



Texas Association of Community Schools

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TACS Zoom Meeting Summary
Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates
Wednesday, June 3, 2020
11:00 AM

Due to conflict with other trainings, we need to hold our weekly COVID debrief Zoom call at 10:00 AM next Wednesday. Please make a note of this!

Commissioner's Call 5/28/20

The Commissioner discussed the Pandemic EBT again, which has been covered in several other calls. You can see guidance on this nutrition program [here](#).

There is no LEA action required for the dyslexia screening waiver. The waiver isn't waiving the requirement to do the screening; it just gives LEAs the flexibility to do the screening in the fall rather than at the end of the year.

There is now an additional waiver for parent notice of student risk of failure for children entering 5th and 8th grade, which you can see [here](#) with instructions on how to complete.

Under the Instructional Continuity Planning section of the website, there is now a list of free online professional development resources, which you can see [here](#).

Also, state health authorities have announced that the annual requirements for schools to screen students meeting designated criteria for vision, spinal, and hearing issues (and to report that data to the state) is cancelled for this school year. You may still report by July 31 if you had finished and elect to do so.

Changes to the TEA COVID Website

The [COVID-19 Related Waivers guidance](#) has been updated and will show you a list of which waivers require LEA action and which don't.

New questions have also been added on the [Federal Funding & Grants FAQ](#). We covered several of these questions. Question #7 says that you CAN use Title I, Part A (eligible students), Title III, Part A (eligible students), and Title IV, Part A (all students) to purchase laptops/electronics, that will be used by private, non-profit (PNP) schools in the district, but they must be maintained in control by the LEA and in their inventory.

Question #10 says that an LEA and the PNP can adjust the original agreement of equitable services using Title III funds to instructional supplies/materials only.

Question #11 says that only time teacher salaries are an allowable Title II, Part A expenditure is when you are adding teachers to reduce class size to a level that is evidence-based. Since summer school classes are needing to be reduced due to COVID-19, the argument could be made that this applies. Talk to the federal programs employee in your district.

There were many new questions in the Migrant section of the FAQ. If your school elects to do Project SMART virtually, you will need to ensure that students will have all physical hands-on materials they will need. Question #26 in the FAQ lists all those materials.

Question #27 reminds you that offering Project SMART is not a requirement for this year, but if you indicated you will be offering a Project Smart program on your grant application, will need to submit an amendment if you no longer are planning to do so.

Question #32 says that each LEA or SSA will need to decide if they will offer Project SMART virtually or face-to-face.

Question #33 says that consideration should be given to the amount of instructional time that will be available for Project SMART. As evidenced by the data reviewed during the TOT, post-assessment scores increase from as little as one full unit of instruction. Currently, all Project SMART data is due to ESC 20 by August 1, 2020. TEA will be extending this due date to August 15 to ensure districts have time to submit data if they offer a longer program.

Question #34 says LEAs can order the Project SMART DVDs via the ESC-20 eStore.

Question #35 lists Rachel.Morales@esc20.net as the contact for questions on offering Project SMART in a region with an SSA (Shared Services Agreement).

Question #36 instructs districts to submit however any parent surveys they receive even if they don't get to the 20-parent minimum sample size.

Question #37 says that in order to participate virtually from home, students would need to have a tablet or laptop. If the LEA has not provided devices for students, and MEP staff have identified the need for a child to participate in the program, migrant funds may be used to provide devices for students/parents to check-out in order to participate in MEP-funded services.

Question #38 instructs districts not to conduct pre/post-assessments if the Project SMART instruction is virtual.

Question #39 gives instructions on how to complete the parent survey.

Question #43 says not to send Project SMART materials home with parents for them to instruct their children.

CARES Act Funding

A few new questions have been added to the [CARES Act Funding FAQ](#).

Question #25 says that it is allowable to buy masks for graduation with Title IV or a local budget and then reimbursing the funding source when ESSER funds are available.

Question #26 covers that internet service for students is an allowable expense for both the ESSER grant and the CRF reimbursement program.

Question #27 says the ESSERF grant will have a compliance report and quarterly reporting.

Question #28 says that any private nonprofit school located within the school district's boundaries may request and participate in the equitable services provision under the ESSER grant.

2020 Census

Barry is on a committee for the Texas Counts census organization. Texas has not been particularly strong in self-reporting for the 2020 census. We struggle because so much of the state is rural and it can be hard to reach everyone in those communities, and this year we have the added challenge of census workers not being able to do door-to-door visits due to quarantine. They are encouraging self-reporting by telephone or website, and they are also dropping off the questionnaire on doorsteps. Title money for schools, free and reduced lunch programs, federal funds, and representation in the House/Senate are all based on census numbers – that is why this is such an important cause!

Other/TACS Business

Today is the last day for Early Bird rates for TASA's Virtual Summer Conference! Register [here](#).

TACS is still planning an in-person conference in San Antonio. Our conference committee members came up with the idea to offer the required child abuse/trafficking and accountability sessions for school board members on that Tuesday of our conference. School board members could just pay a 1-day training fee for Tuesday if they didn't want to attend the entire

3-day event. We are also putting together a legislative panel for the conference and are in talks with Representatives Dan Huberty and Gary Van Deaver as well as SBOE member Kevin Ellis.

The deadline for the cybersecurity training for board members is June 14 – if you would be interested in having TACS offer an online training for this, please let us know by June 5!

As we pull together our Legislative Agenda for the next legislative session, TACS has decided to rally behind the issue of universal broadband. The virtual instruction required by the COVID closures has proven that internet access is no longer a luxury but a necessity for students and schools. Other topics we are standing behind are adequate and equitable funding, sustainable funding for HB 3, increased money for the small and mid-sized school allotment, and allowing the 2020-21 to be a “report only” year for accountability so schools can remediate the effects of learning loss during the COVID closures.

In the past few weeks, we’ve been putting out feelers about sending representatives a letter on virtual learning and have since decided against sending it. Several of our members brought up the excellent point that our requests would open schools up to third party providers who could potentially “poach” students from small and mid-size districts, which would harm those schools. Thank you to everyone who provided this feedback!

Furthermore, some members brought us a letter about waiving surcharges for retired teachers and school districts if they need to have teachers on call due to their regular staff being out for illness due to COVID. Retired teachers are an excellent resource if on-call teachers are needed, but it would be helpful for schools if they were able to waive fees.

Also, due to conflict with other trainings, we need to hold our weekly COVID debrief Zoom call at 10:00 AM next Wednesday. Please make a note of this!

Upcoming Trainings

1. Sara Leon and Associates’ 90-minute training on employment issues during COVID-19 will be Tuesday, June 9 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](#).

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](#),

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Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of June 3, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.