



Texas Association of Community Schools

1011 San Jacinto Blvd., Ste. 204 Austin, TX 78701-1924 Phone: 512-440-8227 •

FAX: 512-442-6705 • tacsnet.org

TACS Zoom Meeting Summary

Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates

Monday, July 20, 2020

11:00 AM

Commissioner's Calls 7/16 and 7/17

Updates to the **Waivers, Finance, and Grants** card have been made. The [SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ](#) has new info added.

New info is available in this document under *"Attendance Methods – On Campus Instruction."* On-campus instruction must be offered for all grades served by the campus every day for every student whose parents want them to access on-campus instruction, except in these instances:

1. Remote-only instruction provided by a full-time virtual campus operating under TXVSN.
2. Remote-only instruction provided because on-campus instruction is prohibited by an order issued by an authorized entity other than the LEA.
3. Remote-only instruction provided any day an LEA closes a campus because of a confirmed COVID case on campus.
4. Remote-only instruction provided during a start of school transition period – 4 weeks with an optional additional 4 weeks with board approval (request must be made to TEA). Students without dependable Internet must be offered on-campus instruction.
5. Remote instruction as the only option for a subset of students as part of a high school hybrid plan (A-B with some remote instruction for high schools only).

New questions in this document under "State Funding:"

Question 1: Will there be an ADA hold harmless for the 2020-2021 school year? Yes, TEA will implement an ADA and student FTE grace period (hold harmless) for the first two six weeks attendance reporting periods IF the district's refined ADA counts during the period are less than the hold harmless projection.

If the first two six-weeks count is low, TEA will replace the attendance number with a number projected using a 3-year average trend of the final numbers from the 2017-18 through the 2019-20 years UNLESS this projection is 15% higher and the ADA is 100 higher than the 2020-21 LPE projections. If it is, the 2020-21 LPE counts will be used (this is the same hold harmless policy as Hurricane Harvey). The calculation for each district's projected ADA number will be posted this week.

Question 11: If a district/campus is ordered closed, how does that impact funding for the district? If the district/campus is ordered closed and does NOT offer remote instruction, then the days will need to be made up or forgo funding for the closed days. If remote instruction is provided, the district may claim attendance for remote instruction.

New questions in this document under "Attendance:"

Question 10: How will LEAs take attendance for students who are receiving instruction at home?

Synchronous: Official attendance time documented in the teacher's daily schedule and the teacher will mark students as "remote synchronous absent" or present.

Asynchronous: Students are marked "asynchronous present" or absent based on student engagement that day using one of the approved methods.

TEA will provide an LMS tool that can automatically enter asynchronous attendance with the local student information system.

Question 21: Will the 90/10 minimum student attendance for class credit rule be in effect for 2020-21 school year? Yes, and no. Waivers for exemption from the rule will be offered, but 90/10 for course credit is different than tracking attendance for funding. Engagement as defined for asynchronous instruction would not need to be recorded daily for attendance credit.

Question 35: Can districts develop a hybrid instructional model that intentionally blends on campus, remote asynchronous, and remote synchronous experiences? District must offer on-campus schooling to families who want it, but for other students, the answer is YES.

Question 37: My LEA wants to offer a hybrid on-campus and remote instructional model (on and off campus on varying days/weeks) for different groups of students in several grades. Can I require students to participate in this hybrid model? For high school, as discussed earlier, YES. For pre-K through 8th grade, to receive funding the hybrid model must be an option for those who want to participate, but an on-campus option must be available every day.

Question 39: If an LEA closes one of its campuses (or the entire LEA) for a reason other than a confirmed case of COVID-19 on one of its campuses, can the LEA provide remote instruction during the closure and, therefore, receive funding? Under the circumstances described, the district may request a waiver from TEA. Waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Question 42: Given significant levels of community spread, we believe it is best to delay the start of the school year – both on campus and remote. Can I change my school calendar to delay the start of the school year? Yes, local school boards control the local instructional calendar. Adjustments to the school calendar may be made before school begins or during the school year.

Question 43: How are high school teachers supposed to track daily student engagement as required for asynchronous instruction when they have 150+ students every day? For ADA funding, one measure of student engagement per day is required. Course credit is awarded when the district determines that the student was in attendance for at least 90% of the days each course is offered. Since determination of attendance for course credit is locally determined, engagement for course credit doesn't have to be daily.

New questions in this document under "Enrollment:"

Question 3: When considering students receiving instruction via remote synchronous or remote asynchronous methods, can my school system accept an out-of-district transfer student in school year 2020-21? Yes, in accordance with your local policy (see chart on page 22 of the guidance for more information).

New questions in this document under "Calendars and Waivers:"

Question 1: If my district experiences a COVID-19 closure during the school year and we continue to educate our students through remote methods, will we continue to earn minutes toward the 75,600 operational minutes requirement? Yes, if you meet the daily instructional minutes required to earn full-day funding.

There are also new updates to the [Federal Funding and Grants guidance](#).

New questions in this document under “Specific Federal Grants – Migrant Students.”

Question 2: Can we use Migrant funds to provide migrant students with food and toiletries during the COVID-19 Pandemic? Districts must continue to ensure that eligible migratory children are provided services from other available Federal, State, and local programs for which they are eligible. Food should be provided by other programs, for example. However, if food is not available from other programs, YES – migrant funds may be used. During these extraordinary times, migrant funds may also be used to provide other necessities, like toiletries.

Question 4: Districts are distributing books and supplies to students via a drive thru approach. Is purchasing masks, gloves and other health and safety related items with Migrant funds allowable for this activity? If the migrant funds are first used to meet identified needs of migratory children and the funds are used to supplement rather than supplant, then yes, migrant funds may be used for masks, gloves, etc.

Question 6: With district closures, how will Migrant project LEAs be affected if/when NGS timelines are not met? NGS timelines will be re-evaluated and further guidance will be provided later.

Question 13: Has the issue of 3rd year migrant families that were going to migrate this summer, but now may not travel because of COVID-19, been addressed? Is TEA considering an expiration waiver for these families due to circumstances beyond their control? In general, MEP funds may only be used for services and activities to identify and address the needs of currently eligible migratory children, but there are exceptions (such as continuation of services for formerly eligible students).

Question 44: When can a MEP begin summer school services? Migrant students do not begin generating funds until the regular school year has ended. Remember, with asynchronous instruction, the school year may still be in session after the buildings are closed.

Question 45: What is TEA’s expectation for conducting a MEP evaluation for 2019-2020? A program evaluation will need to be conducted, but it will be in two time frames: September 2018 to February 29, 2020 and then March 1, 2020 to the end of school. Also, the number of surveys to be collected will be reduced and the deadline to complete will be extended to August 31.

Question 46: What are LEAs that offered A Bright Beginning (ABB, the Migrant Early Literacy Program), going to do about post-tests? LEAs will not be required to administer either a pre or post assessment if it will administered virtually. However, maintain any documentation that is evidence of a progress monitoring of ABB students.

Question 47: Will there be an extension on the deadline for contacting families of currently eligible migrant students to determine if new qualifying moves have occurred? The handbook identifies August 29 as the deadline but will be extended if more time is needed.

Updates to the [CARES Act and COVID Expense Reimbursement FAQ](#) have been made.

Under “CARES Act ESSER Grants:”

Question 35: Is there an impact to IDEA-B LEA MOE compliance for an LEA that uses ESSER funds (Fund Code 266) versus General Funds (Fund Codes 199/420/437) on special education (PIC 23/33) expenses or to ESSA LEA MOE compliance? It is very difficult to determine the impact.

Public Health Orders Card

There are new updates to the [SY 20-21 Public Health Guidance](#). Last week guidance was provided to provide notice, prevent, respond, and mitigate. This guidance was updated with new information provided Friday, such as extending the transition period to 4 weeks instead of three.

The [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) guidance](#) was also updated. This guidance provides information regarding the PPE that TEA will provide to school districts, the number of units of each piece of equipment the state is receiving, and the cost of the equipment per unit.

Texas Educators Card

Newly added is the [SY 20-21 Employment Matters guidance](#). The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Leave provides 2 types of paid leave: Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency FMLA. TASB has added links to many resources within this document.

Question 2 in the document asks what happens if a teacher resigns in lieu of accepting an in-person teaching assignment during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the event a Chapter 21 certified employee resigns outside of the no-fault resignation window, certain provisions in rule may allow the resignation to occur with no impact on the educator's certificate. There is a link from TASB provided in the doc. Michelle Alcala from Sara Leon and Associates recommends reaching out to teachers to see what their plans for the upcoming year are.

Sara Leon and Associates is doing a training on the FFCRA on July 23rd. Register [here](#). Current TACS members do get a discount, so inquire with us about your membership status if you'd like to attend!

Child Nutrition Card

Don't forget that the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program deadline has been extended until July 31. The Commissioner has requested schools continue outreach to families in need by sending letters home, posting on social media, and doing robo calls. So far over \$800 million has been provided to families in need.

Instructional Continuity Planning Card

Texas legislators announced e-learning funding for Texas Students in the form of Operation Connectivity. It is \$200 million in CARES funding from the State to TEA for e-learning devices and home internet solutions for remote learning in order to close the gap in tech access for students. The bulk order survey ended yesterday (7/19). You can see the [Bulk Order FAQ here](#). You may or may not get everything you requested on the form, depending on funding. Each LEA that filled it out will get a confirmation by July 27th. If you completed the survey and you now want to modify it, you have to contact operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov to let them know.

Strong Start Resources

They posted many examples of sample school models. Trainings will be provided; stay tuned for more information from TEA.

Other Announcements/Trainings

TACS will be revamping our website and COVID resources to keep it updated for you all.

Sara Leon and Associates will be holding more trainings as well; a webinar on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act on July 23 (register [here](#)) and a 3-hour training on sexual harassment complaints under the new Title IX regulations on July 29 (register [here](#)).

TASBO will be holding a PEIMS academy on September 17-18; it will likely have both a virtual and in-person component.

Lastly, if your school is in need of sanitization services, please check out our partners at [GermBlast](#) and [Germinator Mobile Sanitizing](#) for help!

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 July 20, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.