



TCTA SUMMARY of Changes in TEA's [SY 20-21](#) [Attendance and Enrollment FAQ \(PDF\) July 17 2020](#)

- Extended the amount of time (school start transition period) that schools can offer remote only instruction from up to the first three to the first four weeks of the schools year, with the option of extending four additional weeks by vote of the school board.

To the extent a school district chooses to implement this transition period, school systems should still begin on-campus instruction as soon as possible while keeping staff and students safe and should continue to monitor the local public health situation accordingly.

If a school system believes it is best for the health and safety of students and staff to continue to restrict access to on-campus instruction beyond the first four weeks of their instructional calendar, they must submit a board approved waiver request to TEA to access the second four week transition window. The board must take action to authorize this waiver by specific vote, and cannot otherwise delegate the waiver application to the superintendent. The waiver application must include an indication as to the local public health conditions that the school district believes would warrant a faster end to the transition period (e.g., the most recent weekly count of COVID-19 cases is lower than the prior week in the county, and test positivity rate in the county is under 10%). Teachers, staff, and parents should be consulted about the transition plan before the waiver is submitted. All waivers are approved upon receipt.

During this transition period, school districts are still required to allow all students to access on campus instruction who come from households without internet access or appropriate remote learning devices. In the event a board extends the initial four-week transition, at least some on campus instruction must be provided each day during the extended transition period.

Beyond access provided to those students without internet access or appropriate remote learning devices, school districts are encouraged to prioritize on campus access during the transition window for students most academically or otherwise at risk who will benefit the most from an on campus instructional experience.

- Also allows remote instruction as the only option for a subset of students as part of a high school hybrid plan. Specifically, for students in grades 9-12, school systems may establish a less-than-daily on campus attendance option to reduce the number of individuals on a campus at any one time and increasing the total number of students served in an on-campus setting in the school district. In the event there is not a daily on-campus attendance option in one or more of these grade levels, the school district must ensure that on-campus attendance is offered as part of the hybrid schedule at least 40% of the days in each grading cycle (typically 6- or 9-weeks periods). Any school district that pursues this hybrid option while not providing a daily on-campus offering for students who otherwise wish to attend on campus may do so after submitting a waiver request to TEA and should do so no later than two weeks prior to the first day of on-campus instruction. All waivers will be conditionally approved upon receipt but may be subject to further review by TEA.



- Regarding requiring student to participate in hybrid models of instruction, the updated guidance specifies that, except for students in high school grades, school districts cannot offer only an intermittent on-campus attendance option for any given grade. Students may choose to opt in to receive hybrid instruction, but, in order for the school district to be eligible to receive funding for remote instruction for any student for any day, the school district must offer sufficient on campus instruction in every grade **PK-8** so that every parent has an on-campus attendance option every day for their student in the school district, excluding COVID-19 closures (described below) or the start-of-year transition period.
- The update guidance also allows for school districts to apply for a waiver from TEA to receive funding while providing remote instruction during a school district-determined closure in addition to those that involve a confirmed case of COVID-19 on one of its campuses.
- Clarifies that local school boards in areas with high levels of community spread can change their school calendars to delay the start of schools. According to TEA, this may also prove advantageous if school systems are continuing to prepare to deliver highly effective remote instruction and/or continuing to work to distribute devices as needed. Similarly, even after the school year starts, if a school system decides it is prudent to make additional adjustments to the instructional calendar, local school systems have that authority. Please note that any instructional calendar must still satisfy the appropriate 75,600 operational minutes requirement for the entirety of the school year and there may be contractual issues that need to be considered.
- Regarding the 90/10 minimum student attendance for class credit rule for the 2020–2021 school year, the updated guidance says that the determination that a student has met the minimum attendance for course credit requirement is made locally. Additionally, tracking of attendance for course credit may differ from the method used to track attendance for funding purposes. More specifically, engagement, as defined for asynchronous remote attendance purposes, would not need to be recorded daily in each class for the purposes of the 90/10 minimum student attendance for class credit rule.

According to TEA, engagement can be tracked in many different ways. For example, a teacher might document engagement at the end of each week or the end of the grading period. Another option is for educators to use an LMS to track daily student engagement in each course. A third option is to have one teacher track engagement for a smaller group of students each day, such as a homeroom/advisory teacher who calls the students and checks in on their progress across assignments/courses, ensuring students have made progress in each course each day. That “homeroom teacher” could also make sure students go to the weekly office hours/synchronous lesson/small group tutoring session for each of their courses where they need help.



From [SY 20-21 Public Health Guidance](#) (PDF) July 17 2020 [Public Health Orders card]

4. School systems must provide on-campus attendance as an option for students otherwise entitled to attend school who follow this document's required public health procedures and whose parents wish them to attend on campus, **subject to school closure and the exceptions listed in the guidance. In high school, school systems may offer a less than daily on campus instructional experience if there is a need to reduce the total count of people on campus at any one time to maintain social distancing.**

5. In order to facilitate an safe, effective back-to-school transition process, during a period up to the first four weeks of school, which can be extended by an additional four weeks by vote of the school board, school systems may temporarily limit access to on-campus instruction. As a result, some parents opting for their student(s) to attend on campus may be required to start with remote instruction temporarily, **although any family who does not have Internet access and/or devices for distance learning at home is still entitled to have their student receive on campus instruction each day during this transition period, as they are during the rest of the year.**