



# 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

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

1:00 PM

### **Commissioner's Call 6/4/20 and 6/9/20**

Governor Abbott announced new Executive Orders for Phase 3 of re-opening Texas. Commissioner Morath covered how this affects schools in his June 9 call, which you'll see below.

The Commissioner discussed the Pandemic EBT again, which has been covered in several other calls. You can see guidance on this nutrition program [here](#). A June letter for schools to send to families has been posted in both English and Spanish. More than 350,000 families have applied, which accounts for almost 700,000 Texas children. They believe roughly 2.1 million children would benefit from P-EBT. Application is open until June 30, so we have a long way to go in letting people know this resource is available.

COVID stats: As of Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup>, 1.2 million people have been tested, with 75,616 positive cases and 1,836 fatalities.

### **Changes to the TEA Website (both from 6/4 and 6/9)**

#### **Waivers, Finance and Grants card:**

TEA has re-organized the [COVID-19 Related Waivers document](#). Remember that the top of that document shows which waivers require LEA action. The waivers on the bottom of the page are automatic and no additional steps are necessary from the district.

Since it is almost hurricane season, they have added a [FEMA COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance Document](#) which discusses planning for hurricanes while dealing with the pandemic for schools on the Gulf Coast. This is a pretty lengthy document that goes into a lot of detail!

The Federal Funding and Grants FAQ document was updated. The first new question is under the Carryover and Application issues section, where Question #8 covers how the extensions of the 2019-2020 ESSA grant application end date gives the LEA continuous access to the funds for the full 27-month period of availability for the 2019-2020 funds and there will be no carryover process in the fall for the 2019-2020 ESSA grant funds.

Under the Extension for Grants section, Question #5 says TEA is extending the 2019-2020 grant application end date to 9/30/2021. This will cause LEAs to have two grants (2019-2020 and 2020-2021) running concurrently through 9/30/2021 and serving the same time period (July 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021).

Question #6 confirms that yes, the new 2020-2021 CIPs that LEAs create will serve as appropriate documentation for either the 2019-2020 grants or the 2020-2021 ESSA grants that are being extended and will run concurrently, as long as both sets of grants are serving the same population for the same purpose.

Question #7 says that the 2019-2020 grant funds aren't required to be fully expended before the LEA begins spending the 2020-2021 grant funds, but LEAs should remember to draw down funds from the 2019-2020 grant first to prevent the lapsing of any 2018-2019 carryover funds remaining in the 2019-2020 grant. Furthermore, do note that there will be no carryover process for the 2019-2020 grant funds (Question #8) and they don't intend to extend the 2020-2021 ESSA grant funds either.

Question #10 says if you would like to join an SSA this year and you are currently an independent project, you can contract with the fiscal agent to provide services for the remainder of the 2019-2020 grant period. You'll need to decide

on a contract start date, the services that will be provided, and the amount of funds that will go into the contract. You can contact the Grants Administration Division at [grants@tea.texas.gov](mailto:grants@tea.texas.gov) for more info.

Question #11 says that if your LEA is currently in an SSA for 2019-2020, but plans to apply for funds independently for 2020-2021, then you will need to contact the SSA and let them know that you will be applying independently for 2020-2021.

Question #12 deals with Title I, Part A grant amendments. TEA will accept amendments to the 2019-2020 application program schedules, including the SC5000, until June 30, 2020. These amendments only impact the program activities for the 2019-2020 school year. After that, 2019-2020 application program schedules cannot be amended. That means that the SC5000 cannot be changed. The budget schedules CAN be changed throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

The [CARES Act Funding and Expense Reimbursement](#) page also updated with new questions.

Question 10 in the ESSER funds section of the guidance clarifies that the ESSER grant funds may be expended March 13, 2020, through September 30, 2021, with 12 additional months carryover under the Tydings Amendment through September 30, 2022. The FSP reduction that the ESSER funds will offset will be taken in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Please note that this approach could cause the LEA's expenses to exceed its revenue resulting in the LEA ending the year with a deficit. In addition, the LEA should ensure the final budget reflects the reduced FSP revenue and record its impact on FSP settle up. Also, this may cause the LEA to fail the Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) indicator 9. Talk to your business manager about this.

Also in this section, Question #31 says you CAN spend 100% of the ESSER funds listed on the entitlements webpage if there are no PNP's (Private, Non-Profits) in your district.

In the next section on State Aid Implications, newly added question #10 says that your LEA's FSP reduction should not exceed your ESSER Grant amount.

In the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) section, several new questions have been added.

Question #4 says CRF cannot reimburse any cost that was already budgeted and planned for prior to March 27, 2020; including 199 and 699 budgets if before that date.

Question #5 confirms that yes, to be reimbursable, items purchased in the general fund must have been purchased according to EDGAR.

In Question #6, TEA says that they are unable to commit to reimbursement for premium pay expenses when a policy was not in place prior to the federal disaster declaration (March 13, 2020). However, still provide all relevant information when submitting your request for reimbursement as they will re-examine this after they receive all the requests.

Question #19 says you CAN be reimbursed by FEMA for cleaning/sanitizing during the time of the disaster declaration. The FEMA process is expected to have a longer window for reimbursement than the CRF reimbursement process which only considers expenses March 1, 2020, through May 20, 2020. At this time, legislative leadership appropriated the CRF funds for reimbursement of costs as of May 20, 2020.

### **Special Ed Card**

Under General Guidance, a document called [Continuity of Learning for Secondary Transition during COVID 19](#) has been added. This document gives many helpful resources including examples of transition-related activities for at-home learning such as : Interest Surveys, Career Videos, Soft Skills, Exploring Work Opportunities, Researching Colleges and CTE programs, and Independent Learning (money/budgeting, dressing for success trainings). There are also some frequently asked questions at the end of the document.

There is now a [Parent Resources tab](#) in the Special Ed card that is full of parent tools, one of these is also on transitional activities for at-home learning. These are optional resources. Also in this section, there are new resources for parents on

compensatory students. It's an informative flyer available in both English and Spanish describing what compensatory services are and how to talk to your school about them.

The [Residential School Program guidance](#) has been updated with 2 more questions. The guidance for summer school applies to these facilities as well. Be sure that if you have a student in a residential facility they are notifying you, along with the health department, of any cases of COVID-19.

### **Academics Card**

TEA has updated the [Reading Diagnostic Instrument document](#). In that document, in the section updated on 6/4, there is a link to a new page that more clearly highlights the educator resources available with a Tool Selection Guide from TEA-approved resources.

The biggest addition is the new document under CCMP header, the Texas College Bridge Overview PowerPoint presentation. In 2018, 121,000 students graduated without demonstrating college, career, or military readiness. We have a huge gap in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. One solution to this issue is the College Prep Math/English Course supported by HB5 and HB22; it's been a challenge to set up due to the school closures and the course is also not widely available at the moment. TEA is working to allow data reporting for this year's graduates who demonstrate college readiness through this college prep class through 8/31 and wants to cover the costs of an online college prep courses and teacher training for the College Bridge initiative.

### **Reporting and Data Card**

[Crisis Code Reporting Guidance](#) is now posted. Many FAQ items have been added.

Question #2 says that If a student enrolled in your district after May 1, if you're not sure what level of engagement to record them, consider one of the following: contact their prior school to see what student's level of engagement was from March 13 through date that they enrolled at your campus, look at their grades, or speak to the parents.

Question #3 says that if a student withdraws prior to the last day of school, the LEA will report a 00 or blank for the crisis code. Do not withdraw uncontactable students.

Question #4 says that students completing assignments in **one** or more of the core content areas would be counted as engaged, whether they are elementary or secondary students.

Question #5 gives an example of a student who has been both engaged and unengaged in different core subjects and says for students in multiple classes (typically secondary), completing assignments in any core content areas would count as engaged.

Questions #6 and #7 say that even If a student is not completing assignments in the core content areas, but is responding to administrators and teachers, they should be coded as unengaged.

Question #8 says that if a student was responding to requests from administrators and teachers but completed no assignments in any core content area because they couldn't understand them, the student would be determined as unengaged. If the student never completed any assignments, the student would be considered unengaged. However, if the student completed assignments periodically, the student would be considered engaged.

Question #9 reminds us that crisis codes for a student are based on two parts. Part one is the student's engagement through April 30th. Part two is the student's engagement beginning May 1st until the last day of school, so if a student stops responding in mid-May, the LEA will have to determine if they were predominantly engaged in Part two.

Question #10 says a student's crisis code can be transmitted through TReX beginning in June 2020 through the 2020- 2021 school year based on their code in the 2019-2020 Summer PEIMS.

Question #11 says if a 12th grade student is withdrawn by the LEA based on graduating at the end of the school year, the LEA should report a crisis code in the PEIMS Summer Submission for them.

Questions #12-15 says students enrolled on the final day of the year should receive a crisis code of 7A-7I, including homeless students. These codes are for Summer PEIMS 2019-2020 school year only. Colleges do not see crisis codes.

### **Instructional Continuity Planning Card**

The Alief Calendar Presentation has been added. Their superintendent, HD Chambers, joined to talk about it. They are on a 9-week calendar and increased their regular instructional days by two (from 174 to 176).

### **Closure Guidance Card**

The [Graduation and EOY Promotion PDF](#) has a slight change - you can now have 10 people in close grouping from same household, rather than 5.

[Summer Instruction, Activities and School Visits Guidance](#) has been updated. They included a summary at the top of the document of all the things that have been changed for easy access. These guidelines ONLY apply to the summer.

All the changes in the guidance are as follows:

- 1) Require school systems to post summary of practices they plan to use to mitigate COVID-19 spread, based in the practices and requirements in TEA guidance.
- 2) Recommends identifying a point person for each school regarding COVID-19 concerns.
- 3) Increases the number of students allowed in a class group by requiring application of three factors related to a minimum 45-square footage per person in the classroom, desks spaced six feet apart, and an overall cap of 22. There is a formula in the guidance for calculating how many you can have in a classroom.
- 4) Allows participation in non-UIL activities.
- 5) Adds hand washing stations as options in addition to hand sanitizer in classrooms and at entrances.
- 6) Provides additional clarification around the wearing of masks and face coverings.
- 7) Add recommendations aligned to CDC guidance that were not previously included, including encouraging students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue,
- 8) Includes recommendation regarding adding physical barriers to desks
- 9) Amends transportation recommendations to clarify that students in the same household may sit together on the bus.
- 10) Adds recommendations related to school planning for response to a COVID-positive or symptomatic student/staff member.

Instructional social distancing for a larger area like a cafeteria is all the same as above for the classroom, but you have to keep groups 12 feet apart from each other.

When possible, try to maintain consistent grouping (including for play space).

There are no assemblies, field trips, or group gatherings unless you can maintain the required distancing.

They strongly recommend opening windows as well to allow for better air circulation.

Students must eat lunch at their desk or an assigned seat in the cafeteria.

The Commissioner hopes to go over fall guidance next week; the summer guidance will certainly inform the fall guidance, but they are not the same.

Guidance published related to non-UIL extracurricular activities on [page 4 of the guidance](#). There is also a new, separate guidance called “Training and Conditioning Guidance for Non-UIL Activities” on the Closure Guidance card. UIL is also currently updating their guidance to go with the Phase 3 orders.

Also under the Closure Guidance and Communication Card is the PPE Updates (both a PDF and an Excel spreadsheet). The state is procuring a TON of new PPE for schools. The Excel spreadsheet shows by district and region your entitlement amount. The amounts are calculated based on the 19-20 student/staff counts. They’ll be sending out a Qualtrics survey for feedback on your allotment (note, you can only decrease the allotment), a point of contact for TEA, and a place to volunteer your district’s warehouse for potential regional distribution. If you don’t complete the survey it could result in a delay in receiving your allotment.

### **Texas Educators Card**

Under the Texas Educators card, they have added a PDF guidance on student teachers/interns starting this fall. There are some new waivers for flexibility for those obtaining intern certificates. Districts will also be able to renew emergency permits for teachers who were on an emergency permits last year (can roll them forward one year).

### **Texas Home Learning**

TEA has added 20 free home music lessons from Quaver for young students so parents can do some enrichment over the summer.

They've also added RLA (reading Language Arts) extension materials with both online and print materials for K-12. There are many books and readings available with instructions for parents. Even if your district isn’t participating in Texas Home Learning, it’s still a resource you can offer families. While supplies last, TEA is paying up to 50 sets of books per grade level.

### **Other**

In the Commissioner’s TASA presentation, he said we needed to work to ensure that students can show “one year and three months’ worth of growth” by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Next Thursday, he will likely talk about testing flexibility. We also expect him to cover funding for remote instruction and fall guidance.

### **Upcoming Trainings**

1. Sara Leon and Associates’ 90-minute training on returning students to school in the fall will be Tuesday, June 16 at 10:00 AM. There is a reduced fee for TACS members, so take advantage of this excellent opportunity! Register [here](#).
2. Proximity Learning International is holding a free Zoom training on Hybrid & Virtual Instruction Services During the Coronavirus. The webinar will be held Jun 17, 2020 at 12:00 PM Central. Register [here](#).

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

Melanie Zumm, External Affairs Coordinator

mzumm@tacsnet.org

*Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of June 10, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.*