



Texas Association of Community Schools

1011 San Jacinto Blvd., Ste. 204 Austin, TX 78701-1924512-440-8227 • FAX: 512-442-6705
• tacsnet.org

TACS Zoom Meeting Summary

Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates

Friday, May 15, 2020

11:00 AM

Commissioner's Call 5/15/20

There are 219 counties in Texas with at least one case of COVID. 587,431 total tests have been administered, with 42,403 positive cases reported and 1,158 fatalities. TEA has added a [link to test collection sites](#) on their COVID page under "General Public Health Resources."

Next Tuesday, the Commissioner will discuss in-school summer learning, as well as funding as it relates to the CARES Act.

The Commissioner said he will need schools' help in getting the info on the Pandemic EBT out to parents. You can see guidance on this nutrition program [here](#). The program will be similar to SNAP, but they will be expanding ages so children 0-3 and 19-21 will be eligible. Lone Star card holders will see the extra \$285 per child automatically placed on their cards, but others will need to apply for the benefits. TEA is working on a communication tool kit to help districts disseminate this info.

The call talked more about school calendar resources. TEA has now posted 3 different district intersessional calendars on their site: Socorro ISD, Clint ISD, and Coolidge ISD. Commissioner Morath commented that he has talked to a bunch of districts who are changing their calendars and research shows this scheduling is good for kids even if it's an adjustment for adults. He also said that there were only about 250 districts that don't have a DOI as it relates to their calendar.

Lake Worth ISD added that they asked the Commissioner about changing 10-month teacher contracts from 10-month to 11-month with revised calendars, which will be something to think about for next year.

The call also discussed updates to the [Texas Home Learning summer planning resources](#). You can see the 2.0 text overview at the link with the suggested learning materials. It does state that the 2.0 version IS aligned to TEKS, but not TEKS Resource System. Three things they want you to know about the new version is that it's shortened and simplified (upon looking closer though, the kindergarten learning plans are only shortened by about 50 pages), customizable, and that TEA will provide implementation support.

They also have different partners offering various resources to share with districts. This includes free reading materials for districts with [myON by Renaissance](#), which includes novels and news articles. You can download up to 20 books supported by audio for offline use (and they have well over 6,000 books available).

Other partners are Frog Street, Houghton Mifflin, Teaching Strategies (with The Creative Curriculum), Learning Dynamics, and more. They have a price listing of these services. If your district is 50% or more disadvantaged populations, TEA will cover half the costs. They're holding webinars on May 21st and 26th; they haven't provided links yet so be sure to check back on their website often.

Dr. Dan Dukes from Abilene talked about what their summer learning plan looks like. They have a link to his presentation on the [Texas Home Learning 2.0 page](#).

Many questions were asked about funding for next year, which they will hopefully be covering next week.

TEA also extended its sympathies about Blake Stiles, the superintendent of Athens ISD who passed away this week. Visitation will be this Saturday and Sunday in Athens. There will be a gravesite service on Monday at 2:00 PM. TACS

extends their condolences to his family and community – Athens ISD is a TACS member and Blake was clearly beloved by many.

Changes to the TEA COVID Website

Special Education Guidance

[Residential Program and High Cost Fund Program Guidance](#) has been added. We didn't go over this guidance in detail on our call because we didn't have any attendees who had residential program concerns. One thing to remember regarding high cost special ed students is if you are participating in a program in which you need to spend a certain amount and you don't spend the amount you need because of COVID, you must return the money. IDEA does not have any waivers for programs.

Other federal programs will allow an LEA to amend their application to try to utilize those services, complete the funding (as long as the expenditures are allowable), or you can roll forward the federal grant money. Remember to supplement and not supplant.

[Speech-language Therapy FAQ](#) has been added.

Question 1 in the guidance says that an SLP may have their entire caseload attend virtual speech-language therapy sessions.

Question 2 says that although there is no requirement to designate sessions as individual or group in the student's IEP, some districts have made that distinction during the ARD. The decision to provide services individually or in a group for virtual learning should be made by the SLP using appropriate professional and clinical judgment. As long as the student's needs are being met, group or individual virtual sessions are fine. Be certain that if you designated a distinct method of delivery you are continuing to deliver services in that format.

Question 3 discusses whether or not IEP minutes need to be met during virtual sessions. In addition to telepractice sessions, a combination of methods might be appropriate for continued student progress. Service providers may choose to document the plan using the Special Education Emergency Contingency Plan. Once the school reopens, the ARD committee must determine whether, and to what extent, compensatory services are needed. See the FAQ link for full guidance.

Question 4 confirms that the scope, nature, and quality of services should be the same for telehealth services as they are for in-person services, but goals may have to be adjusted based on the learning environment. Just document any changes.

Question 5 covers SHARS billing and question 6 details FERPA/HIPAA consideration for virtual learning.

Hans Graff from Sara Leon and Associates added that on the TEA website, they have the Medicaid telehealth billing manual for districts and to remember there's additional consent needed for telehealth services, providers can't just re-use the Medicaid consent.

Academics Card Updates

[The Virtual School Network Guidance](#) has been streamlined.

Waivers/Finance/Grants Card Updates

[School FIRST FAQ](#) has been added. One good thing to note is if you're not going to have your audit done by the required date, you can request a waiver (it will not be automatically applied, you MUST request it). Your audit then will not be due on November 27, 2020 and will be extended until Jan 28, 2021. This only applies to districts with a June 30 fiscal year.

CDC Updates

The CDC put out a new document about how to determine whether or not your school should re-open. It's a helpful flowchart you can see [here](#) and on our COVID Resources Page. Jill Siler of Gunter ISD brought up [an interesting article she](#)

[read](#) about how some superintendents were “underwhelmed” by the new decision tree and are choosing to instead follow the [original guidance released by the CDC](#).

Last Week of School Survey Answers

TACS sent out a survey to our members to see what their districts have planned for the last week of school. We received about a dozen responses, detailed below. As you can see, most districts who responded plan to do some form of review their last week.

- Drive through Kindergarten graduation, check-in school materials and high school graduation at the Drive In Theater to end the school year.
- Finish up incomplete assignments, virtual field trips, real life experiences.
- It will be a regular week of instruction.
- Review (2 responses)
- Make up work for students.
- There will be no new assignments and the last week will be used to make up any missing work. Devices are also being collected.
- We will use the last week for test review and not teach any new material. Finishing up grades, turning in devices and materials also.
- We are using the last week to complete all incomplete work, we are not introducing new material.
- We plan to use it to review, receive late work, and finalize grades. No new subject material will be presented.
- We will be doing some review but since we are so far behind, we will continue to teach until the last day. Teachers are doing their best to make meaningful learning fun while still trying to address all TEKS.

Other Announcements

TASA has started an [Inspiring Leaders podcast](#) and will feature Michelle Smith of Lytle ISD as one of the inspiring leaders.

June 9-12th is the reformatted TASA summer conference. TACS will be doing a session for the virtual conference. Jill Siler of Gunter ISD will be presenting on considerations for small districts re-opening in fall. Joe Burns of Copperas Cove ISD will be speaking about summer planning for July and August.

Upcoming Trainings

Sara Leon and Associates’ training on updates to Title IX will be next Thursday, May 21 at 2:00 PM.

Registration URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vdeCpjpjotHtIPLCOWwF-VINuHaowMoBVB>

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?

- Will there be any relaxations for STAAR for 20-21 based on the amount of time we will be spending catching students up?

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](#),

Barry Haenisch, Executive Director

806-570-7876

Dr. Crystal Dockery, Deputy Executive Director

806-679-9690

Home number: 512-215-2040

Melanie Zumm, External Affairs Coordinator

mzumm@tacsnet.org

Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of May 15, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.