Texas Association of Community Schools

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TACS Zoom Meeting Summary
Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates
Friday, September 4, 2020
11:00 AM

SBOE Meetings Sept 1-2, 2020

SBOE had a special meeting this week. Proclamation 2022 is being discussed. They'll also be discussing Proc 2021 more this next week. They've been discussing the transition plan for electronic testing as well. This is a charge given to TEA to study how testing students electronically would look beginning 2021-2022. They talked about looking at internet access, disruptions, and other experiences. Another area addressed included the adoption of technology applications and CTE that is aligned with the new legislation. They adopted the Character Traits that will be TEKS-aligned and can be taught as part of any course. You'll be able to decide what that curriculum looks like - typically done through SHAC and counselor input. Credit-by-exams for Texas Tech and UT were audited with about 20% of the tests being reviewed. Recommendations for adjustments will be made based on the audit of these exams to each school's curriculum committee.. We sent out detailed minutes of this meeting earlier this week, so check your email for that summary!

Next week's SBOE meeting will also be full of important topics, including the discussion of charters. We know many of you are planning on testifying. If you'd like to know more about the process of testifying, please contact us and we'll be happy to help you. You have until 5:00 PM today to sign up to testify if you are interested! They are bumping all the meetings to start at 8:00 AM, as they anticipate them going late into the night/early in the morning. They will also be discussing the science and health TEKS, which includes sex-education which has historically brought about many people who wish to testify.

Rose Mary Neshyba of Lake Worth ISD added she signed up to testify about charters, as she found that charters in her area have misled the public as to how many schools they plan to open. One concern that came up in the SBOE meeting testimony this week is that charters should have to disclose which zip codes in which they plan to open schools along with other pertinent information to the community.

Commissioner Call 9-3-2020

The Commissioner provided a PPE update; everything except gloves has been delivered. You can see an updated chart of supplies here.

Dr. Liz Fagan from Humble ISD jumped on the call and shared what her district and Harris County have been doing in collaboration with their hospital system to respond with closures and safety measures. You are welcome to contact her if you have questions on how to design a similar system for your district.

Your synchronous attestation is due **MONDAY**. Your asynchronous Letter of Intent list through September 2, 2020 has been posted, and you can view it here.

On September 23, there will be a webinar on Texas Gateway about cybersecurity.

Teacher Incentive Allotment: 26 school districts signed up for this program, meaning 3,650 teachers could receive designations. If you read the TAA on this topic, it reiterates the importance of every district preparing for the possibility of employing designated teachers and receiving funding through TIA. Have a plan in place for how you will be distributing that money. They will be notifying districts beginning April 2021 as to who the eligible teachers will be.

Changes to the Waivers, Finance, and Grants Card

TEA has updated the Federal Funding and Grants FAQ.

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

Question 61: Can students, who are properly identified as migrant, enroll in our district and receive instruction through remote instruction during the pandemic while they are outside the LEA due to their migratory lifestyle?

Yes, the identified migrant student may be enrolled and provided remote instruction by your LEA. Code them ADA 0-Enrolled, Not in Membership when not residing in Texas.

TEA has updated the CARES Act Funding and COVID Reimbursement FAQ.

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

Question 3: Our LEA paid for half the bulk order purchase to Region 4 ESC from local funds. Does this reimbursement program pay for that 50% that was expended?

TEA paid 50% of the bulk order through Region 4 ESC, and the LEA paid the remaining 50%. If the LEA receives city or counting CRF funding as part of their local match then THEY may apply for the local match reimbursement from TEA. TEA will match the amount received from the city or county therefore reducing the actual cost to the district.

Question 4: When will TEA provide the detailed training on the bulk-purchase local match reimbursement process before the application opens September 7, 2020?

ESC staff was trained on August 31 and members from eligible LEAs on September 2, 2020. It can be watched on the TEA YouTube channel in the Grant Compliance and Administration playlist.

Question 5: How may LEAs record revenues and expenditures when LEAs are having to pay the invoice in August 2020 (2019-2020 budget year) for Operation Connectivity project devices purchased, and reimbursement from federal funds will come in October 2020 (2020-2021 budget year)?

TEA's recommendation:

- Record computers in FY19-20 in Fund 199 (Fund 277 is not available until 20-21)
- Record revenue in FY20-21 in Fund 277 revenue object code 5939
- Transfer the funds from 277 to fund 199 as a reimbursement

*This will be a reconciling item on the SEFA and districts will have to keep the paperwork from the original purchase.

Question 6: Does the LEA code the TEA portion of the bulk purchase (50% base share) in our accounting?

Yes, the TEA share is treated like a donation; you must show a revenue and an expense for donated items.

Question 7: What is the process if a city/county wants to allocate local CRF funding to the LEA for hotspots or devices?

The district and the city/county must enter into a documented agreement stating 1) the amount the other entity is providing, 2) the purpose and 3) the timeline. If this can be done by October 1, the matching funding can meet part of your local match requirement.

Question 8: How should the LEA ask its city/county for an allocation toward the local match?

The process will vary from county to county and city to city. At times 2 or more LEAs working together has proven to be successful. The whole process can take time so don't wait until the last minute to start.

Question 9: Did the county and city receive detailed information on how to apply for their CRF funding?

For everyone participating today, probably "no." The 12 largest counties and 6 largest cities DID receive direct allocations. Everyone else depends on the TDEM for allocations. Counties may suballocate their CRF funding.

Question 10: How can I find out how much CRF funding my county received?

For the largest counties and cities, click here For all others, click here.

Question 11: How do we know if we are eligible to apply? How do I apply for the local match reimbursement funding?

To be eligible to apply, your district must have:

1. Participated in the bulk order program through Region 4 ESC,
2. Paid your invoice for your 50% local match to Region 4 ESC, and
3. Received an allocation of city/county CRF funding for your bulk purchase local match.

To start the application process:

1. Send an email to customerservice@teabulkorder.com and request the local match reimbursement application form.

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2. You will receive a return email with a link to your individual LEA application forms with much of the data pre-filled.
3. Complete the forms and submit them through the system.
4. A DocuSign request will be sent to your designated authorized official.

Question 12: Can we receive these local matches if we did not use the bulk purchase but ordered our devices in the early summer and paid for them directly?

Orders outside the bulk order will be different and more info will come later. However, the district may request reimbursement funding from the city/county for the expenses and then the LEA would only apply to TEA for reimbursement of the difference.

Question 13: How is this different then the CRF being applied for through TDEM?

Operation Connectivity bulk-purchase: 1) Administered through TEA; 2) application for funds is similar to the bulk order form, 3) application opens September 7 and closes October 1, 4) Contact customerservice@teabulkorder.com for info.

TDEM CRF Reimbursement Program: 1) Follows TDEM grant process, 2) is only for allowable costs to LEAs caused by COVID between March 1 to May 20, 2020, 3) Application opened August 1 and ends September 30, 4) more info from crf@tdem.texas.gov.

Federal Funding/Correspondence and Notices

Recently released was the TAA "TDEM CRF LEA Reimbursement Program."

The TDEM application process for CRF LEA Reimbursement Program began in early August and closes on September 30th, however to receive reimbursement the district must complete the first step by **LABOR DAY (9-7-20).** Instructions for completing and submitting the required documents are found here: https://tdem.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CRF-LEA-Terms-and-Conditions-FINAL-20200801.pdf

To date, approximately 20% of the LEAs have started the process to apply for the reimbursement and less than 2% have submitted costs for reimbursement.

Training on the application process is provided every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 1:00 PM. You can register for the trainings here: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpfu6urDgvG93eNoD578Ldt7F0yjOQnto8

Changes to Attendance and Enrollment

The Attendance and Enrollment FAQ and Guidance has been updated again.

New information under "State Funding:"

Question 6: How can we be funded under asynchronous instruction for students who do not have Internet access at home?

A plan for providing remote instruction to students without Internet or computer access must be approved by TEA. Your plan should include:

1. Instructional schedule: to ensure the student is engaging with about the same amount of academic content as in a regular, on-campus school day.
2. Material design: to ensure instructional materials are designed specifically for an asynchronous learning environment except paper packets instead of online work.
3. Student progress: must be monitored daily (very hard without technology!)
4. Implementation support for educators and families: support for teachers and communication of expectations to families and students.

Without an approved plan being followed, funding will stop after the grace period for students following the plan.

Changes to Instructional Continuity Planning Card

The Asynchronous Learning FAQ has been updated.

New info under "Plan Development"

Question 18: How can we be funded under asynchronous instruction for students who do not have Internet access at home?

See Attendance and Enrollment FAQ # 6 in the State Funding section.

Question 19: Can a district choose not to provide a computer and/or Wi-Fi access if students have opted into remote instruction?

If a student has access to on campus instruction but opts for remote instruction, the LEA does not have to prove computer or WIFI access. If the LEA isn't meeting asynchronous plan requirements, they won't get attendance funding after the grace period ends (third 6-weeks).

You'll also see that the Texas Home Learning 3.0 FAQ has been updated. Since only about a third of districts are using this LMS (Schoology by Powerschool), we will just hit basics. They will provide this LMS for two years with no charge but you must access it by March 1, 2021. No dates have been set yet for the release of scope and sequence and "Year at a Glance" info. Check TexasHomeLearning.org for releases. If you click "Stay Updated" in the top right corner, you can sign up to receive automatic updates.

There are several webinars coming up on THL materials:

- THL 3.0 Adopting and Getting Started with Carnegie Learning Texas Math Solution (6-12); Wednesday, September 9 2020, 1-2pm: Register Here
- THL 3.0 Science Materials Overview (K-5); Thursday, September 10 2020, 1-2pm: Register Here
- THL 3.0 Reading Language Arts Materials Overview; Friday, September 11 2020, 1-2pm: Register Here

New information on the FAQ:

Question 19: Does Schoology support grade pass backs with TxEIS?

For TxEIS, our integration includes automatic rostering but not grade passback.

Question 20: How will Schoology integrate with TxEIS (soon-to-be Ascender)?

In the immediate, Schoology can "integrate" with TXeis/Ascender via SFTP. The limitation with this solution is that files from each district could potentially be different and grade passback is not possible. In the long-term, API development is underway to fully integrate Schoology and TXeis/Ascender. This will also permit the availability of grade passback.

Question 21: What is included in "instructional materials?"

- Unit plans and daily lesson plans aligned to Texas standards
- Formative and summative unit assessments
- Built in progress monitoring
- Teacher, student, and family supports
- Digital format with printing capability
- Accessibility supports for all learners

Question 27: What grades and subjects is TEA providing instructional materials for?

- Integrated Pre-Kindergarten
- Math - K through 12th grade
- English Language Arts and Reading - K through 12th grade
- Spanish Language Arts and Reading - K through 5th grade
- Spanish Language Arts and Reading Skills - K through 2nd grade 6
- Science - K through 5th grade
- Social Studies - K through 5th grade

Changes to Public Health Orders

In the SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance, they edited bullet point #4 under "RESPOND" to remove remote reporting and add info on online submission each Monday: "Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday)."

TEA added the COVID Case Reporting FAQ.

Question 1: I cannot locate the authentication code for my district in order to submit my weekly positive COVID-19 cases. Where can I access this code?

Authentication codes were sent to superintendents on August 28. Contact your ESC if you don't have one – confirm your email address.

Question 2: Since I am reporting positive cases to TEA, do I still need to report cases to my local health authority?

LEAs must notify TEA and their local health authority. TEAs form doesn't include individually identifiable info needed for contact tracing.

Question 3: If I do not have any positive COVID-19 student or staff cases to report, do I still need to submit the case report?

No.

Question 4: Where does the authority lie for TEA and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to collect positive student and staff COVID-19 cases?

Submit form on Monday for the prior 7 days (Teacher, staff member, student or visitor is test-formed to have COVID-19).

Question 5: When reporting cases, do you want "lab-confirmed" or "test-confirmed" positive cases? Based on the changes in the guidance document, I'm assuming we focus on "test-confirmed."

Test-confirmed.

Question 6: If a bus driver or bus monitor tests positive and they are not ever on a campus, will they be reported in this new portal?

On-campus includes the bus and any school facilities

Question 7: Will the public reporting of this data include charter schools?

Yes.

Question 8: My district has already started school. Do I need to go back and retroactively capture positive cases and submit them?

Submit a report from the date the school year began.

Question 9: My school is providing virtual instruction for the first four weeks. Do we report those student cases on the form?

The COVID-19 case report form should be utilized for on-campus cases. If an LEA is offering virtual instruction, this will likely mean that only staff members are reported.

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 the first video, "Understanding Trauma and Its Impact." They will be posting a new video each week, with the next video coming out on September 10.

Questions Answered in Our Chat

- During one call I thought the Commissioner referenced a 2nd TDEM CRF reimbursement for the summer months, with more information to be released in October. Is this correct? There will be additional funding (though it is not TDEM/CRF funding – it is called prior purchase reimbursement program funding and we should receive more information from the agency on these funds in October.
- There is a training on the CRF and other TDEM funding today at 11:30. The Zoom ID is 99428058055.
- For districts transitioning under health order in increments, do we need to file the waiver. We begin our transition at 3 weeks in September 10th. As long as you begin transition prior to 4 weeks, you should be fine.

Important Due Dates:

Synchronous Attestation: September 7, 2020

Last Day to create CRF account through TDEM: 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.

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Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of September 4 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.