



Texas Association of Community Schools

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TACS Zoom Meeting Summary
Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates
Friday, August 21, 2020
11:00 AM

Commissioner's Call 8/20/20

DSHS will be contacting schools about piloting a new program on data collection starting this week. A TAA will be posted about it by next week.

The Commissioner also reviewed the [English Learner Implementation](#) guidance, [DAEP and Discipline guidance](#) and [Special Ed guidebook](#) that he had misplaced before the Q & A section last week. Please see our last week's summary for information on these, as we covered them more in-depth there and did not want to be redundant with your time. Just as a reminder, IDEA guidelines are not relaxed which is especially important with regard to your timelines. If your DAEP is going to be remote, the LEA will need to fill out a waiver if you want to bypass the 15:1 DAEP requirements.

Two TAA's were released this week:

- [Request for Letters of Interest – Math Innovation Zones and Blended Learning Planning Grants](#)
- [New Texas Formative Assessment Resource \(TFAR\) and Updates to STAAR Interim Assessments](#)

Dr. Price from Boerne join the call to talk about the first week of school at their district. He had several great points to share with districts preparing to start and did a great job talking about Boerne ISD's preparation!

Changes to Waivers, Finance, and Grants Card

This page has been reorganized into topics to make it easier to search. The website has updated the [Federal Funding and Grants FAQ](#).

New information under "Specific Federal Grants - Migrant Students:"

Question 48: Due to current COVID circumstances, are LEAs required to implement the A Bright Beginning (ABB) program?

Title I, Part C Program-Specific Assurances state that districts accepting the funds, to the extent possible, assure the following:

- Coordinate with other programs (Head Start or other agencies that provide preschool services) to migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) with access to school readiness services;
- Implement the TEA-approved early literacy program (A Bright Beginning) for migratory children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) that are not served by other programs.

Question 49: What is the latest date an LEA can start or end a home- or center-based ABB program?

This is a local decision. Districts offering virtual instruction of the program are not required to collect or submit pre- and post-assessment data, unless the assessments are administered face-to-face.

Question 50: Aside from supplies, materials and resources, can migrant funds be expended on equipment for teachers and parents/children (e.g., electronic devices, WiFi, headphones, etc.) to implement the A Bright Beginning program via distance learning?

Yes, if the costs are identified as a need and it is reasonable.

Question 51: What if the parents/children in the A Bright Beginning program do not have devices (laptops/tablets) and/or internet access?

As we saw in the prior question, migrant funds may be used for parents to check out IF:

- A) the purchases are allowable
- B) the devices can be purchased, received, and delivered in time for the ABB program to be implemented, and
- C) parents are taught how to use the devices.

Question 52: If an LEA decides to not offer A Bright Beginning, can they print the lessons and prep the materials for parents and suggest they use them as the “instructor” at home?

At this time, NO.

Question 53: How do Migrant program staff decide whether to offer face-to-face instruction or virtual instruction for A Bright Beginning?

This is a local decision.

Question 54: What platforms would instructors use to deliver A Bright Beginning virtual instruction?

The ideal platform will allow for both the instructor and participating ABB parents and child to share their screen, join by audio, join by video, and annotate documents.

Question 55: How will virtual instructors collect pre- and post-assessment ABB data?

The assessment(s) must be administered face-to-face to ensure fidelity of the data collected and the instructor must be able to observe specific child behaviors. Instructors may decide to use only parts of the assessment to capture formative data and to inform their instruction. Do not enter child assessment data into NGS unless the assessment was administered face-to-face.

Question 56: How will virtual instructor collect parent survey data?

“Completed by Parent” Version:

1. Schedule a time for parents to complete it in person, or
2. Email the survey; parents can complete it electronically, save the document, and email it back.

“Completed by MEP staff on behalf of the parent” Version:

1. Display the survey on a Zoom screen, ask parents the questions, record the answers, or
2. Complete the survey by telephone.

Question 57: Are there updated supply and materials lists for a Virtual A Bright Beginning program?

No.

Question 58: Is an electronic book list available for A Bright Beginning?

The purchase actual books or ebooks is left to the district, but providing actual books is encouraged because migrant families do not have home libraries, devices, or internet.

Question 59: How do you offer ABB home-based instruction virtually?

The program is designed for face-to-face test delivery. Virtually the teacher will need more preparation time because lessons are designed to offer hands-on, interaction lessons. Also, instructors may want to offer two 30-minute sessions per week instead of the recommended one-hour session because of the short attention span of 3 and 4 year olds.

Question 60: What materials would be needed to deliver the content of the A Bright Beginning program virtually?

This is a detailed answer. See [the guidance pages 32-33](#).

There are also updates to the [CARES Act Funding and COVID Reimbursement FAQ](#).

New information under "Operation Connectivity Bulk-Purchase Program and Local Cost Reimbursement Program:"

Question 1: Can our ESSER Grant be used as bulk-purchase local match for the devices purchased through Region 4 ESC in the CRF Operation Connectivity Bulk-Purchase Program?

Yes! TEA is allowing the ESSER grant to be allowed as local matching funds.

Question 2: Our county told us they can only contribute the county CRF funds to our local match if this can be considered "prevention of disease" which they have to spend 75% of their CRF Funds on. Will TDEM allow this to be considered "prevention of disease"?

Your country's interpretation is not correct. The city/county is not required to have expended all of the 75% of funding in categories 1-3 before expending in categories 4-6 (where LEA reimbursements would be coded). At the end of the CRF period of performance, TDEM will review each jurisdiction's spending in aggregate to determine the 75%-25% requirement.

Question 3: When will TEA provide the detailed training on the bulk-purchase local match reimbursement process before the application opens September 7, 2020?

Training for ESC staff is on Monday, August 31st from 2-5PM. Training to eligible LEAs is on Wednesday, September 2nd from 9:30 to 12:30 PM. To access trainings, click [here](#).

Lastly, the [SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollments FAQ](#) was updated with one question:

Question 8: Will crisis coding be required?

Yes, districts will need to submit a crisis code indicator on all students attending school in the 2020-21 school year. Crisis code data will be submitted through the PEIMS Fall 1 collection by close of business on October 5, 2020 and again on November 6, 2020.

Changes to the Instructional Continuity Planning Card

The Remote Instruction page has been renamed "[Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction.](#)" They have now added a [20-21 Asynchronous Instruction Plan FAQ](#).

New information from this guidance:

Question 2: Will I receive notification of my LOI submission? How can I check to make sure it's been received?

Yes, LEAs will receive an email confirmation of their LOI submission with links to additional resources for plan development and the link to the survey for submitting the asynchronous plan application. TEA updates the posted list of LEAs who have submitted LOIs every Thursday.

Question 8: I am in the system to submit my asynchronous plan and did not upload the attachments before moving past the Open Responses, and now I cannot return to that page of the survey without submitting. What should I do?

Once you leave the Open Responses page of the survey, you cannot return to that page. You have two options:

- Clear your browser cookies – this should allow you to restart the survey in its entirety.
- Complete and submit the survey, then use the link from your confirmation email to "retake" the survey. Please see next question below.

Question 9: I accidentally submitted our plan without any attachments, what should I do?

You must retake the survey and submit a new survey response. There is a retake survey link provided in your initial confirmation email.

Question 10: We have made changes to our plan; can we submit the revisions to our plan?

No. Wait to see if plan is approved or if revisions are required. If they are, add changes then. If it was approved, you can implement additional components while maintaining fidelity to the original plan.

Question 15: Are campuses required to develop a separate asynchronous plan or does the district plan cover all campuses if campus information (such as schedules/start times, etc.) has been included?

The district submits one plan. Select grade levels with details on schedules, materials, design, tracking of student progress, and support for educators and families.

Question 17: Can we replicate one of the posted exemplars and submit that as our asynchronous plan submission for our LEA?

LEAs can use exemplar as inspiration or replicate if appropriate. If copied, it will be flagged for additional review and verification. Districts are responsible for implementing their asynchronous plan as written once the plan is approved.

Changes to Texas Educators Card

They've now added a [20-21 Educator Wellness](#) document. This is also found under the General Support card. It talks about strategies to take care of your staff and yourself. It illustrates a multi-tiered system of support for teachers and utilizing a team of professionals with a mental health background (like your school counselors and social workers) when making decisions for staff.

There are also tiered activities listed for how to support different groups as we return:

Tier 1: Universal support for all staff.

Tier 2: More targeted support, like to folks on campus who are maybe apprehensive about returning to school.

Tier 3: More intensive support where counseling staff may feel they need to refer a teacher to outside counseling.

Pages 8-9 of the [TEA wellness guidance](#) has some helpful charts on recommended guidance and staff trainings for different topics like bullying. **This chart can help you make sure you are in compliance with the required trainings and policies!**

A [CDC study](#) referenced in an article in today's TASA Daily reinforced (to Crystal at least) the importance of checking on the physical AND mental health for our educators and staff. The study reported that 25% of young people (ages 18-24) have considered suicide during this pandemic. This is helpful information to keep in mind when thinking about your young or first-year teachers who may fall into this age range.

Overall, 40.9% of respondents reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%), symptoms of a trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic† (26.3%), and having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 (13.3%).

Among 25-44 year olds, 35.3% reported anxiety and 32.5% reported depression. Among 45-64 year olds, levels were lower but still notable: 16.1% reported anxiety and 14.4% reported depression.

They've added the slides from the [Operation Connectivity Bulk Order PowerPoint](#). 800 districts are participating in this program. If you have not received your invoice, he said to check your spam. It'll be under OPConinvoices@esc4.net. For questions, email customerservice@teabulkorder.com.

ESSER Grants

Remember, ESSER applications need to be submitted by August 24 – that's Monday! 300 schools still haven't submitted their applications. This is concerning because this is your hold harmless for 2019-2020. If you do not apply for these funds you will see reductions in your September payments!!! If you have questions on this, feel free to contact Crystal!

Texas Home Learning

So far, 240 districts new to Schoology have joined in addition to the 77 who were already using it for their LMS.

On Wednesday, they held a webinar on THL 3.0 Math and College Prep; you can watch it [here](#) on YouTube or [access the slides](#).

If you are interested in the THL Instructional Materials Overview webinar series, the dates and links are:

- 6th -12th Math; August 25th 2020 at 1pm; [Register Here](#)
 - Expected Materials Release Date: 8/31
- K-5th Math; August 26th 2020 at 1pm; [Register Here](#)
 - Expected Materials Release Date: 8/31

Questions Answered in Chat

Are we having to submit an accountability plan or something along with Asynchronous/Synchronous plan?

Crystal wasn't aware of anything specific tied to accountability that is an update with the planning, but will do more research.

Katherine Kuentler of Yorktown ISD pointed out as a reminder about the School Improvement deadlines for schools in need of improvement. They have resources on the TEA website which state on page 4 of [this guidance](#) that districts and campuses shall continue to implement interventions based on their 2019 state accountability ratings.

Other

- Regarding our state budget deficit, it looks as if we will have a \$4.67 billion budget deficit at the end of this biennium which ends August 2021.
- Reminder that if you have a student/staff member who tests positive, they need a doctor's note to rejoin their UIL activities – like athletics, cheer, band, etc...
- The first 2019-20 preliminary accountability ratings have come out. The ratings were very positive with 99% of public schools passing with 87.5% of them earning an A.

Important Due Dates:

Pandemic EBT Application: August 21, 2020 (TODAY!)

ESSER Grant Application: August 24, 2020

Tax Information Survey: August 31, 2020

Synchronous Attestation: September 7, 2020

Asynchronous Plan: October 1, 2020

Other Announcements/Trainings

TACS has updated our website. If you now visit our COVID page, we have added some [school resources including sample plans and videos](#).

Sara Leon & Associates is also holding a Sexual Harassment Complaints Under Title IX Live Webinar Training on August 27, 2020 from 9am - 12 noon. Registration link found [here](#).

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

TACS has unfortunately cancelled our September conference in San Antonio. We hope to be able to offer more webinars and other resources to our superintendents and members throughout the year, and are saddened that we won't be able to hold our event this year!

We will now be moving to 11:00 AM on Fridays for these meetings. The Commissioner is moving his calls to only Thursdays at 3:00 PM, so this gives our members a quick turnaround with a debriefing from our team. Our inboxes are always open if you need us and you can always give us a call!

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Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of August 21, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.