



# Texas Association of Community Schools

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• tacsnet.org

## TACS Zoom Meeting Summary

Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

11:00 AM

As of today in Texas, 300,384 people have been tested for COVID-19, with 26,171 people testing positive and 690 fatalities.

Just some reminders: Deadline to certify direct cost rate proposals are still due May 29, 2020. These are completed through TEAL. The process was originally sent to districts back in December.

TEA is doing webinar at 10 AM tomorrow (4/30) about the Do Not Hire Registry.

We received \$307 million for education in Texas. However, Chairman Huberty made a statement to Houston Chronicle on April 20 that it would be "prudent for schools to squirrel away some money, even if it is too early to tell how much of an impact the pandemic will have on funding next year."

### **SBOE Meeting**

The SBOE discussed the new energy career cluster districts will be offering next year. Also, the African American studies course (a one-year credit) are set to start Fall 2020. Grand Prairie ISD will be piloting the first American Indian social studies course.

They have only done a first reading on the rule about hiring CPAs licensed in other states; it has not passed yet. It will likely get a second reading in summer.

They approved Proclamation 2022 (2022-23) PE instructional materials.

The Perkins V state plan was also approved.

SBOE may have a special meeting in May.

### **TRS**

TRS has approved ActiveCare health plans for September 1. They are promising lower costs, increased access to providers, and a new lower premium plan.

The portfolio dropped from \$164 to \$157 billion but is still secure. TRS has about 90% of their staff working from home, and they think 10-20% will continue to work from home once the pandemic is over.

The Sunset Advisory Commission said that TRS needs more effective contract management oversight and would benefit from additional oversight and greater transparency of investment practices.

The state auditor gave TEA and TRS the lowest ratings for finances and grants: "Additional Monitoring Warranted."

### **UIL**

The UIL medical panel approved waiving physicals for next year, so this will now be recommended to the board (who will likely adopt it). They are also recommending that 6A schools continue to participate in the UT Southwestern Medical School concussion study.

### **New on TEA's COVID Site**

## Academics Card

The TEA website has added [Guidance on Individual Graduation Committees](#). Our "TACS Notes" on the questions covered:

Question #1: You must have committee meetings by June 10 and students have to complete assignments/projects by August 31, since that is when IGCs need to make a decision on awarding a diploma if you want to include the student in that year's graduation data.

Question #2 - There is no requirement for a signed IGC form or teacher recommendation – a principal or counselor can sign. An individual graduation committee must consist of the teacher of each course with an associated EOC exam on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily.

Question #3: If a student took an EOC class with a certain teacher last year and that teacher is now unavailable or not teaching the class, the new teacher can sign the form. But remember that a determination that a student can graduate must be made by the initial IGC and the committee's vote must be unanimous.

Question #4: A student who is on schedule to complete graduation requirements in Spring 2020 but who has not yet met assessment requirements for graduation may be eligible to graduate as a result of an IGC determination regardless of the number of EOC exams the student needs to pass. See the guidance for full information on developing IGC plans.

They've also added [NCAA Eligibility FAQ](#). This is a good resource to send to your athletic director.

Also added is a new [Instructional Materials FAQ](#) that includes [Steps to Submit an Instructional Materials inventory Waiver](#).

## EMAT Spending

As you know, the EMAT page came down in April and they don't bring it back until May. When EMAT comes back, you can still spend money on 2019-20 printing costs. However, if you spend all of that money this year, remember that you won't receive extra money next year, as the EMAT funds are for the biennium.

Also, districts don't order home learning materials through EMAT; you access those through the TEA COVID page or your ESC. You can pay for the printing of these materials through EMAT, but you don't order them there.

## Student Assessment Card

TEA has posted the Optional End of Year Assessment [webinar](#) and [PowerPoint slides](#).

## USDE Updates

Secretary DeVos said she is not asking for special ed waivers during pandemic. FAPE will continue to be a mandate.

Hans Graff from Sara Leon and Associates added that DeVos did submit a waiver request for the transition from ECI to 3-year old programs in school districts. Since districts couldn't complete evaluations, this waiver would allow students to remain in ECI past age 3 and continue receiving services. These students can be evaluated when school resumes.

## Other

Many ideas have been discussed in the news about what school will look like next year. In the Washington Post, Michael Hinojosa of Dallas ISD talked about plans to have some students attend class on Monday/Wednesday and others on Tuesday/Thursday. Some playgrounds will be closed and busses will be half filled to allow for proper distancing. Furthermore, teachers will wear masks and temperatures can be taken at school.

USA Today had an article saying schools need to plan for a 2-3 day school week. In your classrooms, what are your capabilities for students sitting 6 feet apart?

Some schools are adjusting their calendars instead. California schools are discussing starting the school year in July. Another superintendent talked about starting younger students earlier so they can work on reading, while older students will stay online a little longer.

In discussing graduation ceremonies for 2020, Barry said he's heard some confusion on what to do if there is a disagreement between a county judge and mayor about the criteria for groups meeting. Sara Leon had great advice. She noted that the 25% capacity requirement outlined in the governor's order is just for specified businesses, it's not for all structures. She is recommending that you have open and frequent communication with the county judge and/or mayor to talk about graduation plans if you're planning to hold an in-person ceremony. The county and major aren't always on the same page, so be prepared to conform to the more restrictive of their plans.

### **Upcoming Trainings**

A training on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for schools will be next Thursday, April 30 at 2:00 PM.

Registration URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtfuusqj0tHtw51qTln9YitnEuvw-Efwb>

A training on special education considerations for returning students to school will be Thursday, May 7 at 2:00 PM.

Registration URL: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kcuioqj8uGNZvh6XMf\\_R3YID8o79nYx-H](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kcuioqj8uGNZvh6XMf_R3YID8o79nYx-H)

### **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 27, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.*