follow related to reimbursement for the SAT and ACT authorized by House Bill (HB) 3, 86th Texas Legislature, 2019.

TEA COVID Website Updates

Instructional Continuity Card

The [slides from the "Staffing Approaches: Virtual Academy" webinar](#) have been added.

The newest Project Restore video on ["Building Strong Partnerships with Students Families"](#) and a facilitation guide has also been posted.

Public Health Card

Several new questions have been added to the [K-12 COVID-19 Testing Project FAQ](#).

New information under "Opt-In Application Process:"

Question 4: What determines our test distribution allotment?

- The distribution will be based on various factors, including the availability of testing materials received from our federal partners and the number of school systems that have chosen to participate at that point in time.
- Initial Allocations will be based on the number of staff and students as well as the October 16th Trauma Service Region COVID-19 Hospitalizations as a percent of total hospitalizations. Trauma Service levels will be updated two weeks before the end of each month to determine the following month's allocation numbers.
- TEA provided TDEM with fall 2019-20 PEIMS counts which is the most recent data available at the state level. The staff counts include teaching staff, support staff, auxiliary staff, administrative staff, paraprofessional staff, auxiliary staff.

- For allocations starting with January, school systems will be required to have reported results for a minimum of 50% of the tests previously distributed prior to receiving a new allocation.

Question 16: My school system or private school is not shown in the allocation, how many tests will I receive?

The Texas Division of Emergency Management will calculate the number of tests that you will receive in the same fashion as the other schools and will notify you of the number of tests that you will receive separately.

New information under "Training:"

Question 9: If I need to change my test coordinator or alternate test coordinator, who should I tell?

Email COVIDCaseReport@tea.texas.gov with your school name and the contact information (name, email and cell phone number) of your new test coordinator and/or alternate.

New information under "Miscellaneous:"

Question 2: What fund and object code does my LEA record for the personal protective equipment (PPE) and Abbott BinaxNOW test kits received from TDEM?

The district would record the PPE and test kits as revenue to fund 199 and object code 5829. Depending on the LEA's fiscal year end and when it receives the items, the LEA may record the PPE as inventory. See chart on page 12 of the guidance.

Special Populations Card

There have been a couple questions added to the [English Learner FAQ](#).

New information under "LPAC Procedures – General:"

Question 1: What are the priority LPAC duties for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year?

Priority LPAC duties at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year include the following:

- Identification of potential English learners within the first four calendar weeks of the students' enrollment.
- Completion of the extended timeline for determining 2019-2020 English learner reclassification using the final LAS Links testing window of November 16, 2020. See the [October 27th Texas Tuesday Communication](#) or [LAS Links Texas website](#) for further details.
- Communication to parents/guardians on English learner progress and continued program participation decisions within the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year. The [LPAC Beginning-of-Year \(BOY\) Guidance Checklist](#) provides details on LPAC duties for closing out the 2019-2020 school year and starting the 2020-2021 school year

New information under "LPAC Procedures – English Learner ID and Placement"

Question 2: Can a student be placed in a bilingual education or ESL program while English learner identification is pending?

Yes. Generally, 19 TAC 89.1220 (j) allows for identified English learners who are awaiting parental approval to be temporarily placed in a bilingual education or ESL program. During periods of school closures or intermittent breaks due to the coronavirus pandemic, LEAs may similarly provide temporary instructional support for potential English learners to ensure prompt access to program services when the identification process is delayed.

- Potential English learners include those for whom the Home Language Survey indicates a language other than English is used either in the home or by the student most of the time, but the identification assessment has not yet been administered. This also includes students for whom identification assessment is needed but the student is participating in school remotely and the parent has not agreed to remote assessment.
- Additional anecdotal data may be collected on the potential English learner to determine instructional supports, such as informal analysis of English proficiency using the ELPS Proficiency Level Descriptors, educational history from student and/or family interview/survey, analysis of previous school records from another state or country, etc.
- A student cannot be formally placed in program services (by indicating in TSDS – PEIMS) and cannot generate Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds as an English learner until he/she has been identified as an English learner by the LPAC and parental approval for program services has been received. Funding for program participation as an English learner begins on the date of parental approval for program services.

Question 5: How does an LEA proceed with English learner placement when there is a delay in receiving documentation from the student’s previous Texas LEA?

For students transferring from other Texas public schools, previous LPAC documentation of the student’s identification and placement in program services should be obtained. While the receiving LEA awaits documentation, the student may be provisionally placed in program services, until there is sufficient documentation indicating the student has been identified as an English learner and parental consent of program participation is obtained. In order to gather information prior to receiving formal documentation, the receiving LEA may call the sending LEA to inquire if the student was previously identified as an English learner and receiving program services. The phone call should be documented. The receiving LEA may also look at the student’s previous PEIMS codes, TELPAS results, etc., to see if the student was previously identified as an English learner.

Question 6: What if students who were enrolled as of PEIMS snapshot on Friday, October 30th were still in the process of being identified as English learners? Will there be an extension for reporting English learners in the PEIMS Fall Submission?

For the 2020-2021 school year, the agency is allowing LEAs to update the students’ English learner associated coding until the PEIMS Fall Resubmission closes on January 14, 2021. Therefore, LEAs can continue the English learner identification and placement process for students past the PEIMS Fall snapshot date. LEAs are unable to receive funding, if applicable, until all necessary documentation is on file (as outlined in 19 TAC §89.1226). Additionally, remember that, although the agency is providing this extension, LEAs cannot count students as English learners for purposes of the PEIMS Fall Submission if those students were not enrolled as of the snapshot date. For presumptive English learners whose full identification is completed and reported during the extended PEIMS Fall submission, federal funds will be generated for these students, but state Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds will begin when parental permission for program participation is obtained.

New information under “LPAC Procedures – 2019-20 English Learner Reclassification”

Question 2: How can reclassification be determined for English learners who were unable to complete all four domains of the 2019-2020 TELPAS?

The English Language Proficiency Assessment component of the reclassification criteria cannot be fulfilled with partial TELPAS data. If all four domains of the 2019-2020 TELPAS were not completed, the LEA may administer the [LAS Links Assessment](#) only to English learners who have demonstrated a potential for reclassification with the extended testing window through November 16, 2020 (Grade 1: Listening and Speaking; Grades 2-12: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing).

Note that TELPAS and LAS Links scores cannot be combined to meet [reclassification criteria](#). Also, if the LAS Links assessment is used at the beginning of the 2020- 2021 school year to determine reclassification from the previous year, the student should be assessed with the grade level assessment for which the student was enrolled in the 2019- 2020 school year.

If utilizing LAS Links for 2019-2020 reclassification decisions, the assessment can be administered in person (using [DRC LAS Test Administration Guidelines](#)) or virtually (beginning on August 17th). See the July 28th DRC Texas Tuesday for more information, and additional guidance and resources for virtual assessments will be forthcoming on the [LAS Links Texas](#) webpage. The use of the virtual LAS Links test administration is optional.

Question 3: How is 2019-2020 English learner reclassification criteria determined?

See flowchart on page 7 of the guidance.

Question 5: What assistance is provided to LEAs who opt to use the LAS Links Assessment for 2019-2020 EL reclassification?

LEAs can score the assessments for reclassification locally, or DRC can complete the scoring for a fee. If LEAs choose to have DRC score the assessments for reclassification, their local funds or Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds can be used. Additionally, only for the 2019-2020 reclassification decisions (with the extended LAS Links testing window through [November 16, 2020](#)), the LEA can use Title III, Part A-ELA funds for DRC scoring of the LAS Links assessment used for [reclassification](#). Please visit the Texas-dedicated LAS Links website for information on scoring by DRC.

Waivers, Finance, and Grants Card

There have been some updates to the [SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ](#).

New information under "On-Campus Attendance Requirements:"

Question 8: At the conclusion of the back-to-school transition period or transition period extension, is my LEA required to allow all students back on campus who wish to begin in-person instruction or can we wait until the beginning of the next grading period?

At the conclusion of your back-to-school transition period or transition period extension, all students who wish to attend on campus must be allowed back on campus, even if the end of the transition period does not correspond to the beginning of a grading period. However, LEAs can require those students who chose at the beginning of the current grading period to continue receiving remote instruction but who now wish to pursue on-campus instruction to remain as remote learners for the remainder of the grading period. At the beginning of the next grading period, those remote students would then have the option to change their instructional delivery method to the on-campus option.

Question 14: If a campus experiences a number of confirmed COVID-19 cases that impacts a significant number of instructional staff such that on-campus instruction may temporarily no longer be feasible, can the LEA restrict on-campus access to the specific campus?

For campuses that have already opened to on-campus instruction, an LEA may restrict student access to on-campus instruction and instead offer those families remote instruction for up to 14 calendar days, if a significant number of the instructional staff at the campus is impacted due to a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak, such that the campus can no longer be sufficiently staffed for instruction even when making appropriate operational adjustments. In such cases a 14-day period would allow for enough time for the virus incubation period to be completed. The campus access restriction and resulting offering of remote instruction must be limited to the specific campus being impacted. A closure period does not end until the campus has reopened for on-campus instruction for at least one instructional day.

The restriction of on-campus instructional access could take the form of shifting to a hybrid instruction method at the campus (with, for example, a subset of students attending on campus on alternating days while receiving remote instruction on alternating days) or being fully remote, subject to the caveat that students without Internet access or appropriate learning devices at home whose parents want them to attend on campus are still required to have access to on-campus instruction during this time. Any instructional days offered in this scenario would still count toward the 75,600 operational minutes requirement. Effective November 18, notification must be given to TEA using the [Request to Restrict Student Access to On-Campus Instruction Due to Confirmed Instructional Staff Cases of COVID-19 on Campus form](#). The requests are approved upon receipt.

New info under "Calendars and Minutes Requirements:"

Question 8: What happens if an LEA provides remote instruction that does not comply with the requirements of this FAQ document?

LEAs that don't comply with these requirements will only be entitled to claim half the operational minutes they would have normally claimed on each instructional day they are out of compliance. This could require LEAs to add additional minutes to their calendar in order to bring them into compliance with the 75,600 operational minute requirement. LEAs should be tracking changes to the daily offering of on-campus instruction, as this information will be reported and will impact your LEAs funding. In order to maintain the 3rd six weeks hold harmless, any minutes would need to be made available on-campus.

Other Updates

The [Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#) has been posted on the TEA website. It details the general requirements for on campus attendance and normal attendance procedures for alternative educational settings.

Upcoming Events

-TACS Book Club

Our first meeting will be covering the book "Thrive Through the Five" by Jill Siler of Gunter ISD. We will meet over Zoom on January 12 at 9:00 AM. Register [here](#).

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Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of November 20, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.