



Texas Association of Community Schools

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TACS Zoom Meeting Summary

Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates

Monday, April 20, 2020

11:00 AM

Barry and Crystal were visiting earlier and discussing that in some districts teachers have been told they can't physically go to the school building. Districts probably need to begin planning for what the procedures will be for teachers be on campus to close up rooms or grab supplies or materials as they continue to work with students for the next several weeks.

Hans Graff from Sara Leon and Associates added that it shouldn't be an issue for teachers to stop by the school as long as they are maintaining social distance. However, to avoid an overload of staff coming in on one day, it might be smart to create a schedule of who goes in when.

Students will also need to eventually go to school to get personal items from their lockers. Schools could possibly open only one hallway at packet pickup or do partial openings of just some areas of school so that the maintenance staff can keep up with disinfecting. Superintendents, please email Crystal with any ideas you have that you might want to share with other districts.

UIL Update from Dr. Jamey Harrison

Jamey would like to stress that the last thing in the world they wanted to do was cancel events for the year. Everyone at UIL was surprised by the Governor's declaration; they had many plans to get the seasons completed. However, if it's not safe to be IN school, how can they declare it's safe to have practices/games? Furthermore, venues weren't willing to host tournaments and games. Unfortunately, the decision was out of their hands. This was a very painful and challenging decision.

They will recognize teams in some way, particularly the basketball teams who were about to have their playoffs. They are also finalizing plans on what to do with the Lone Star Cup and how to recognize the top finishers. Since they have been more focused on planning how to finish the season rather than cancel it, they are just now working on cancellation procedures.

The most popular question the UIL has been receiving is whether or not pre-participation sports/marching band physicals will be required next year. This decision will require action by their legislative council, but their medical advisory committee has made a recommendation and they have shown with all decisions in the past that they intend to follow advice given from the medical advisory committee. Of course, they want all kids to get a physical if they want to and are able, but the requirements will be suspended in case the medical community continues to be stretched too thin to hold physicals. This review of the requirement would be for this coming year only. The official announcement will likely come in early to mid-May.

A question came up during the meeting regarding the strength & conditioning (S&C) camps and coaches camps that take place in June and July, and if there will be a state decision on these or if it will be locally decided.

Jamey said there are no final answers yet, but they do plan to substantially relieve coaching restrictions during the summer. Once kids can gather again and be with coaches, they want them to get as much time as they can together. Not only will they need to catch up on missed practices, but it will be a big help for their mental health as well. The UIL has talked about lengthening practices and adding Fridays. Trainings will probably be no more than an hour per day for an individual kid, but if they are multi-sport athletes, that would be different. For spring sports that lost most or all of their

season, the UIL's plan is to allow those out of season athletes to do strength and conditioning after school so they can continue building strength and skills. They will make sure coaches have time with their athletes and will likely release everybody to do S&C at the same time.

Thank you for your leadership, Jamey – especially when the decisions you have to make are difficult or unpopular. We appreciate you!

Changes to TEA's COVID Resource Site

The Special Education Task Force created guidance on [speech](#) therapy and [physical and occupational therapy](#). These documents give considerations and resources for those staff members. They have added more to the speech therapy guidance, including planning frameworks and guidance on confidentiality issues.

The [English Language Learner Guidance](#) was updated on April 17. Nothing terribly new was covered; it simply reiterates that schools still must provide summer school for rising pre-K and rising first graders.

TEA posted a ["To the Administrator Addressed" correspondence](#) after the Governor's announcement with more guidance on the school closures.

USDE Updates

A CTE waiver [invitation letter](#) and an [optional template](#) for states was added.

Unemployment Compensation Training

Sara Leon and Associates will be holding a training on unemployment compensation on Wednesday, April 22 at 2:00 PM, SLA is doing unemployment compensation for schools. Be sure to register [HERE](#) so they can get a headcount.

TACS Membership

In May, TACS will be following our typical fiscal year schedule, so we will be invoicing for membership. We will also be sharing dates for what we'll be doing in the upcoming year. We are planning to have our September conference and legal conferences as usual unless we hear otherwise through an executive order. We are so grateful for the positive feedback we have received about our Zoom conferences during the COVID19 pandemic. Because of the success of these conferences, when the legislative session starts, we plan to hold legislative update meetings on Zoom. These meetings will be very much like what we are doing now – they will be scheduled on certain days at the same time so that those who are able to join can do so. We'll send a summary afterward each meeting and include a link to it in our Communique each week.

Questions Asked and Answered

Q: Since students are going to have "missed" the last 9 weeks of school, is there any talk of STAAR test relaxations or reductions for 2021? In other words, when we make promotion decisions, should we account for additional make-up time next year, or should we expect students to enter next year at the regular entrance standard?

A: This certainly seems like something TEA will have to consider, but we will follow up with TEA and keep you all posted. [According to an article by Dr. Michelle Smith](#), a national survey indicated that 47% of secondary students have never logged in once for online instruction. There will definitely be some education regression next year. We posted the linked article on our Facebook if anyone would like to share it.

Q: Any graduation plans that are final?

A: None that we've heard yet, but the Commissioner will likely address that this week. Anyone with ideas of what your district is doing can email us.

Q: If you have reached your required minutes, can you end the school year earlier than your calendar says?

A: The Commissioner says yes. And furthermore, you can count the minutes that teachers came back from Spring Break to prepare for remote learning towards your required minutes. This is only valid if you complete the Missed Days Waiver and it is granted for your district. When you do your school waiver, you will count all of the days you were closed instructing, preparing, and temporary. Once they grant the waiver the FAQ states those days will be designated as instructional days in the attendance accounting software...and will be counted the same as they would have been if you had been able to operate normally.

Although you can go ahead and get board approval based on the Governor's Executive Order and your approved calendar showing the last day you will be providing Instructional Continuity Delivery, you will NOT be able to put it in the system for submission

Also, know that if you change your end date, you will change the notification of the 10 days prior to the last day of school.

Q: If seniors raised money for a class trip they can no longer take, can they vote with their sponsor to repurpose that money for something else, like laptops for all seniors?

A: You would need to look at how the funds are organized and what the funds were raised for, since they aren't necessarily school funds. This will probably be judged on a case-by-case basis. This is a good question to visit with your school attorney about. (Thank you, Hans from Sara Leon and Associates for helping with this question!)

We're still waiting on TEA to answer on the certification and teacher contracts specific to additional certifications that were to have been added for the contract period to be extended.

We are still waiting on guidance for our teachers who have not passed ESL certification.

James Cowley from Groesbeck ISD shared information he received from TEA on CPR waivers. This week we should receive information similar to the teacher appraisal waivers that will give step by step directions on how to complete.

Regarding the missed school waivers, you CAN fill these out now because you know when school will end based on your adopted school calendar. Get your board to approve it and submit it as soon as it has been approved.

Outstanding Questions to TEA

The following are the questions we have asked TEA on behalf of our members, to which we haven't received a response yet:

- Since certification tests are not happening right now, some districts are concerned that teachers who are currently employed will be unable to complete requirements for them to continue employment. With the 10 days before the end of instruction rules, will any of the certification requirements be waived - for example, will TEA give teachers another year to complete certification requirements?
- Is TEA working on any type of checklist for re-entry for students and/or teachers?
- ~~For the PEIMS information addressed in question 1 of the FAQ for Finance, could you give some examples for the following scenarios: 9 week reporting, and situations where the 5th six weeks started prior to spring break.~~
- ~~Will the waiver for CPR for seniors be placed on the waiver page? **Waivers will be up soon!**~~
- In looking at vetting the instructional resources (as addressed in the latest information on Information Technology as of 4/9/2020), we wondered if the resources on TEA's pages have been vetted?

If you have heard from TEA on any of these issues and have a response in writing, please forward it to Barry or Crystal so we may share the resource with our other members.

We invite you to continue to visit [our website for updates and information](#),

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