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AGENCY NEWS

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Texas Education Agency

Division of Communications

(512) 463-9000

teainfo@tea.texas.gov

tea.texas.gov

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TEA Announces Additional Reopening Guidance, Including Local Option for an Online-Only Start to the 2020-21 School Year

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AUSTIN, Texas – July 17, 2020 – Last week, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released public health planning guidance for the 2020-21 academic year in order to well prepare students, teachers, and staff to safely return to school campuses for daily, in-person instruction. Given the latest developments around COVID-19, TEA is issuing important updates to the guidance (</sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>). In response to the varying public health realities of each Texas community, these changes give the needed flexibility for schools to effectively provide a smooth transition for students, teachers, and staff so that they will experience the safest and least disruptive mode of learning during the beginning of the school year.

School systems will now be able to temporarily limit access to on-campus instruction for the first four weeks of school. After the first four weeks, a school system can continue to limit access to on-campus instruction for an additional four weeks, if needed, with a board-approved waiver request to TEA.



Click here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ee_H01EDm-4&feature=youtu.be) to view Commissioner Morath's video message to Texas teachers and parents.

TEA guidelines include important exceptions for students; specifically, any family that lacks Internet access at home and/or requires devices for students learning virtually. Any student requiring on-campus instruction during this period—i.e. those who need reliable access to technology—will still be entitled to on-campus

instruction every day during this transition period.

Local school boards for districts in areas with high levels of community spread also retain the flexibility to delay the start of the school year.

Additional changes provide school systems with the ability to convert high schools—with school board approval—to a full-time hybrid model once students have transitioned back to on-campus instruction. This model will provide for a more socially distanced school experience, where students receive a portion of their instruction on-campus and a portion of their instruction remotely at home.

One week prior to the start of on-campus activities and instruction, school systems must post for parents and the general public a summary of the plan—developed in consultation with their teachers, staff, and parents—that they will follow to mitigate COVID-19 spread in their schools based on the requirements and recommendations outlined in TEA’s updated public health planning guidance.

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