



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, August 28, 2020

11:00 AM

Commissioner Call 8-27-20

The Commissioner spent a little time talking about Hurricane Laura. A third of Region 5 districts had water damage and half of them didn't have power. There will be extensions for budget approval if your district is in a region that was impacted.

He then began discussing the TDEM management of the CRF funding. This is a good time to remind each of you that CRF expenditures are for March 1 through May 20 fall under the CRF portion of the CARES Act funding. The process under TDEM is more streamlined than FEMA and the deadline on for those funds is September 30. You do have to create a new account to get this funding and it needs to be done by September 7th. Only about 185 districts have completed an account set up so far and 18 of the 1200 districts in Texas have completed the application itself. If you are planning to take advantage of this funding, be sure you are noting these deadlines. A new TAA will come out this week on this subject.

The commissioner also talked about some changes to the [public health guidance](#); these changes are mostly verbiage changes. You can see them in the [SY 20-21 special health card and planning guidance](#). They've changed the wording from "lab confirmed cases" to "test-confirmed cases." The reason for this is because there are now a lot of different testing procedures that may not go through a lab. The other change in public health verbiage is in the symptoms section. These updates just provide clarity on "acute infection test." They changed the verbiage to say "doctor's office, approved testing site, or other site" since there are now many places to get tested. Furthermore, they updated the definition of "close contact" again. They modified it to mean "being within 6 feet for a largely uninterrupted or sustained extended contact period throughout the course of a day of approximately 15 minutes" with someone with COVID - so if you simply quickly saw someone with COVID, that is likely not considered close contact.

Commissioner Morath also issued a reminder about notices. Remember, the [Rights and Responsibilities](#) need to be sent to all parents. This is a great thing to send as a part of your enrollment package. This is under the Tools and Templates page on the TEA COVID webpage.

The Commissioner talked again about the new data reporting system with DSHS - we cover this later in the summary. The reporting applies only for cases on campus, according to the Commissioner.

James Oliver of Martin's Mill ISD hopped on the Commissioner call to talk about what he's found in his first few days of school. His biggest piece of advice is to be flexible and know you'll probably have to modify lunches, pick-ups and drop offs. He did say he didn't notice a lot of tears this year from kids being dropped off; they were all very excited. 80% of students are doing in-person learning in his district.

Lastly, be sure to update AskTED and make sure the info is current!

Changes to the Academics Card (Also found under Strong Start Resources)

TEA has just added two new documents here:

- Lubbock-Cooper ISD: [What does a COVID day in Pre-K look like?](#)
- District Example: [Pre-K 4 SA: Remote Early Learning](#)

Changes to Instructional Continuity Planning Card

They've added some Texas Home Learning 3.0 webinars:

- 6th -12th Math: [Recording Here](#)
- K-5th Math: [Recording Here](#)

Changes to General Support Card

TEA has updated the [SY 20-21 School Board FAQ](#).

New info under "Board Goals and Progress Monitoring:"

Question 9: Although it is the law that the HB3 developed goals must be incorporated into the superintendent's evaluation, do school boards retain local control on other areas that they may incorporate into a superintendent's evaluation?

The local school boards retain control on what is included within the superintendent's evaluation as long as the requirements within The Texas Administrative code are met:

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter150/ch150cc.html>. Notice it doesn't say, "the HB 3 student performance goals," only "a student performance domain."

New info under "Board Trainings:"

Question 1: During this time, are school board members required to complete school board trainings outlined in TEC, §11.159 and 19 TAC §61.1?

No, the Commissioner has waived training requirements until January 31, 2021. There will be no requirement to report board member training hours in the October meeting before the November elections.

Question 2: Can a trustee be considered delinquent prior to January 31, 2021?

No, but annual board training requirements are still in effect. Board members should take advantage of training opportunities when available. If a training is in-person, all guidelines outlined by state and local health authorities must be followed.

Question 3: When the waiver expires at the end of January 2021, will board members with May elections need to finish one year's worth or two year's worth of training before the spring 2021 election?

The waiver provides only relief from the delinquency designation, not training requirements.

Question 4: If required board training for the 2019-2020 school year was not completed prior to the waiver, what will be the reporting requirements at the end of the January 31, 2021 waiver period?

Reporting before the May election will be April of 2021. Board members who do not meet the annual requirements during the 20-21 time period will be reported delinquent.

Updates to Special Ed Card

TEA has added the [SY 20-21 Special Ed FAQ](#).

Question 1: When we are providing remote instruction or implementing a contingency plan do we need to change PEIMS reporting code if those services represent a temporary change?

No.

Question 2: How should LEAs count contact hours for virtual instruction for ESY reimbursement submissions?

Only hours of synchronous communication between school staff and eligible students may be counted as ESY contact hours for purposes of reimbursement.

Question 3: Do we need to submit Homebound waivers for students during the 4-week period of remote instruction?

Yes. However, if the special ed student is included in your asynchronous plan, then no (make sure to include how you will serve them in the plan). See [this guidance](#) on specific homebound waivers.

Question 4: Can we use IDEA funds to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) or other pandemic related specialty equipment for students served by special education?

Yes, IDEA funds may be used for expenditures directly tied to specific needs identified an individual student’s Individual Education Program (IEP).

Question 5: Will the timeline for the emergency rule requiring rising first grade students to participate in the required reading assessment within the first 20 school days be extended due to issues relate d to at home learning in the 20-21 school year?

No. incoming 1st graders in the school year 2020-2021, who were not assessed for dyslexia at the end of the 2019-2020 school year as kindergartners, must be assessed within the first 20 school days. Data will be used for the Early Reading Indicator Code for Fall PEIMS submission. See [here](#) for assessments to be used.

Updates to Special Populations Card

TEA has updated the [SY 20-21 English Learner Guidance](#).

New information under “English Learner Program Services:”

Question 1: What are the expectations for bilingual and ESL teacher certification within remote and in-person learning?

Expectations for B/ESL teacher certifications within remote and in-person learning have no changes. If the LEA doesn’t have appropriately certified teachers, they must apply for an exception and/or ESL waiver on or before November 1st, 2020. For further information, see the [Bilingual Education Exception and ESL Waiver FAQ](#).

New information under “LPAC Procedures - General:”

Question 1: What are the priority LPAC duties for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year?

Priority LPAC duties at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year include the following:

- Identification of potential English learners within the first four calendar weeks of the students’ enrollment.
- Communication to parents/guardians on English learner progress and continued program participation decisions within the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year.
- Completion of the extended timeline for determining English learner reclassification through the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year.
 - The extended timeline for the first 30 calendar days begins when the LEA resumes school for all students for the 2020-2021 school year regardless of in person or remote learning setting.
 - If the LEA is unable to complete the reclassification process within the extended timeline in the fall, the LPAC documents the reasons for which the timeline was extended, including the plan for completing the process in a timely manner.
 - All 2019-2020 English learner reclassification assessment and decisions must be completed and documented by the PEIMS snapshot (last Friday in October 2020).

See the [LPAC Beginning-of-Year \(BOY\) Guidance Checklist](#) for more info.

TEA has also added a [SY 20-21 Highly Mobile and At-Risk Students Guide](#). This guide contains best practices, definitions, and additional resources for the following areas: dropout prevention/intervention, foster care, military connected, pregnancy-related services, and preventing child abuse and neglect (including human trafficking). Do note that some of the links in this guide don’t work right now but they are working on fixing this.

TEA has also added the [SY 20-21 Gifted and Talented Education Guidance](#).

New information under "Program Services:"

Question 1: What are LEAs responsible for regarding G/T services during school reopening and potential closures?

LEAs should continue providing program services for G/T students.

Question 2: Who is responsible for G/T coordination?

G/T services are coordinated by appropriately trained G/T education administrators, coordinators, and specialists (G/T Staff).

Question 3: Per HB 3, each school district shall annually certify to the commissioner that the district has established a program for gifted and talented students, that the program is consistent with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students, and the use of funds on the district's program for G/T students. How will this be implemented during the 2020-2021 school year?

You will need certification by LEA that your program is consistent with the Texas State Plan for the Education of G/T students and the use of funds.

Question 4: In what section of the remote learning plan should districts include their remote learning plans for G/T services?

See the rubric on page 2 of the guidance.

Question 5: How will guidance documents ensure that in-person and remote students can continue to be pulled out from their classes for G/T services and/or clustered in like-ability groups for instruction?

a. As evidence of services, LEAs may report the pull-out schedule for G/T educators. Full inclusion programs may document cluster grouping in their virtual learning plans.

b. The reporting of actual student participation will need to be determined at the local level.

Question 6: How do we document what we are providing in terms of G/T services for students?

G/T staff should document the services provided to the student, such as student packets, lesson plans, online learning platforms, and G/T teacher and student contact time via phone or online. Teachers should maintain a log of services provided.

Question 7: Should LEAs update PEIMS coding for newly identified G/T students in the wake of COVID-19?

Yes, the LEA should update PEIMS coding if the LEA has begun providing G/T services for the newly identified G/T students. Students are only reported through PEIMS as G/T if they are participating in the state-approved program. Note that for any G/T student who is furloughed, coding is changed to zero during the furlough as they are not receiving services.

New information under "G/T Identification:"

See table on page 3 of the guidance for info on referral, identification, selection, and services.

Question 1: Per TEA guidance, many districts postponed or delayed G/T testing for identification during the spring 2020 semester. What guidance will be provided for ensuring equitable access to identification for services this year and for identification in Spring 2021?

TEA is working on identification of students for G/T student guidance for review and will post it to their COVID info page.

Question 2: Can districts require in-person testing on school or non-school days?

An LEA must offer virtual identification process or in-person testing at select district sites to accommodate the student population and offer them on non-school days. LEAs should publicize all testing options available.

New information under "Curriculum and Instruction:"

Question 1: Will curriculum and lessons provided by Texas Home Learning 3.0 include G/T education strategies such as depth and complexity and higher-level questioning? Will the Texas Performance Standards Project and more challenging curriculum be easily accessible in this resource as an option for serving gifted students?

Yes.

Question 2: In light of the flexibility parents have to move students between in-person and remote learning, how will districts keep track of which G/T students are served by in-person and/or remote services?

LEAs can have teachers and G/T coordinators take attendance of services provided and report to district leadership.

New information under "Professional Learning:"

Question 1: How can we provide professional development for G/T teachers?

ESCs and LEAs are still providing online training sessions. See [here](#) for resources offered by region.

Question 2: Will the agency waive the G/T professional development requirements for the 2020-2021 school year?

No.

New information under "Family and Community Involvement:"

Question 1: What do we communicate to students' families around the identification/selection/delivery of G/T services?

Communicate the processes, policies, and procedures.

Updates in the Reporting and Data Card

A To the Administrator Addressed was released on [2020-2021 COVID-19 Case Reporting](#). The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in conducting a statewide weekly data collection of positive COVID-19 cases in schools. These data will be collected using a web-based form that can be found at <https://txdshs.quickbase.com/db/bqrc8nie5?a=showpage&pageid=101> and will require an authentication code to submit. The form is available as of today. Prior cases must be reported by September 8. The 1st and 4th Weeks Enrollment Data Surveys to be submitted by September 14 and October 5, 2020. If you need extensions due to Hurricane Laura, simply reach out.

Questions Answered in Our Chat

Should I have already received an online link for the asynchronous plan?

Yes, when you submit your [letter of intent](#), they send an email to you that week. The email will go to whoever is listed as the primary contact on the Letter of Intent. If you didn't receive anything, you can email AsynchronousPlanReview@tea.texas.gov to let them know. You can check if your Letter of Intent has been received [here](#).

Important Due Dates:

Tax Information Survey: August 31, 2020

Synchronous Attestation: September 7, 2020

Last Day to create CRF account through TDEM: September 7, 2020

Asynchronous Plan: October 1, 2020

Other Announcements/Trainings

Sara Leon & Associates will be holding another training on sexual harassment complaints under the new Title IX on September 3 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. You can register and learn more [here](#).

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

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!

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 August 28, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.