



Texas Association of Community Schools

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TACS Zoom Meeting Summary Zoom

Meeting with TACS and Sara Leon & Associates

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

11:00 AM

Delivery of Instruction

TACS Deputy Executive Director Crystal Dockery discussed what is being currently done by schools in California with regard to OT/PT services. IEP/ARD meetings are being held through Zoom conferences so that attendance is documented. The chat system logs comments made and is being used for the "signature" page in those meetings. This allows committee members to log any questions or concerns. Some of the districts are providing videos of the therapist leading individual OT/PT sessions so students can keep up with their progress. California districts (at least the ones represented by the contact there) are not providing speech therapy for articulation disorders at the current period. Hans, with Sara Leon & Associates, is attending a TCASE meeting at this time and will give us the updates he has for our zoom meeting tomorrow.

Guidance on Delivering Paper Materials/Packets Safely - the TACS CliffsNotes version:

- No one with symptoms, or who has had contact with anyone symptomatic, should be helping prepare packets in any way. A good baseline for knowing who is symptomatic is to take the temperature of anyone who is preparing packets.
 - Be sure before you begin that you thoroughly clean the location where you will be working.
 - If you use paper envelopes, try to use envelopes that do not require moisture to close.
 - Wait 24 hours to distribute packets after assembly, because the virus can live up to 24 hours on paper and as much as 48 hours on plastic.
 - Consider using the postal service, because there is currently no evidence of the virus being spread through the mail because of the time it takes to process mailings.
 - Document how much you spend mailing packets, because the costs might be reimbursable.
 - If using school staff to distribute, they need to avoid direct contact with people you're delivering to (maybe leave materials at the door or on the front porch).
- If students/family come to you for packets, make the packet pick-up OUTSIDE of school buildings, like on a table. Spread out the pick-up times so there aren't too many people at once. Maintain appropriate distancing between all people, and consider vehicle pickup. You could even have parents have a sign in their car window saying names of children and the grades/class they are in so they know which packet to receive.
- Explicitly tell parents to not enter school buildings.
 - After each pickup cycle, clean the area.

Options for students when returning packets:

1. Mail them in (the district can include a self-addressed envelope for families to make this easier).
2. Drop off (same rules for delivery).
3. Take a photo with phone and email it.

James Cowley of Groesbeck ISD shared a **form** (see email for attachment) his district has been using to document delivery of instruction for all students. (See attached) The form also records how many kids they haven't been able to reach and is broken up by campus. One thing his district has noticed working through this process is that some students had outdated contact information, but they were able to reach some of the high school students by using the info on their parking permits. Educators are resourceful!! In an initial survey of who didn't have internet access, 13 homes were found to have no access, but nine of those 13 said they would be willing to get the work on their phone instead of having to come to school to pick up work. One grade level was using Facebook, but that turned out to be problematic, so they had to revamp that concept.

Thank you, James, for sharing with our other members!

Crystal wanted to emphasize how contact from teachers is so important for students right now, especially since we are hearing of increased instances of child abuse in news reports...

Questions About Employee Compensation - TACS CliffsNotes version

Q: Can you use grant money/federal funds to pay staff during this time?

A: Yes, you can as long as you pay them consistently with the way you pay state employees, and as long as there is no discrepancy in how you allot money or make payments. Employees who are federally funded still need to document time and effort, even if working remotely.

Q: Is a board resolution enough to let teachers work limited hours in person and other limited hours from home?

A: Yes. TEA also says you can get a board resolution so superintendents can make special decisions during this time, so you're not having to hold several board meetings a week just to get things done.

[See the resolution](#) for district purchases Sara Leon & Associates provided for this. See other sample board resolutions the firm has provided [here](#)

Q: Is TEA considering waiving certain educator certificate renewals if they are expiring this year?

A: Not at this time, because renewing certificates is a fairly simple process that can be done online 24 hours a day and the professional development is completed over several years rather than just this year.

Rose Mary Neshyba of Lake Worth ISD reported that she received a call from TEA stating ESL is a federal regulation and they are waiting on clarification about those certification waivers until guidance comes from USDE. They may have to delay those teachers' contracts until May. Sara Leon said that you have until 10 days before the end of student instruction to renew contracts and 15 calendar days to offer a hearing. We're not sure if TEA will give more guidance, but assume everything is business as usual in terms of noticing staff of nonrenewal.

Michelle Alcala of Sara Leon and Associates cites that EEOC guidance is acknowledging that COVID is a direct threat and because of that, there are certain questions that employers can ask that they couldn't before because of ADA, such as symptoms or taking temperatures. You CAN ask employees to stay home if you have reasonable belief that they may pose a health threat. If they're able to work remotely, they recommend being flexible with that. They have assembled a Q&A for districts that you can read (see email for attachment).

Sara Leon reminded everyone that the extension of FMLA does include private employers with fewer than 500 employees (who will get tax credit), and governmental entities (who will have to pay). The DOL has a free app on its website for a phone-based timesheet. See [here](#).

Barry reminded everyone that the Fair Labor Standards Act still applies if employees work overtime, even if they are working remotely.

Also, if you are opening a child care center, contact Health and Human Services for guidance because you will be subject to all rules of daycare.

Postponing Board/Bond Elections:

Sara Leon and Associates has provided a resolution that will allow you to move elections to November (they recommend working with your bond counsel if moving bond election). You have to act prior to April 20, 2020 (first day of early voting) if you are postponing.

SLA has put together [a resolution for anyone postponing their trustee elections.](#)

We invite you to continue to visit our website for updates and information.

Tomorrow's agenda items are:

- Special Education – additional update information
- Evaluations/Appraisals
- What's new since yesterday

Please join us tomorrow at 11 am by clicking here: <https://zoom.us/j/804190846>

Meeting ID: 804 190 846

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Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of March 24, 2020. It is intended for informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for legal advice.