



# Texas Association of Community Schools

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• tacsnet.org

TACS Zoom Meeting Summary  
Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates  
Wednesday, April 8, 2020  
11:00 AM

## Superintendent Call with TEA Overview

As of Monday morning, there have been 88,649 people tested for COVID, with 8,262 current cases and 154 fatalities.

Some elementary schools in Austin are providing childcare for workers and calling it “temporary school.” The CDC has made several recommendations for moving forward. Right now, there isn’t a waiver for school districts for the child care requirements. TEA is hopeful that those will happen this week. Meanwhile, Northside ISD provided example documents on the TEA COVID resource page.

TASB’s [guidance on postponing May elections](#) is now posted on their website.

TELPAS updates. There will be costs associated with the LAS Link's Assessments for reclassifications. Document everything related to costs you wouldn’t have incurred if we were doing school as usual. More guidance is available on the TELPAS FAQ.

Homeless students – there is a new update that has many best practice recommendations for your districts.

Updates are also available for Residential School Programs – specifically for visually impaired and deaf students.

New guidance is available for Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Interventions – specifically dealing with the limitations parents will have with things like resources and materials available to them. Region 13 has a webinar that will be addressing MTSS.

In regards to special ed and special populations, there is no flexibility in regards to IDEA. Make your best efforts and document accordingly. The state extended the parent notice – rather than being due on April 30, it is now extended until October.

A “To the Administrator Addressed” was posted about [the Instructional Continuity grant](#). If you have campuses that are Title 1 and targeted schools, you can apply for those grants.

At-home learning resources for students with disabilities have been posted to the TEA site. You are not required to use them. If you have another program that is working for your district, continue with that.

The agency has also developed at-home learning resources as a contingency option for school districts (found on [TEA COVID page](#) under Texas Home Learning). These are also optional resources. They are working on creating a Summer School Bridge 2.0. In the 1.0 version they have a parent and student section with a separate link for teachers. Online or printed materials are offered. They only focus currently on the 4 core subjects (math, reading, science, social studies). Schedules are ready for Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup>; the agency is continuing to work on schedules for grades 6-12. Online resources should be ready next week. They may create a “contingency plan 3.0” as things change and we move forward.

For districts hoping to use FEMA funds, Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) is the only area that applies currently. Read more about FEMA Category B [here](#) on Page 14. The Commissioner also wants schools to be aware that they may need to allow medical personnel to use their facilities for medical use, should hospital space become limited.

Barry received a comment from one superintendent this week that they had become aware that Spectrum and AT&T were not being as generous with free services as they had advertised. The companies were requiring people to sign a

contract before they received their free months of service, so be wary of encouraging families to utilize these companies. Many districts are setting up hotspots on school buses and parking them around town; many have reported good success with that strategy.

### **US Department of Education Update**

Commissioner Morath talked about the importance of documentation. USDE has provided more flexibility with federal funds to take care of any local needs. However, these will come through the state. You'll want to document well, because there may be federal or state funds flowing to you for different issues and projects, and the Commissioner may use his flexibility power to use federal funds in new ways.

### **TEA Updates on Assessment**

SAT/ACT/ TSIA

The April test dates rescheduled to June 13; students will take test that date instead of receiving a refund. May testing dates also postponed and haven't been rescheduled yet.

TSIA will be reimbursing students for the test and proctor fees.

### **TELPAS/LPAC Guidance Updates**

TEA has added more specificity to the questions answered in the guidance.

For reclassification, TEA ideally wanted campuses to be consistent across the district, but they understand some campuses and classes might have already finished the four required areas whereas others didn't finish before the closures. In those cases, you can utilize what you need to make it as consistent as possible. If you do have differences across campuses, simply document why.

For students with cognitive difficulties, TEA has posted a link to the [English learner reclassification rubric](#). The STAAR Alt 2 won't be available for those students to take, so you can use the alternate TELPAS for grades 2-12, and for grade 1 use holistic ratings. For students with severe cognitive disabilities, that is the only way to reclassify them. TEA is waiving the requirements for how you'll work with those students, and you'll have the extension as well to complete the process during first 30 calendar days in the 2020-2021 year.

For districts wondering what funds can be used for this, you can use local funds, bilingual education allotment (BEA), Title II funds, or CARES funds (COVID funding). Make sure to track your costs no matter what funding source you plan to use.

The Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) is giving discounted cost for LAS Links Assessments. Districts can score locally or send to DRC to score for you. Work with whoever on your staff usually does testing/reclassifying to develop a plan for LAS Links assessment moving forward.

### **Changes to TEA Instructional Continuity Planning Framework Phases**

[Phase 1](#)- Added link to website for [Qualtrics](#) free survey platform for schools.

[Phase 2](#) - Added:

- Texas Home Learning overview webinar, which again is taking place today at 3 PM and would be helpful for instructional staff to attend.
- Pre-K guidance. The guidance discusses teachers providing parents with a daily resource or idea for a theme for learning as well as other types of activity/play activity.
- Updated CTE courses remotely with websites for CTE teachers to utilize for distance learning. Remember there are 2 tabs - one for educator resources as they work with students and one for actual CTE Courses.
- At-home learning for students with disabilities, broken down by which special needs students have. Tomball ISD added some resources about their remote learning for students with disabilities. Their teams do weekly

communication on IEP implementation. They have a help desk for parents and webinars for teachers offered periodically.

- Tomball also uploaded their grading guidelines. For grades pre-K to 1, they have three grade levels: Masters, Approaching, and “Not Yet.” For grades 2-5, they have “Completion” or “Competency.” Grades 6-12 also receive “Completion” or “Competency”, but they have two grades per week and at least one must be a Completion and one must be Competency. They are a 9-week district.
- “Texas History at Home” from the Texas Historical Commission.

[Phase 3](#) and [Phase 4](#) have no updates.

Child care assistance resources are now available. Northside ISD posted several example documents for your use. Please let Crystal know if you are doing this and she will go more in depth with reading/researching if the need is there in small and mid-size schools.

MTSS document has some really good questions to review as a district in several areas including: Academic Support, Behavioral Support, Delivery, and Monitoring Progress and Documenting. Region 13 is doing a webinar on this topic. Please click on the ESC resources page for more information.

### **School Finance FAQ**

Crystal covered questions 7 and 8 of the School Finance FAQ guidance from TEA:

Question 7: We originally announced closure to extend spring break for one week before the decision was made to close schools in Texas. Will our funding be reduced?

A: No. For districts that were “Closed, Temporary,” apply for Missed Day Waivers to cover up to one week, before you transitioned to “Closed, Preparing”.

However, if you are not going to meet your required 75,600 minutes, then you will have to do a waiver. Wait until end of the governor orders, so you know how many total minutes you’re asking to be waived. Will likely show some grace for waivers, but some people did closed temporary for extended spring break, document why you closed. For days you missed for hurricane or flu, those are all days you’ve already missed, wouldn’t hurt to have virtual site-based meeting on it to talk about how you’ll be asking for waiver for those days.

Question 8. What actions do districts need to take to ensure 55% spending requirement for special programs?

A: Districts should make every good faith effort to ensure additional weighted special program funds continue to be spent in support of student needs. TEA will wait until the final expenditure data is reported to the agency before making a determination about waiving the 55% expenditure requirements. The agency will continue to support flexibility where possible, but districts should remember that salaries make up the vast majority of district operating budgets and since funding will be uninterrupted it is the agency’s expectation that those salaries for special program personnel will continue to be paid and coded to the proper program intent code.

### **Other Notes**

Sara Leon reports that TASB has sent out a nice form for board delegation of authority to seek certain waivers, but she has seen board delegations that go way beyond what is legally permissible. She cautions districts to pay attention when your boards are approving delegation to make sure they aren’t delegating authority they didn’t have in the first place.

Region 13 ESC is hosting Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) webinars each Wednesday from 2:00-5:00 PM.

AASA is doing a webinar today at 2:00 PM on “When Re-entry Happens.” From everything we are hearing, the re-entry timeline is looking like it will be in the fall.

SBOE will be doing a virtual meeting next week on April 16 and 17. Crystal will include that information in future Zoom calls.

Texas Comptroller Glen Hegar did an interview with the Texas Tribune. He posits that the revenue estimate will probably fall by several billion dollars. He is recommending a hiring freeze and cutting all expenses at state agencies. Even before the pandemic and fall of oil prices, sales tax receipts were down significantly over this time last year. The Economic Stabilization Fund is now at a projection of \$8.5 billion, down from an earlier estimate of \$9.3 billion.

Crystal will reach out again to Tam Jones of SBEC about the ESL waivers for teachers. When SBEC hears from USDE on how to proceed, we will notify everyone.

There was a question regarding site-based team approval on T-TESS and T-PESS - it is requirement that site based team participate in T-TESS and T-PESS? No. In the commissioner's call on March 30th he stated that District Advisory committees would need to approve any changes; however, in reviewing the waiver, consulting with TASB (thanks Randy), TASB documents online, the general waiver - other, and our own Sara Leon, we have determined the waiver does not seem to require SBDM approval.

### **Public Health Resources**

Please review [the overview](#) (found at bottom of page) to know what is to happen this coming week. They are very specific about calls, texts, social media posts and email blasts.

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 8, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.*