



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

Friday, September 11, 2020

11:00 AM

Commissioner Call 9-10-2020

The Commissioner call was mostly going over documents that have been updated, as well as a short tutorial of a Texas Home Learning module. He did answer a few questions in his Q&A:

- Dyslexia curriculum has not been shared yet. TEA is still working on it.
- To extend your transition plan beyond the 4 weeks, see attendance and enrollment FAQ. Essentially you will submit a waiver to extend the start of the 20-21 school year.
- Operation Connectivity devices should be arriving this month; the Chromebooks might be taking a bit longer than other devices.

Changes to the Waivers, Finance, and Grants Card

TEA has updated the [CARES Act Funding and COVID Reimbursement FAQ](#).

Question 4: Can CRF funds be used for reopening schools this fall?

The Department of Treasury has released an updated document that indicates YES, payments from the funds may be used to cover costs of up to \$500 per student to be eligible expenditures and schools do not need to document the specific use of the funds up to that amount.

However, two programs 1) Op Conn Bulk Purchase Local Match Reimbursement Program and 2) Op Conn Prior Purchase Reimbursement Program rules and guidelines are unchanged.

You will also see a change noted in the [CARES Act Equitable Services FAQ](#). On Friday, September 4, 2020, a federal judge issued an order striking down the CARES Act equitable services Interim Final Rule. The order "vacates" the rule. DOES has indicated they will not appeal.

Changes to Student Assessment

They've updated the [Optional Beginning of Year Assessment FAQ](#).

Question 4: When is the registration window and when will BOY assessments be available?

The registration and testing windows have been extended. Registration is July 20 – October 9, 2020. The administration window is July 27 to October 16, 2020.

Changes to Texas Educators Card

TEA has updated the Intern and Emergency Certification Waiver FAQ with the following information:

- The requirement that internships, clinical teaching experiences, and practicums must occur in actual school settings rather than virtual school settings has been suspended.
- The requirement that observations of teacher candidates must occur in a face-to-face setting has been suspended.
- The field-based experience requirement that only 15 of the 30 required hours may occur in a virtual school setting has been suspended.

Changes to Attendance and Enrollment

The [Attendance and Enrollment FAQ and Guidance](#) has been updated.

New information under "Calendars and Minutes Requirements:"

Question 9: How is the prior year average determined for low attendance waivers during the 20-21 SY?

Generally, when a school day attendance was at least 10% below the overall average attendance rate for the district or applicable campus for the prior year because of weather or safety issues, the district may apply for a waiver to exclude the day from ADA and FSP funding calculations.

Due to the school closures during the 5th and 6th six-weeks of 2019-2020, the overage average of the prior year will be calculated using the average of the first 4 six-weeks for the prior year attendance rate.

With ADA hold harmless for 2020-2021 for the first two six-weeks attendance reporting periods, the low attendance waivers application will be closed until November 16, 2020.

New information under "State Funding:"

Question 9: How will the agency calculate the prior law Regular Transportation Program allotment for the 2020-2021 school year given that we did not operate a full-school year in 2019-2020 and that linear density rates are based on prior year mileage?

Regular Transportation Program is now based on a rate per mile set by the legislature. However, to determine if the district is eligible for the Formula Transition Grant, TEA will calculate the Regular Transportation Program allotment using both the rate per mile AND the linear density rate. The prior low 2020-2021 Regular Program allotment will be calculated using the same linear density rate that was used in 2019-2020 (2018-2019 miles).

Question 10: My district's May 2020 Bond elections have been postponed. This delay may impact my district's ability to set its interest and sinking fund (I&S) tax rate to include tax effort for new bonds by the second year of the current biennium (school year 2020-2021). To consider these bonds eligible for Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) state assistance for the 2022-2023 biennium, will the TEA waive the statutory requirement that taxes levied to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds be included in the district's audited debt service collections for that school year (in this case, 2020-2021)? Alternatively, will the agency allow my district to set its tax rate in 2020-2021 instead of 2019-2020 to include the required tax effort for considering the new bonds eligible for EDA state aid assistance in the 2022-2023 biennium?

No, it's possible the district may not receive the EDA funding for those bonds until the next school year.

Changes to Instructional Continuity Planning Card

The [Letters of Intent received through September 9th](#) have been posted. The Commissioner and Lily went through the Texas Home Learning "Great Minds" lesson plans resource and showed the elementary science portion called "[PhD Science](#)" (it is TEKS aligned). It has lesson plans and teacher resources. All the lessons have student editions and teacher editions.

There are several [upcoming webinars](#) you will see listed on the THL page. These webinars are designed for people who are planning on using Texas Home Learning. The K-5 Science Materials webinar has been posted on the THL website and we will include it in the summary as well. Today (Sept 11) they are doing a webinar on English Language Arts and Reading Materials Overview (9-12) at 2PM. If you just want more information, he'd recommend watching the overview series.

They added one question to the [20-21 Asynchronous Plan FAQ](#)

Question 20: Our Asynchronous Plan has already been approved. However, we have received additional guidance regarding serving students without internet connectivity, serving students without devices, and our Homebound

population that we would like to add to our asynchronous plan. Also, given the changing circumstances of this school year, can we treat the approved Asynchronous Plan as a living document?

After an Asynchronous plan has been approved by the agency, a district will be allowed to make adjustments to its plan via an amendment process for any additional information they would like to include or for revisions that have made after implementation began. The amendment process will be released in mid to late October. Document any changes you make and make sure they're aligned with your plan's rubric.

Changes to Public Health Orders

TEA has updated the [COVID-19 Case Reporting FAQ](#).

Question 2: How can I go back and check the accuracy of my submission?

There is NO way to check this. Make a copy before pressing send.

Question 3: Can I correct mistakes?

Email COVIDcasereport@tea.texas.gov to discuss it. There is no way for a district to correct mistakes.

Question 4: When do I use the Multiple Campus selection on the COVID-19 Case Reporting Form?

Only for a staff member who physically moves from campus to campus like speech, dyslexia, or intervention specialists; never report students using this option.

Question 5: Can I use the Multiple Campus option to report cases on different campuses?

No! You need one form for each campus. You can report multiple cases on one form as long as they are from the same campus.

Question 6: My LEA or campus name or address is incorrect on the COVID-19 Case Reporting Form. How do I update that information?

LEAs should proactively update their information in AskTED, as it is the LEA's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of this information.

Question 10: My school is providing virtual instruction for the first four weeks. Do we report those student cases on the form?

No, unless they were on a campus or in a district facility. Probably staff members are the only ones reported in this situation.

Question 12: We have a staff person that tested positive for COVID-19, but they were only in the Education Service Center building. Do I need to report them on my campus form?

No, report only those who were physically present on a campus or multiple campuses.

Question 13: Do I need to report district employees outside of educators (administrative staff, janitorial services, cafeteria personnel, etc.) that test positive for COVID-19?

Yes, IF they have been on a campus.

Question 14: Do I need to report people not employed by the district but were on campus and had a close contact (e.g., a copy machine repair technician, delivery person, etc.)?

Yes.

Question 15: Do I need to report parents of students that test positive for COVID-19?

No, unless the parent was on a campus and exposed a close contact.

Changes to General Support Card

TEA has added a new Mental Health section which includes Project Restore, a free [trauma-informed training video series](#). They have posted another video, "Understanding Your Experiences & Building Resilience." They will be posting a new video each week, with the next video coming out on September 17.

Child Nutrition

They reorganized the Child Nutrition section and put together a new 20-21 [child nutrition FAQ](#). On August 31, the USDA issued a waiver allowing Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Operations to continue to operate through December 31, 2020.

SBOE Notes

Crystal covered the SBOE meetings this week; we sent out separate notes on this so if you'd like more detail, we'd recommend looking at those.

They talked about science curriculum and spoke a lot about climate change, especially in the context of the wildfires happening in California right now. They did add some things about climate change and human error to the curriculum.

Content specialists talked about physical education TEKS. Some of the teachers who are teaching physical education are generalists and they feel they may need more specialists.

Health education was a very popular topic for testimony on having inclusive, medically accurate sex ed and talking about gender identity and sexual orientation. The Health TEKS have not been updated since 1997, so we do need some updates.

The other big day for testimony was yesterday, covering charter schools. We have extensive notes on those that will be coming later today.

Chat Discussion

There was lots of discussion and concern on STAAR being administered this year. We think it will be a bit topic during session. The Commissioner said on last week's call that they are looking at the STAAR online/in person concerns. We completely agree with Denise Morgan, who helped spearhead this discussion, that a STAAR assessment this year is not a good idea. Barry also pointed out the confidentiality concerns of online testing at this time. We definitely encourage calls and letters to representatives as soon as possible, or making board resolutions if that is an option.

Barry added that you never know which voice tips the scale with the governor, Commissioner, or legislator. We've seen bills turn around in 30 minutes with the right person advocating for it.

Veronica Vijil says they are going to administer the BOY assessments and see what we will need to tweak/refine/change/add/delete. Her group met with commissioner and it was on the agenda and he wouldn't make a commitment about STAAR. With the connectivity issues, the December tests are very unrealistic especially when they won't receive devices until November. She'd like to at least postpone the December tests.

Deann Lee said that in addition, to test fidelity and tech issues, it isn't possible to hold districts to a standard when students are in and out with quarantining and similar issues.

Important Due Dates:

Health and Human Services Provider/SHARS Funding Deadline: September 13, 2020 (more info [here](#))

Asynchronous Plan: October 1, 2020

Other Announcements/Trainings

"ESC-2 Fall Personnel Services Symposium:" Sara Leon & Associates in conjunction with ESC-2 will present an in-depth, interactive workshop on critical topics of legal concern related to personnel management issues in the COVID-19 era for

public school human resources administrators, principals, and superintendents. October 6th from 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM. Register [here](#).

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

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 September 11, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.