



CCOSA

Summary of SDE COVID-19 School Leaders Calls

March 13, 2020 – July 22, 2020

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

- Currently in Oklahoma there are 28,065 positive cases of COVID-19 – a sizable increase from the previous day, but this number includes a backlog of cases. There have been 474 deaths, and 630 are currently hospitalized. We must be vigilant by wearing masks, practicing social distancing and washing our hands.
- Hot spot grant applications are due by Friday, July 24, at 11:59 p.m. Shelly Perkins of OSDE can answer questions about the applications, so contact her at shelly.perkins@sde.ok.gov.
- OSDE still expects to announce the hot spot awards on July 31 and that they will be shipped to schools one week later. Remember, Verizon has more hot spots for sale to districts for \$60 each, plus the monthly service fee of \$10. Districts can transition their current Verizon hot spots to this deal. Call Verizon directly about this.
- Districts must complete OSDE's PPE survey today. Submit one response per district. Please check in your district that someone is completing the survey. Superintendent Hofmeister is optimistic that OSDE can make a purchase on behalf of districts.
- OSDE has reopened the Certification office on Tuesdays and Thursdays for dual results background checks. For more information, see the [OSDE Certification page](#).
- The Consolidated Application is now open except for the immigrant and migrant portions of the application. OSDE will send a notice to districts when all sections are open.
- 352 districts (64%) have shown interest in the Exact Path tool. 261 have signed up. It's not too late to sign up.
- OSDE is launching the Network of Learning with input from the experts at CCOSA for those interested in a new high-quality virtual learning option. Districts must provide notice of their interest by Friday, July 24. Contact Aaron Espolt at aaron.espolt@sde.ok.gov for more information.
- The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) has color coded the state map by county in green, yellow, orange and red (<https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/covid-19-alert-system>). Green is the lowest zone; yellow is a caution zone; orange is the danger zone; and red is an emergency zone. OSDE is presenting a recommendation to SBE at its 9:30 a.m. meeting on July 23 that will follow along with the OSDH map.
- **This** is OSDE's recommendation to SBE:

- Green is the lowest zone and the one where we want to be. In the green zone, there is no requirement to wear masks in schools.
- In the yellow caution zone, students in grades 4-12, all staff and school visitors will wear masks. Students in grades PK-3 will also wear masks, but can remove their masks if they're with their cohort. Most Oklahoma districts are in yellow.
- Orange is divided into two parts. Orange level 1 (14.39-25 cases per 100,000 people) is nearing the danger zone. Masks are required, and the district must prepare to transition to virtual or distance learning. No extracurricular activities are permitted unless social distancing can be observed.
- In orange level 2 (25-50/100,000), the district must transition to distance or virtual learning, although 25% of students may be in school buildings. This 25% would cover students with special needs and others who must be there in person to facilitate learning. There is a mask requirement in school buildings. No extracurricular activities are permitted.
- In the red zone, all restrictions from orange level 2 continue in place, except that only 15% of students can be in school buildings.
- Teachers are expected to be in school buildings whatever the color zone – green, yellow, orange, or red.
- OSDH will update its county map weekly by color. So, districts may be in a different color zone from one week to the next.
- The top concern is to help communities stay tied to data with a spectrum of safety protocols as surges and peaks occur. The goal and expectation is that instruction will take place in person until it can't according to the most recent map. There will be mask-wearing exemptions applicable to some students with disabilities. OSDE's recommendation is that special education can and should be provided at a school site no matter the district's color zone.

Questions

- Hot spot grant. Will hot spots be CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) compliant? Yes, they will come in compliance. Districts can add additional security features.
- Are districts out of pocket any money if they receive a hot spot grant? OSDE pays the cost of the device - \$60 each. The district must pay the \$10 per month service fee for at least six months for each hot spot for which it receives a grant. This hot spot deal through Verizon can extend through June 30, 2021 or the national emergency, whichever comes last.
- Is this hot spot deal only available with Verizon? Yes. Superintendent Hofmeister wishes it wasn't limited, but this is what we have now. Additional funds to pay for something else could be coming.

- Regarding the county color alert system, how can you access the numbers of cases? Go to <https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/covid-19-alert-system> and look at the top left for the most recent date. Click that, and you'll see the counties and a number of cases per 100,000 for each county. How we behave as communities now – like wearing masks – can lead to declining numbers. McCurtain County, for example, has dropped its number. It can be done. Numbers may dissipate or spike based on community transmission.
- How will this system impact districts with numbers changing weekly? Districts need to become accustomed to watching their numbers. They'll need to project and plan for the future. If you don't think ahead, you'll just have to shift as numbers change. Remember, OSDE hasn't presented its recommendation to SBE yet. SBE may make changes and adopt something different.
- At age 10, a child can spread the virus with the same impact as an adult. For students in PK -3 – teach them how to wear masks. Fourth grade and up will wear masks. PK-3 students are capable of following modeling. OSDE is recommending masks with a clear panel for teachers in PK-3 and special education. OSDE is trying to get those.
- Won't measuring cases as the OSDE alert system does disproportionately impact small communities? Densely populated areas are at greater risk.
- Is the OSDE recommendation posted on the website? No, because it's with SBE members and still potentially being revised. Changes may continue to be made during the July 23 SBE meeting.
- Once adopted, when will this system go into effect? It will take effect right away and stay in effect until September 30, 2020.
- Can teachers in PK-3 also remove their masks? Are face shields acceptable? Face shields can be used if a person can't wear a mask. But they provide protection only to the wearer, not others. PK-3 teachers should wear masks at all times when with students.
- Does wearing a mask limit the amount of quarantine time that might be needed? No. Masks limit the spread. A recent JAMA article included the results of a study of transmission by two COVID-19 positive hairdressers. No clients got COVID when the hairdressers and the clients wore a mask. They're hopeful that wearing masks on both sides (teacher and student, for example) can provide 85% protection.
- Are recommendations or requirements going to SBE? Both. The green zone is all recommendations. The yellow, orange and red zones all have some mandates and restrictions.
- What about districts in multiple counties? Which county do you go by? Use your designated county. This information will be in the WAVE.
- OSDE is looking to provide some PPE for districts that may be hard to find, like face shields, gloves and gowns. OSDE may be able to tap some CARES Act funds and is working with the Governor's office. The first focus is on things that will be hard to get.

- What are the leave options when a teacher must be out for quarantine? Options – sick leave; emergency leave; FMLA; Families First Act, with 80 hours of leave may also be an option. Suggest you use that Families First Act leave first because it’s scheduled to end on December 31, 2020. OSDE will support anything districts can do to help employees. It’s up to you.
- Is either SBE or OSDE going to request a statewide delay of the start of school? No. It’s important to be together in school. Get in and establish relationships, make connections. Kids are depending on school being there for mental health supports.
- When returning from another state, must staff be quarantined for two weeks? No, not aware of this, but will check.
- As to coaches and athletes during practice, if the district is in the orange or yellow zone, must they wear masks? Superintendent Hofmeister and Brad Clark would advise that, although an exception may apply.
- If you’re going to another county in a different color zone, abide by the zone of the county you’re in.
- Is there any information on enrollment codes that may be different? Anticipate a set of enrollment and attendance codes at least by the time of the SBE meeting – July 23.
- Under OSDE’s recommendation to SBE, students aren’t required to wear masks at recess.
- If the teacher is at the front of the room and the closest student is six feet away, can the teacher remove mask? No. Need to maintain your protection. Teachers can take it off if no one else is in the classroom.
- Will SBE be mandating other things, like temperature checks? No. Districts can determine that. If everyone has a mask on, it will help overcome a faulty thermometer or other thing. If an individual doesn’t have a temperature, they can still carry the virus.
- At SBE’s July 23 meeting, it could adopt something more restrictive than OSDE’s recommendation.
- Are bus drivers expected to wear masks? Yes. In one district, the drivers are wearing a clear mask and clear shield. It will also retrofit fans to fit on buses. Then the drivers can drop their masks under some circumstances when the shield is on and fan is running.

Closing Remarks

- Superintendent Hofmeister stated that she’s never seen such hard work or such great leaders shouldering such responsibility. They’re contemplating so many details and wrestling with decisions. She is asking for families and teachers to extend grace and patience. Science is still investigating the virus. Districts must be ready to shift. We’re all going to learn a lot this year. Superintendent Hofmeister stated that she is very proud to do this work with school leaders. Adults in schools and families need to model what we want our students to do. She stated that she is praying for you.

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

- As of today, there are 22,813 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in Oklahoma, with 1,075 of those just in the last 24 hours – an Oklahoma record. The latter number includes Governor Stitt. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), as of today, there are 427 deaths and 571 hospitalizations, almost half of which are in ICU. We've had nearly 5,000 new cases in one 1 week.
- A mask, according to the CDC, is a critical tool to reduce transmission. Masks are useful for the wearer and for others in the area. A large number of Oklahoma districts have already decided to require masks of staff and students. OSDE is also hearing from lots of staff and parents. Believes SBE will take up a mask requirement next week. More details to come about what that might look like. They're working with health experts on this.
- State aid initial allocations. For a variety of factors, they won't be released today. Hopeful they'll be released at end of next week.
- OSDE put out a PPE survey on 7/14. Districts are concerned about getting PPE. The survey results will be used to prepare an "ask" for PPE for districts. Survey is open till 7/22 at 5:00 p.m.
- Hot spot grants. The application opened in GMS on 7/14. Quick turnaround is necessary. Completed application must be submitted by 7/24 at 11:59 p.m. Recipients will be announced 7/31. Verizon will ship hot spots to grant recipients within one week after that. Grant recipients must agree to pay \$10 per month service fee for each hot spot for at least six months. The hot spots provided under the grant will be available as long as the national pandemic continues or June 30, 2021, whichever is later.
- Can only apply for and assign hot spots from the grant to low income students and only 1 per family unless there are more than 3 children in a family, then can assign 2. Can't award to teachers or staff, but district can purchase additional hot spots for non-low income students and for staff and teachers at \$60 per hot spot. If the district purchases hot spots, the service fee is still \$10 for each. Verizon pricing info is confidential, so only share it with those who need that info to process payment, etc.
- There are 3 prompts in the hot spot grant application – (1) how do the hot spots connect to the district's distance learning plan, (2) how do they connect to local initiatives and (3) what is the district's hot spot deployment and implementation plan. Districts must attach their 2020-2021 distance learning plan and technology survey to their application. OSDE will be looking for the hot spots' connection to virtual learning and how hot spots will support the district's virtual learning plan. Bonus points will be awarded to those who didn't receive an incentive grant or received less than \$150 per student in CARES Act funds. Apologized if Verizon is not available in your area.
- At the July 23 SBE meeting, emergency rules will be presented re distance learning. The information included in the rules is what's already in the OSDE FAQs and Framework. Among other things in the emergency rules, districts are required to have plans to

measure attendance and credits and to provide access to all students. There will be processes about reporting attendance and absences through the district student information system (SIS). OSDE will provide the Rules and attendance codes in the near future.

- Showed Exact Path video. Exact Path professional development starts on 7/20. Districts don't have to be rostered to participate in the PD, but would be more meaningful for them if they were. Districts can still sign up for Exact Path. All districts can join in the PD.
- Superintendent Hofmeister stated that we'll all get through this. We'll persevere. We'll pull together to make it happen. There's promising info re possible vaccines. "You're doing amazing work, and you're amazing. No one has gone through this in 100 years. What we're doing is monumental." This work impacts millions in OK. Superintendent Hofmeister stated that she's proud of you and proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you. Getting through this will require flexibility and pivoting.

Questions and Answers

- PPE survey. How suggest districts calculate the number of masks needed for students, considering that surgical masks are recommended to be changed every hour? Consider cloth masks that can be washed, along with single day use masks. Haven't heard of masks that must be disposed of after an hour.
- Any info about the Oklahoma death rate per positive cases recently? No, doesn't have that info today. Has seen data that indicates the positive spread per capita in Oklahoma. That data puts OK among the leading states for virus spread. Doesn't have the source for this info. Death rate is important, but need to focus on living with the virus. The data we receive doesn't include the conditions of those who are leaving hospitals. Don't discount that information. That includes amputations due to blood clots and lung scarring. In conversations with OK public health officials, they're commenting on the rise in pediatric cases.
- More info about what is going to SBE re masks. These decisions must be based in evidence, research and expert opinion. Makes sense to have a tiered system that corresponds to the path of the virus in active areas in the state. Anticipate a graduated recommendation that goes through the spectrum, including masks for all staff and students or closure of schools in areas with a highly volatile, highly dangerous spread. Not comfortable discussing the nuances of this plan. Still needs to vet it with others. Need to have the most specific response we can so a community without spread doesn't have to mask the same ways as those with great spread.
- Masks. Can a district require students to wear a mask if it doesn't provide masks? Districts do require students to provide supplies. Of course, you can regulate in schools for safety and well-being. This is along the same lines.

- Oklahoma students already have among the lowest health outcomes in the U.S. They have more asthma, diabetes and co-morbidity. Also, our staff members have more health conditions, and their average age is higher. Some of you are hearing of teachers fearful to return to their schools. We have an obligation to keep safety top of mind. These are reasons will ask SBE to do a multi-tiered response re PPE. Data says wearing a mask protects others and the wearer, to some extent. Wearing masks can simulate herd immunity and help minimize risk.
- The safest thing is virtual on-line school. The CDC notes this. But must balance this with homes that aren't safe. School staff members are frequent reporters of abuse. When there's a virtual on-line setting only, ER cases increase, as do injuries from neglect and abuse. For many families, it's important that students return to a school building.
- Thinking of pushing back school start date or suggesting to districts that they do so? Each district should consider this based on their community. The answer depends on what's happening in your area. Work with local health officials to make this decision.
- Hot spot grants. Is there an expectation that districts attach their distance learning plan for 2020-21? Yes, OSDE wants to know what you've planned for 2020-21. Over the school year, a lot of students and staff will be in quarantine at some point because of a case in a classroom. OSDE is working on a template for a 2020-21 distance learning plan, but there's no set date to complete it. Not sure it will be out by the 7/24 hot spot application deadline. The template, when done, will be in the accreditation upload. As to the hot spot grants, OSDE wants to see you'll be doing some virtual online distance learning that would justify an award of a hot spot grant. That's a key piece in asking that you attach your plan. The grants will be competitive, so they're looking at ways to differentiate districts.
- Face shields vs. masks. Will a face shield satisfy a mask requirement? No. A face shield with a mask provides "extraordinary" protection. A face shield alone provides no protection to others. It may provide some protection in very low grades where students might not wear masks.
- Will the mask requirement from SBE extend to districts in areas with very few cases? It depends on what you're seeing. OSDE is trying to get a system that provides greater flexibility than across an entire county. Just because you have one positive case in a county doesn't mean the virus isn't more prevalent in that county.
- Hot spot grant app. The assurance statement provides that the district must distribute hot spots to students within two weeks of receipt. Is that flexible? No, it's a hard deadline. Get them deployed to eligible students as fast as possible. All devices under the contract with Verizon have to be activated by a certain date. The other option for hot spots – other than through the grant – is for a district to do a P.O. off the state contract at \$60 per hot spot with the same \$10 per month service fee. How does a district make these purchases? Get in touch with Verizon directly. OSDE will do this if requested.

Verizon knows these inquiries will be coming. Also, Verizon will have regularly scheduled meetings with districts. Expect the roll out soon.

- What about use of employee sick days for a teacher if the teacher gets COVID or has a student that gets it? This depends on local policy. Sick leave or FMLA can be tapped, as could the Families First COVID Relief Act. Other options could also arise.
- What about the potential for requiring staff testing before reporting back to school? That could tell you if you have asymptomatic cases. It may create some overconfidence in the event of negative tests. Other countries have lots of testing and rapid turnaround for teachers and students. If we had that capability, we could do that, but we can't. If an individual has symptoms or has been exposed, there will be a quarantine whether or not they took a test.
- Thoughts about temperature checks for staff and students upon entering buildings or bus? There's some backing off on this as a district requirement because some touchless thermometers aren't accurate and fever isn't always present with COVID. But we can get into a routine of taking our temperature and, if have a 100 degree temperature, then stay home. The temperature is 100, not 100.4 degrees, per the Oklahoma state epidemiologist.
- If parent won't require student to wear a mask, can student be made to stay home? It's best to be extra careful and wear masks. Districts should look at what's feasible and practical. Virtual opportunities are available for those who won't wear a mask. However, there are exceptions, such as for some students with disabilities. This is about changing a culture so children can be in school and learn. We need to act to protect others. It's our responsibility to think of the collective good.
- OSDH spoke to superintendents and said it won't be able to share identities of those tested positive or who have been told to quarantine. There are exceptions to this with public health and in an epidemic. Thinks this is a misunderstanding. OSDE shares the concern expressed by the superintendents. There's an exception in FERPA and a similar one under HIPAA that in a health or safety situation, info can be shared with the appropriate officials. Will continue to have conversations with OSDH about this.
- Superintendent Hofmeister stated that if you're thinking it's going to be fine, it may. But returning to school will be the first test for Oklahoma for 700,000 kids and 80,000 staff and teachers together. The virus might not be in your community now, but there's a likelihood of it impacting your school, community, etc. We want to be able to open schools for as long as possible for the sake of kids. There are probably lots of people who are asymptomatic, but have the virus and are walking around spreading. This situation will overwhelm county health officials if we don't go forward safely. That's a factor in whether and how to mandate masks.
- What is guidance for staff over 65 or with vulnerable conditions? They're at risk. The average age of an Oklahoma teacher is over 50 years old. We're trying to protect this

work force. Oklahoma has poor health outcomes for children and adults. This is why OSDE wants a more uniform calibrated response re safety. Each individual makes the decision. Some people are saying they're frustrated by their district's unwillingness to take a stand on masks, so they're deciding not to work in a school this year.

Superintendent Hofmeister stated that a superintendent told her she sees no masks on people on the street, but anonymous surveys show 75% approval for wearing masks at school. Districts may get different results from anonymous surveys.

- Emergency drill requirements. They're still as important as in the past. They can be done without lots of students participating at once. OSDE has looked at other states. It's important to continue with drills, but not to do them with everyone at once.
- Bus transportation. If district personnel take a student's temperature at the bus stop and the student can't board, what does it do if the parent isn't at home? It's possible some districts are going to take temperatures before bus boarding as opposed to screening at school. You need to create awareness in parents to look at this issue in the morning – take the student's temperature at home to avoid these circumstances. If an individual is sick or feels they have symptoms, then they need to stay home. Don't let the desire to be present at school overcome this.
- A student tests positive in the class. Who needs to quarantine? This is addressed in the [Framework](#) at page 14. What about other students in the classroom for 30 minutes or more with the student? If those students spent more than 15 minutes in close contact with the positive student, they have to quarantine. Assigned seating at elementary level may help with contact tracing. Same with keeping a cohort of students together. Whole class quarantine may be necessary under some circumstances.
- Superintendent Hofmeister stated her thanks and appreciation. She said that you may be waiting to put out your district reopening plan because you don't want to have to change it. However, families and communities want specificity in a crisis. All of us have to be willing to flex. "We have what it takes to get through this." Kids will see your leadership and see teachers as people who care for them. It's important to get back to school together, to make connections and stay in school as long as possible. Keep up your resolve.

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

- Wearing masks is fundamental.
- Return to school. Knows you're working diligently on plans to return to school. Reference [OSDE's Return to Learn Framework](#) as you develop your plans. Communicate with everyone – teachers, parents, etc. - regularly even if you're still working on your plan.

- Exact Path. There's been an "incredible" response to Exact Path. 335 districts have shown interest or signed a contract. 189 districts are fully deployed for use. If you haven't returned the form yet, move swiftly so you can start ASAP. The OSDE data team has made the rostering process for students using Exact Path very simple. Once you have returned the form and students are rostered, you can start using Exact Path.
- Hot spots grant. OSDE has 50,000 hot spots from Verizon that will be disbursed through competitive grants. Using ESSER \$ to OSDE for this work. Grant requirements will be released this week. Thinks application will open 7/14. It will have a quick turnaround. Other states' school districts are also working with Verizon to get hot spots. Don't want Oklahoma districts to have to wait on Verizon because Oklahoma moved too slowly. Applications will be due 10 days after grant opening (7/24 at 11:59 p.m.). Grants will be awarded around 7/31.
- Districts that get a hot spot grant must pay the monthly service fee of \$10 per month for unlimited data, which will continue through the pandemic or 7/31/21, whichever is later.
- Can only assign these hot spots to low income students and only one per family unless there are more than 3 children in a family. Can't award to teachers or staff, but district can purchase additional hot spots for non-low income students and for staff and teachers at \$60 per hot spot, which is the same amount that OSDE paid. Essentially, there is one big statewide family plan through Verizon to operate these 50,000 hot spots.
- There are 3 prompts in the hot spot grant application – (1) how do the hot spots connect to the district's distance learning plan, (2) how do they connect to local initiatives and (3) what is the district's hot spot deployment and implementation plan. Districts must attach their distance learning plan and technology survey to their application. Bonus points will be awarded to those who didn't receive an incentive grant or received less than \$150 per student in Care Act funds.
- Nutrition. USDA has issued extensions to several waivers that now extend through 2020-21. The first is for non-congregant settings. Meals can be delivery or grab and go. USDA also granted waivers for meal service time, parent and guardian pick-up and meal pattern flexibility if the district has exhausted all other options. USDA also granted a waiver that provides offer versus service flexibility for high school students. They can get a full meal at lunch without worrying about offer v. serve.

Questions and Answers

- What about use of face shields? A mask with a face shield is effective. A face shield alone isn't as effective as a mask. Agrees that children need to see teachers' faces and vice versa. Superintendent Hofmeister wants to see masks for teachers and students as part of school district plans. Tuesday, will have a meeting with new Oklahoma State Department of Health Commissioner Fry. Will ask him about this. A face shield provides further

protection on top of a mask. As to N95 masks, OSDH has asked that these not be used in schools as they are needed in health care settings.

- Hot spots awarded via OSDE grant. How will devices and troubleshooting work? Technical issues are the district's responsibility, but they'll have a direct line of communication with Verizon. Verizon will host regular calls with districts to work through technical issues. Management and deployment fall to districts once the hot spots have been disbursed.
- Emergency drills and social distancing. Will there be a waiver of emergency drills for the 2020-21 school year? Will take this issue up with OSDE legal. If the issue is going to go forward, it should be on SBE's July meeting agenda.
- Waiver of Oklahoma standardized testing? Other states are talking about this in the context of those states, which have value added measures (VAMs) for teacher evaluations and other issues that Oklahoma doesn't have. Superintendent Hofmeister hesitates to jump into this conversation before school starts. We have these assessments for a reason – to take a snapshot in time to consider the civil rights of students in federally protected groups – those with disabilities, English learners, those in poverty, and due to color, race, ethnicity. Talking about not having assessment at this point is inappropriate when we consider the reason for the assessments. Hope you understand that Oklahoma doesn't have to think about VAMs and only has US History in addition to the federally required assessment. Also, there is no waiver available right now. Anticipates this will be a year of great challenges, but doesn't want to open the waiver door today.
- Are districts concerned about teachers being too afraid to return? What about the propriety of having those over age 65 and in vulnerable populations return to work? Superintendent Hofmeister is hearing from some in these groups that they're fearful. Whether to return is a personal decision. Superintendent Hofmeister states that it's possible to keep teachers and staff safe. It depends to some degree on behavior in our state and communities now. Mask wearing is the single most effective thing we can do besides hand washing. There is a new concern about virus transmission through aerosol. Given that, it's far more important that we wear masks. OSDE is part of a group reviewing what other countries that addressed the virus did successfully, and success is attributed to mask wearing and other factors common to those countries. What didn't work in other countries? Israel started with mask wearing, but lifted the requirement because of the heat. With that, COVID went out of control there, and school was cancelled. The group studied data of 12-15 countries. It can be safe enough to work if masks and social distancing are used and hand washing takes place regularly.
- We know school will feel different. We need great teachers in schools. Superintendent Hofmeister heard from an Oklahoma teacher with a large online presence that if students wore masks and face shields, that would relieve teachers' minds. Shields alone might not help due to the aerosol nature of the virus, but masks will help. Face shields are open so it

would seem that the virus could go under the shield due to its aerosol nature. Will ask the new OSDH Commissioner about the efficacy of face shields used without a mask.

- The CEC says children under 2 shouldn't wear masks. If there's a choking hazard, students also shouldn't wear them. Does SDE think students over age of 2 should wear mask? Yes, when feasible.
- Quarantine. Is there an OSDE requirement for a 14-day quarantine when a student or staff member is exposed to someone who tests positive? This is addressed in OSDE's Return to Learn Plan. Yes, a 14-day quarantine is required from the last time of exposure to the person who tested positive. (See information about the nature of that exposure below.) An isolation period (for the person who actually tested positive) may be shorter in duration than the quarantine period (for a person who's exposed to the person who tested positive). Should there be a COVID test at the end of this 14-day period? That's not required now by CDC.
- If one person in one grade is COVID positive, must the entire grade be quarantined? The fact that one person in one grade is positive doesn't mean everyone in that grade would be quarantined. Who would be quarantined depends on whether social distancing was in place and who was exposed to the positive person for 30 minutes. Contact tracers will get to work on the issue, and notice of exposure would go out.
- Is there a "trigger" for when schools would close due to COVID? Districts will make this decision along with the local/county health department or OSDH, similar to how decisions are made for closing a school due to influenza. Visit with your local/county health department about this. The trigger is likely to be much like the trigger for influenza – a certain % of students are out for that illness. For the flu, the trigger is often 80% of the school's students are out. Understands that schools would want to have a specific set percentage. OSDE will discuss with OSDH. Also, OSDH will be doing color coding of counties according to COVID-19 risk. OSDE will have something that corresponds with these color codes. Would be great to have some uniformity across the state.
- Should staff members and students be tested for COVID before the start of school? It shows whether the person has the virus at a particular point in time. Exposure can occur after that.
- Will new teachers be able to get certifications and background checks before the school year begins? Yes. There are sites that can do finger printing. But, for new employees, they save money by having OSDE do their fingerprinting. They can get access to this through OSDE by making an appointment.
- Should districts contact trace or leave it to the health department? Districts will work with their health department. You'll work together. Start working with them now – establish relationships and discuss who to connect with and what you can expect from your local/county health department. If there's no swift response from the local/county department, call the state epidemiologist. OSDH is indicating it's not tracking down

someone a COVID-positive person walked by or shared an elevator with; it's someone they spent at least 15 minutes with without social distancing.

- When will districts get state aid allocations? The goal is July 15. OSDE has all ASRs in and is working as quickly as it can. As to Title I applications, OSDE hopes to get them out next week. They're in test right now.
- OSDH has indicated that it has lots of signage that schools can use, along with videos about proper wearing of a mask. OSDE can put this info out in its Admin Newsletter.
- Look for the hot spot grant application coming out soon.

Friday, June 19, 2020

- The meeting covers 2 main areas – use of Incentive Grant funds and Exact Path
- There are 9,706 positive cases of COVID-19, with more than 800 new cases in the last 2 days, 367 confirmed deaths and 211 hospitalized - an increase - with roughly half that number in intensive care. There were 2,400 fewer cases 10 days ago. Health experts are concerned about the rise in cases among those ages 18-35, who account for nearly half of those cases. Be vigilant in social distancing, using masks and following health protocols.
- Incentive Grant application was released last Friday with a total of \$16 million dollars. Grants will be awarded by July 1. Applications are due June 22. The Summary document from OSDE's website can be found at <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/CARES%20Act%20Incentive%20Grants.pdf>.
- Districts can sign up now to use the Exact Path tool, an adaptive online math and reading tool for individual instruction. It can be used in the classroom and at home. It integrates with the NWEA and Renaissance Star assessments.

Exact Path

- Aaron Espolt – Understands decision making process for Superintendents and the process for deciding whether to use this tool. Feels confident your questions will be answered. Will be putting his kindergarten age child into the program in her home district. To help districts, OSDE has set up additional supports, including a group of users currently using Exact Path you can talk to and a webinar on Wednesday, June 24, at 10:00 a.m. to answer technical questions. Invite your leadership team to the webinar to view the product demo, speak with specialists and do Q&A.
- For information from other districts your size currently using Exact Path, contact;

6A

Bartlesville - McCauleyCR@bps-ok.org

5A

El Reno - cmcvay@elrenops.org

Ardmore – kholland@ardmoreschools.org

4A

Stilwell - ggilstrap@stilwellk12.org

Cushing - koln.knight@cushing.k12.ok.us

Wagoner - rharris@wagonerps.org

3A

Eufaula - jfsmith@eufaula.k12.ok.us

2A

Minco - ksims@minco.k12.ok.us

Holdenville - rdavenport@holdenville.k12.ok.us

- Edmentum reps Angela Bilyeu, formerly with OSDE Assessment Section, and Kia Devers, Education Program Manager who works with districts on implementation, made the presentation.
- Angela – Edmentum is focused on the educator first. Students have experienced a double summer slide this year. Want to make sure you’re building schools around your students whatever the setting – brick and mortar, virtual, blended. Big question is what to do next with students. You’re not sure where they are or what they were doing when out of school and wonder how to pinpoint where they are and help them. You also want to support teachers with resources to help them figure where students are now and how to grow them at a good pace.
- Angela - Exact Path is very flexible and can mold to what you’re already doing. Takes NWEA and Renaissance Star scores and uploads into system to develop a personalized learning path for each student K-12. Educators facilitate and monitor student learning. The system automatically assigns progress checks every four skills. There’s also a grouping tool, whatever the setting. Educators don’t have to examine data themselves to do manual grouping. Aligned to Oklahoma Academic Standards. Takes learning down to the skill level. Diagnostic first, then instruction, then target needs and plan next step in learning path. Place student on learning path and it adjusts as student completes skills.
- Angela – Exact Path provides lexile and quantile scores as well as a national percentile ranking for students. Edmentum can provide proven effectiveness research from third party businesses and has info about how Exact Path works with WIDA. Exact Path login can be done on multiple devices. It’s mobile optimized so can be used on many types of devices. There’s a teacher login page. There’s a knowledge map in math reading, language arts. There are skills in each area. Teachers can see where students are and what they’re working on on the knowledge map. Teachers can also open drawers to see additional resources they can use to help students. They can see the progress checks and students’ correct and incorrect answers. Exact Path translates into 19 different languages. It will support English learners and students with disabilities – IDEA or 504.
- Kia – Next steps. Want this to be done in an efficient and effective manner. Districts should complete the simple online interest form at <https://info.edmentum.com/oklahoma>. Only need to submit it once. Edmentum’s

internal team will review and send an email with next steps, including a site to begin exploring. Please submit interest forms as soon as possible so Edmentum can do a sound rollout without missing anyone. The Exact Path webinar is Wednesday, June 24 at 10 a.m. They will go in-depth with tools and can answer your questions. Make sure those who lead instruction in the district are on the call. Look for the email from the internal team after submitting your interest form. Look for the invite to the webinar. Attend the webinar. Your team will get info about rostering and other more technical issues.

- On Monday, June 22, OSDE will send an email bulletin with a reminder and log-in for the Exact Path webinar on Wednesday, June 24 at 10 a.m. This info will also be in the Tuesday Admin Newsletter.
- Incentive Grants (789). 340 districts have begun an application, and 76 have submitted one.
- Carolyn Thompson – Review the Summary about Incentive Grants at <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/CARES%20Act%20Incentive%20Grants.pdf>.
- Districts that commit to spend at least 30% of their ESSER funds (788) in at least 2 but no more than 3 of 5 priority areas will be eligible to apply for the Incentive Grants. Districts must commit to spend at least 10% of the total allocation (788) in each of the selected priority areas. Awards will be based on a district's enrollment from the October 1, 2019, accreditation report. See chart on page 1 of the [Summary](#).
- Funds must be spent in awarded categories. But Incentive Grant funds (789) don't need to align with same percentages as long as they're used in priority areas. The selected areas from the 5 priority areas do not need to be the same areas in the CARES Allocated Grant (788) as the selected priority areas selected for the Incentive Grant (789).
- Incentive Grant funds can't be used for personnel costs, including salaries, benefits and/or stipends.
- Districts receiving an Incentive Grant (789) can't use the required 30% set-aside of the ESSER Allocated Grant (788) to pay the salaries of existing personnel. But they can use the 30% in ESSER Allocated (788) to hire new personnel or pay stipends to existing personnel, as long as those expenses are directly related to the impact of COVID-19 and further the intended use of the Incentive Grant. For example, if a district chose mental health supports as one of its priority areas, it could purchase SEL curriculum and hire a new person to implement the program.
- LMS and CMS purchases don't have to be from statewide contract. E-textbooks don't qualify. Edmentum and Edgenuity are examples of CMS.
- What about bus or vehicle purchases from Incentive Grant funds? No, it's not an allowable expense to purchase a bus or vehicle to move people. If a district wants to buy equipment to turn a bus or vehicle into an access point, they can do that.
- Incentive Grants (789) are only for those districts that commit 30% of ESSER Allocated (788) funds to at least 2 of the 5 priority areas. No area may receive less than 10% of the total allocation.
- Does a district have to certify its ESSER grant (788) before it certifies its Incentive Grant funds (789)? No. Go ahead and complete and submit your Incentive Grant application.

- ~~In their application, districts should show how they're going to use Incentive Grant funds in the same way they're using the 30% set aside.~~ During the call, the above deleted information was provided, but was later clarified. After the call, OSDE sent an email with a revised [Summary](#) that now states: "However, districts may select different areas in the Incentive Grant application than what was selected in the CARES Act formula grant application."
- If a district needs to later make an amendment to its formula grant, OSDE anticipates providing the flexibility for that. Will tackle that issue when it comes up.
- What if a district already purchased an LMS? Can it use Incentive Grant funds to pay for it? OSDE wants to see districts do new things with the Incentive Grant funds instead of paying for things they've already committed to. OSDE will ask Grants Manager Shelly Perkins about this. Districts can contact her at shelly.perkins@ok.sde.gov or (405) 522-2194.
- This is a competitive grant and not everyone will have access to it. Your application and implementation should align with the terms of the grant and OSDE's intent as it's explaining it.
- If a district didn't check the set aside of 30% in its initial application (788) but then went back and did it, can it still apply for the Incentive Grant (789)? Check with Shelly Perkins at shelly.perkins@sde.ok.gov or (405) 522-2194.
- Can't use Incentive Grant funds (789) to hire a new person, but can use 30% set aside (788) for that. Districts can also use the 70% (that is not tied to the 30% in priority areas) of the ESSER Allocated Grant (788) to hire new or existing personnel.
- How does a district figure out how much to apply for in its Incentive Grant (789) application? Look at page 1 of the [Summary](#). It sets out the max a district can apply for. But even if it applies for the max, it may not get that.
- Back to the issue of funds for hiring tutors. Districts can do that with the 30% set aside of their ESSER formula funds (788). They can use the other 70% of their funds for any reason in the 12 areas.
- Districts receiving an Incentive Grant from ESSER or GEER funds are required to provide equitable services to students and teachers in nonpublic schools. Does the private school consultation occur after districts find out if incentive funds were awarded? No, that can happen before for the ESSER Allocated fund (788), and districts don't have to do it again if they get incentive funds, unless there's a new need identified.
- The Incentive Grant application scoring rubric is on page 3 of the [Summary](#).
- Can a district amend its first CARES Act application (788) if awarded an incentive grant (789)? Monty Guthrie says yes.
- If a private school opts out of allocated ESSER funds (788), can it opt in to Incentive Grant funds (789)? Brad Clark says no, don't believe so.
- Is there any possibility to move the Incentive Grant application due date from June 22 due to short notice? Let OSDE know if can't get it done by Monday. They want to get the funds allocated as soon as possible, but will take it under consideration.
- Hot spots – this is a separate contract. The best case scenario is for OSDE to get the application out and contracts done by the end of July.

- If an Incentive Grant (789) is not awarded, can the district reallocate the 30% in (788)? Yes.
- What are OSDE's expectations for the data reporting section of the Incentive Grants application for 10 points? Email OSDE because Robyn Miller is not on this call.
- Regarding hot spots, the vendor is Verizon. Districts won't get a better deal than Verizon is offering. There are 50,000 available and then districts can apply for an additional 50,000 using the low state rate. They can't apply yet. OSDE needs to work details out. The very simple hot spot application will be in GMS in 2-3 weeks.
- Does a district get any extra benefits for submitting its Incentive Grant application before the deadline? No.
- ~~Incentive Grant funds have to be used for the same areas as the district's 30% set aside in at least 2 and no more than 3 of the priority areas.~~ During the call, the above deleted information was provided, but was later clarified. After the call, OSDE sent an email with a revised [Summary](#) that now states: "However, districts may select different areas in the Incentive Grant application (789) than what was selected in the CARES Act formula grant application (788)."
- What kinds of compensatory services can be provided through the Incentive Grant (789)? Could hire tutors with 30% (788) set aside and from the rest of the ESSER Allocated funds (789) as long as the district reserved at least 10% in some other priority area. But for Incentive Grant, think about the needs of students with disabilities and English learners. For students with disabilities, it could be for assistive technology.
- If the district's CARES Act application (788) is in review, how can the district change it? Contact your reviewer and let them know. They'll work with you.
- If district didn't budget SEL in its formula grant, can it budget it in its Incentive Grant? ~~The district may have to submit an amendment to its formula application.~~ During the call, the above deleted information was provided, but was later clarified. After the call, OSDE sent an email with a revised [Summary](#) that now states: "However, districts may select different areas in the Incentive Grant application than what was selected in the CARES Act formula grant application."
- Several on the call commented that the restriction of using the same category is very problematic. Superintendent Hofmeister said she was glad to have that feedback. After the call, OSDE sent the revised email discussed above that provides greater flexibility.

Closing Remarks

- Superintendent Hofmeister said she appreciated everyone seeking to meet student needs and applying for Incentive Grants. OSDE wants to make this as easy as it can.
- She also stated concern that participants seemed more confused about Incentive Grant requirements than they were before the call.
- The Exact Path webinar will be Wednesday, June 24, at 10 a.m. Look for an invitation with credentials from Supt. Hofmeister on Monday.

OSDE's Post-Call Email

- The post-call OSDE email referenced several times above states that “We know many of you will be working on your applications through the weekend, and we want to ensure you can do so without undue confusion. If an application has already been submitted prior to this clarification, the district **will be allowed to make an amendment.**”
- Contact Shelly Perkins at OSDE with questions at shelly.perkins@sde.ok.gov or (405) 522-2194.

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

- Superintendent Hofmeister started the meeting by referring to the “great” CCOSA Conference last week and said she appreciated Dr. Deering and all the work that went into the Conference.
- Child Nutrition. USDA has issued a nationwide waiver extending the timeline from June 30 to August 31, 2020 for SFSP and SSO operators, on a case-by-case basis, to operate open sites in non-eligible areas. This refers to those operating a site without meeting the 50% free and reduced threshold. USDA also issued a nationwide waiver extending through July 31, 2020 for all Child Nutrition Programs previously issued waivers for non-congregate feeding, meal service times, no child present parent pick-up, and meal pattern flexibilities.
- There are currently 7,480 positive COVID-19 cases in Oklahoma, 355 deaths and 150 currently hospitalized. Numbers are showing a steady if modest increase since June 1 since Phase 3 of the reopening plan took effect. There are increased positive cases and deaths, while hospitalizations remain steady. Experts recommend that we continue to practice “courteous behavior” and social distancing.
- OSDE’s [Return to Learn Framework](#) is out. Hope you’ve read it and are looking at it in concert with plans you’re making. If you’re working on plans, call on OSDE for help.
- The [Framework](#) addresses four broad areas – School Operations, Academics and Growth, Whole Child and Family Supports, and School Personnel. The Table of Contents is hyperlinked. There’s also a checklist at the end. The School Operations section may be of particular interest.
- Suggest all schools do some type of screening before allowing people to enter the building. Screening refers to a simple questionnaire or temperature check or something like that. If you do this, adopt a policy and communicate it to families. Plan for the additional time that may be needed to implement your plan as children are getting to and from school. Schools could require families to do a certification before putting a child on the bus, such as certifying that they’ve completed a temperature check that day. A temperature of 100 F would be the threshold on which to decline entrance to school, according to the state epidemiologist. This is a different threshold than CDC, which uses 100.4 F.
- The [Framework](#) provides lots of information about what to do regarding outbreaks. If an individual shows symptoms during school time, isolate and send them home. They can’t return until ten days after showing symptoms and three days after their fever is gone,

without benefit of fever-reducing medication. This is the time that an individual who is COVID-19 positive is shedding the virus. If the individual tests negative for the virus, then use normal school protocols in determining when they can return to school.

- The [Framework](#) provides that if an individual has had known close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, the individual must stay home and self-monitor for 14 days. This 14-day period is considered the quarantine period and is the typical amount of time to show symptoms of the virus.
- The [Framework](#) also provides that if an individual tests positive for COVID-19 and is at school, they should be isolated and sent home. The isolation period is ten days after symptoms began and three days after their fever is gone, without benefit of a fever-reducing medication. The district should immediately contact the local health department. Remember that local health departments have had little to no opportunity to work with schools in this situation, so OSDE is working on more uniform responses from health departments to these anticipated school calls. In addition to or instead of calling the local health department, the district should call the Oklahoma State Department of Health on-call epidemiologist. The school should close areas where the positive individual spent at least 30 minutes and should wait at least 24 hours to clean those areas. It will be a case-by-case decision whether or not to close all or part of a school building. Contract tracing will be critical to the closure decision, and the district will need to work closely with health agencies. Districts should also stay in contact with OSDE and others to help refine and improve these school protocols.
- The [Framework](#) also includes various scenarios for school in the 2020-21 school year. Districts should address traditional, distance and blended scenarios in their plans. As long as health officials say it's safe, districts should plan for the majority of the school year on site via a traditional model. Districts should also have a plan for distance learning with required student participation at least in the event of resurgence of COVID-19 or if students otherwise can't come to school. The blended model would include both onsite and distance learning. This may be a very good option due to the flexibility it provides. Make sure district policies are in place reflecting how distance learning days will be used, including advance notice to families, requirements for student participation and consequences for failure to participate. Distance learning videos are available on OSDE's YouTube channel, so look at them.
- Elements of support from OSDE with CARES Act/ESERS funds. This week OSDE will be providing information on two CARES Act-funded initiatives. *Exact Path* from Edmentum will be available with a statewide license that OSDE buys and makes available to all districts for students K-12 from June 2020 through July 2021. Districts will have to opt-in to access this free resource. This tool helps set growth goals and promotes growth. It's not just an online tool to be used away from school. It's designed for use inside the classroom, especially in elementary grades, with students who are gifted and talented and

for those with severe gaps. *Exact Path* provides differentiated virtual grouping and meaningful reports. Teacher training will also be provided. This tool could be a significant part of a district's offerings for students because it individualizes and helps close learning gaps. It includes lexiles and quantiles like Oklahoma educators are used to seeing with state assessments. It can also integrate with information from NWEA Maps and Renaissance Star Assessments. Districts can opt in to use *Exact Path*. It's free for this upcoming 13-month period (through July 2021).

- The incentive grant application will be released through grants management this week. OSDE is trying to make the awards by July 1 so you'll have lots of time to plan for and use the money. You'll have ten days to complete and return the app – by June 22. The priority is around LMS and CMS purchases. They don't have to be from statewide contracts. 30% - no less than 10% - can be spent on one area. The funds can't be used for existing personnel expenses. 30% is set aside for new personnel or stipends. More information will be released in a day or two.
- OSDE is entering into contract negotiations for hot spots. It intends to use funds from its SEA set aside for up to 50,000 hot spots. Districts will be responsible for expenses associated with the hot spots (at about ¼ of the usual expense) for six months.
- Erik Friend presented information regarding data integration for Google Classroom. OSDE has been working with Google and student information system vendors. They're working on a process to use data to roster students into Google Classroom (GC) with no need to reenter information in GC that's already in the student information system. OSDE is in contract negotiations with the vendor that's providing the necessary tool. This is another opt-in service for districts. Once the bugs are worked out, it will be open to anyone who wants to opt in. It's expected to save teachers a lot of time. Email Erik if your district is willing to pilot it.

Questions

- Is *Exact Path* an all-in-one online curriculum or must other things be used with it? It's part of a curriculum, but in an emergency could be used alone, as NYC recently did. *Exact Path* offers much more, though. It can be used for reading, English and math as a supplement in an emergency, but it's not all-inclusive. It's a learning path to be used in conjunction with instruction in the traditional setting. OSDE will have a crosswalk study with the Oklahoma Academic Standards available when they roll it out. It will be an important tool. It will blend with tools already in use, like NWEA Maps for placement and charting growth paths and with Renaissance Star Assessments. That's part of the reason why it was selected. Edgenuity doesn't have anything like this yet. They're about 1 ½ to 2 years away from having a tool like this. Districts can start using it to close gaps this summer. 47 districts are already using it. OSDE is letting every district make the decision on their own

about how to set grade levels. NYC set it at grade level for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year because it wanted students to be at their grade level by end of year.

- Can districts establish a test account to check out *Exact Path* before signing on (opting in)? Can't guarantee this will be possible.
- *Exact Path* training will be at the LEA level. Districts don't have to sign up for training. The information will be sent to you, so don't contact OSDE for it. Information will come out to you in the next few weeks. Look at this tool on the Edmentum website. There's lots there for you to glean. After becoming familiar with it, OSDE's Aaron Espolt made a request to his home district for his own child to be able to use this tool. Grateful it will be available. There's no cost to districts for the 13-month *Exact Path* contract. OSDE will get feedback from districts along the way.
- *Exact Path* can't be used to fulfill the requirements for RSA Screening. It's not approved for use as a screening tool by SBE.
- Regarding virtual learning plans for this fall, can a student be full-time virtual learning if the parent or child is uncomfortable sending the child to school? Yes, but the district must have a policy about what the rules are for attendance (for staff and students), etc. and how you'll support students in that environment. The [Return to Learn Framework](#) at page 20 has bullet points about the essential points such a policy must include, such as devices, access, connectivity and communication.
- How is a student to be counted absent or present if doing virtual learning in 2020-21? For attendance purposes, districts have local flexibility about how to measure. One option could be to use what applies to statewide virtual charter schools, which looks at the number of virtual instructional activities completed in a minimum time period. Districts can change that and require more as they deem appropriate. Counting absences is a local decision, too.
- OSDE is hearing about the innovative things districts are doing and wants to share these things at times. There are great ideas coming from Sand Springs and Superintendent Sherri Durkee. That district is working to define different learning opportunities. For example, what does it mean to be virtual full-time or in a blended model? With this information, there may be a better understanding by all and make it easier to move from one to another.
- Is anyone providing sample policies that districts can consider? Contact your membership organizations. Also, OSDE will be discussing these things. And remember to consult with your legal counsel. On the Oklahoma Edge learning platform there's a learning module up where you can post questions and network regarding best practices and policies.
- This is a paradigm shift for everyone in public ed. This is a time to shed some ways of thinking about attendance and instead consider outcomes and competency/mastery. This could lead to changing current attendance policies. Feel the freedom to differentiate and respond to what your community needs. Your community will want to know you have

plans about how you're going to shift depending on circumstances and how you can provide greater opportunities.

- When social distancing is required, the district wants to use every available space and have half of students in-person with the teacher and half virtual with a para supervising and then shift. Is that allowable? Yes, Brad Clark and Supt Hofmeister think this works and is allowable. There may be a limitation on this as to students and special education though.
- Is it advisable to have built-in distance learning days? Yes, Superintendent Hofmeister thinks so. It's good to embed those days so when you NEED to shift, it won't be unfamiliar.
- District got feedback from auditor that it couldn't pay for connectivity in a student's home. What can OSDE do? Does this mean hardwiring in a student's home? This gives OSDE opportunities to work with the auditors on its approved list to discuss this issue. The outcome might depend on the specifics of the situation. If connectivity is required for attendance under the district's policy, then it must provide a connection or other equitable access. Superintendent Hofmeister states let's explore this and work with auditors.
- Screening of students. If district requires taking temperature for screening on a daily basis, should the district keep a record of those temperatures? What about having a requirement for a doctor's note before return to school? OSDE doesn't want to create a situation that you have to keep certain documents. Do what makes sense. OSDE isn't going to create hurdles and barriers to return to school. Use your common sense. Work toward a culture of thinking of others and how your actions affect others. That culture will keep us safer. Be cautious about creating bureaucratic steps that don't need to be in place. This is the pragmatic and common sense approach. If we require a doctor's note from some students, that places a financial burden on the family. This requirement could be mitigated by the duration of time we ask people to stay out of school. Balance getting kids into schools, etc. with keeping people safe. We must be flexible and understanding and think of others. Focus on balance and do what CDC says is feasible, practical and doable in the community. If districts require this, communicate it well in advance. For personnel, it must be in policy and the handbook with advance notice because it's an FMLA issue.
- Where can districts find out more about incentive grants? You'll have the information Thursday or Friday.
- What about information about free hot spots and how districts can access? There will be a separate application for this. It may be a week or two or more before that information is out.

- Regarding child nutrition, there is one more data pull for CEP in June that would be available on the 26th or if there's a problem, on the 29th. This will help you look at CEP for 2020-21.
- Imagine Math is in next year's appropriated budget beginning July 1. That contract must also be done. OSDE teams are working long hours and weekends to get all of this done. They want to get you the most competitive opportunities out there.

Closing Remarks

- Superintendent Hofmeister applauds the work districts are doing and refers to their leadership as extraordinary and inspiring. Thank you for tackling issues and for reflecting that sense of confidence that comes with planning and listening to your community, teachers and other stakeholders. Look at next year as an opportunity to do things differently and meet kids in different places than before. Keep the focus on the learning and growth that has to happen to fill weak areas.

Monday, June 1, 2020

- Dr. Aaron Wendelboe joined the meeting to answer questions. He is Oklahoma's interim State Epidemiologist.
- Based on modeling, data you've see, what are your projections or thoughts for what the fall will look like? This is a best guess. Oklahoma's public health infrastructure started getting overwhelmed in mid-March because there wasn't enough diagnostic testing, contact tracers, etc., but we've since built that public health infrastructure. Positive cases will be fairly steady with outbreaks here and there. We might experience a slight decline. When school starts, we'll have a new situation, but it may not immediately be a game changer. Some schools will probably have an outbreak, but doesn't think it will be overwhelming to the system. When weather changes later in the year, we'll probably have a surge of cases because people will be inside more. Over time, too, the risk assessment will change. People just may start changing their behavior in a way that increases the risk. Those factors make it hard to KNOW what will happen. We may see real challenges in November or December.
- What is contact tracing and what might a school district's role be? The State Department of Health would like to know of cases and exposures ASAP. You can call the county health department or the state at (405) 271-4060. The state can still take the lead in investigations. The process starts off with a confirmed case, preferably. The contact tracer looks at who the positive individual was around, such as people who were within 6 feet for 15 or 30 minutes. Start with that. We anticipate lots of questions, and the state

will work with those questions. There aren't any cut and dried decisions about when a class or school will be closed. Each case must be investigated.

- Should schools be screening students and staff entering the building? Tough question to answer for all. Diagnostic tests give a clear answer whether a person is positive or not for COVID-19, but only for a point in time. The state is trying to get testing available as much as possible. [Dr. Wendelboe refers to diagnostic testing for COVID-19 as screening.] Don't want to discourage screening, but don't want school administrators to feel like they must do screening. It may not be logistically possible. It would be helpful, but isn't critically important. If find lots of negative test results at the beginning, exposure can still occur after. We want to identify positive cases to keep those individuals out of the building. But you're not going to be able to keep screening week after week.
- In that case, is it better to do temperature checks or questionnaires for students and staff before entering the building? The more you can do the better. As of now, not sure what formal recommendations will be for fall.
- Any recommendations for transporting students? Going to be a challenge by the nature of buses because they bring students close together. What would decrease the risk? The use of masks on buses for all students would be helpful and probably doable. Also air flow – consider keeping windows open to the extent possible. To the extent you have resources to space students out, consider more bus routes. Do the best you can with what you have.
- What is the temperature for an individual at which you should deny entry to the building? Would say 100 degrees F.
- Social distancing and the importance of staying six feet apart. Is that a best practice when schools reconvene? Yes. Person to person spread through close contact accounts for the majority of spread. It's also important to clean surfaces and the environment. Social distancing will have the most impact. Conventional wisdom is when people sing, talk, etc., droplets go three feet. So, that distance is doubled to six feet. The CDC and others are still using 6 feet.
- For classes like choir, PE and band, where droplets might travel further, what recommendations are there for these activities? There is no real recommendation now. Tough question. Dr. Wendelboe has a HS student in band. Engaging in these activities increases risk. Understands that these things may make school more enjoyable for students. Can minimize risk by doing these activities in a non-traditional way – postpone them, spread students out, use Zoom, for example. Be creative in how to offer. Washington State had one of the largest outbreaks in a church with a choir. Many deaths from that event.
- Is it important to wear masks? It's as important as requiring people to wear pants and underwear. It's not a violation of people's rights to require wearing masks. The evidence collected from this situation has shown that wearing a mask decreases transmission. Dr.

Wendelboe said in February there wasn't evidence to show masks are effective. Now evidence does show masks work, especially when used properly. He and others learned from this situation and changed recommendations. As a teacher, it may be difficult to wear a mask while teaching. What about a face shield? Or the teacher could just be distant from others - that might be sufficient. Not saying that everyone needs to be masked every second of the day. There will be parts of the day when students won't maintain six feet apart. During that time, emphasize use of masks. When you can, it may be reasonable to allow students to take off masks. Think about the importance of this measure to society. Everyone has a right to be protected. It's as important or more so than the position that the government can't tell me to wear a mask.

- Is wearing a mask about protecting the wearer or others? The primary protection is for others because if the wearer is sick, it keeps them from spreading the virus to others. That doesn't mean wearing a mask doesn't protect the wearer. Younger people tend to be more asymptomatic. No one really knows if they have the virus or not. We'll be better able to keep our economy/system open if people are wearing masks.
- What kind of mask should people wear? N95 masks would be difficult to teach in. Medical personnel need them because they're in a known exposure environment. Surgical masks are ok. Cloth masks are a great idea, but they're not all the same. If they can cover the wearer's mouth and nose and fit tightly, great. Keep a couple on you and wash them between wearings. There may be a shortage of surgical masks later because this is a global pandemic. Prepare now to get cloth masks so you won't have to worry about a shortage of surgical masks in future.
- At what point will we not have to do this anymore? Thinks it will be a while – until we've reached herd immunity or have an effective vaccine. Herd immunity is when 70-80% has antibodies that protect them from infection. Oklahoma is probably below 2% now. We're in this for the long haul. Early on we talked about flattening the curve. Thinks Oklahomans were successful at that. Sees us as continuing to need to do these things through the upcoming school year, until next summer.
- Screening and testing. If a person has symptoms, is running a temperature or tests positive, how long must they be out of the school setting? If they have COVID-19 symptoms, test ASAP. Within a couple days, you'll know the result. If not positive, then can probably apply regular school policies to the situation. If positive for COVID-19, then they'll be out for ten days or until the symptoms dictate – three days with no temperature without benefit of medication and progression in other symptoms, then can look at coming back to the building.
- When will COVID-19 test results start coming back sooner? The state should be down now to 3 days to get tests back, not 7-10 days. If you're having that kind of wait, contact him.

- Regarding cleaning equipment and sanitizing buses, what equipment and spaces are more important than others to disinfect? High touch surfaces are the priority. The more cleaning you can do the better, like cleaning shared computers. If can provide students with their own things that they don't need to share, that limits mistakes or mis-cleaning. There's a limit to that, of course. The higher the frequency of touch, the more important it is to clean. Each touch increases risk.
- If you know a computer lab is used by lots of students, would it help to add or layer steps for protection, like before students go in, wash hands or use hand sanitizer? Would that help? And again on the way out to protect themselves after touching the equipment? Yes.
- What about kids with breathing problems wearing masks in sports? The first layer of protection is social distancing. Equal to that is being outside and not inside. Tennis and baseball are probably lower risk than wrestling. If students are engaged in increased activity, don't use masks in those situations. Consider whether you're going to go ahead with the sport. In baseball, the bullpen is probably where students will be closest together. For football or volleyball, don't see how you can really use masks or social distancing to prevent transmission.
- What is the effectiveness of current antibody testing and what is the timeline for it? Not going to improve antibody test effectiveness very fast. Will be doing more antibody testing in next couple weeks. There are 2 different types – finger prick and drawing blood. State is using finger prick mostly. Wants to do some of this testing with children. If a district wants to partner with the State Health Department to design a protocol for antibody tests, that would be great. The state wants to do repeated antibody tests every 8 weeks. Yes, we may get false positives now, but if we do this, the inaccuracies will still be helpful info because it will reflect the change from previous baseline.
- Should all students be required to be tested for the virus or would it be preferable to have antibody testing for students? Yes, the antibody testing would be helpful for the community. Would want to do it repeatedly – every 8 weeks. Don't need to test the same people every time. Get like 100 students in a couple grades – that would be helpful. There may be parents very willing to participate.
- If there's a positive case or exposure to someone who's positive, a positive case doesn't mean the school needs to shut down? If you've waited 14 days after exposure to someone positive, is it safe to go back to school if you weren't tested? As to the second question – yes, but hopes you'll get tested. Yes, the quarantine period is 14 days. The reference to ten days in the previous answer is for symptomatic people. Quarantine refers to people who've been exposed, but not infected. When someone is infected, there's an isolation period because that's the timeframe they're shedding the virus. So that's why the quarantine period is 14 days, and the length of the isolation period is different.

- How important is air ventilation? Right now, the more you can displace air, the better. Put on maximum air exchanges.
- Will school closure be a part of the response if there's a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school? Feels right now that a single case doesn't necessarily warrant closing school. If we're able to proceed with case and contact investigations, should be able to identify people with the highest risk of exposure. Can isolate and quarantine those people and should be able to keep school open. If this positive case involves a classroom or pod, might need to close that down. Wouldn't necessarily start with closing down the whole school. We're in a different situation now than we were in March, and that's why we used the approach of shutting everything down then.
- Any ideas on a safe class size number? Colleges and universities are talking about classes of no more than 40. Haven't seen the evidence to support that number. Don't know what resources schools have to make choices. If there's COVID money to provide portables or something to provide more space flexibility, would recommend that to get smaller classes.
- Why isn't there a cut and dried answer on school closing in the event of a positive case? Why must schools ask for guidance for their specific situation? We don't have a lot of guidance about closing school if there's one case for other diseases, like pink eye, measles, etc. The same is true here. We've learned a lot, but will learn more. We don't know what's it's like to have schools open in times of COVID-19. Also, there are many competing needs, like parents who need to go to work. We want to be partners with schools to take information and respond in a way that benefits everyone while recognizing these competing needs and preventing transmission of disease.
- Will too much hand washing or hand sanitizer wreak havoc with a student's immune system? No, not with their immune system. Look at medical personnel and the hand washing and sanitizing they do. The risk is that soap and sanitizer can dry out skin. It doesn't cause long-standing damage.
- What should school administrators be considering now? Flexible thinking. Going back to masks, because we learned and changed our recommendations. We might have frustrated parents that say you said something and now are saying something else. Keep your humility, you might make mistakes. Focus on what we know now - social distancing, masks, sanitizing and thinking of the needs of the population you're serving. Dr. Wendelboe feels the burden school administrators have.

Closing Remarks

Superintendent Hofmeister expressed thanks to Dr. Wendelboe, who is the parent of a child in public school. She'd like him to come back for another call later.

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

- There are currently 6,229 confirmed positive cases in Oklahoma and 322 deaths from COVID-19,
- Suspected hospitalizations continue to drop. These statistics look very optimistic.
- Phase 3 of Governor's Reopening Plan will begin June 1.
- Next week, the all district call will be Monday, June 1 at 1:00 pm to accommodate the schedule of Oklahoma State Department of Health interim epidemiologist, Dr. Aaron Wendelboe and to avoid a conflict with the CCOSA Conference. Dr. Wendelboe will be available to answer questions. He and his team have been involved in the guidance that the OSDE is developing.
- FBI asked that district leaders be made aware of a scam (email coming). Teachers approached via an email that appears to have come from an education leader and asked to purchase gift cards to students and send card code to the return email address. It is a scam.
- Reopening plan (guidance) will be published soon on OSDE website. A session about the guidance will be presented at the CCOSA Conference on June 4. It is important to remember that these are recommendations rather than requirements. It provides a framework to be adapted by the local school and community needs.
- Dr. Wendelboe has indicated that where we are right now with the COVID-19 situation is the very best that it is going to be. Once we reopen as a society, we know cases will rise. It will not continue to improve as we reach into the Fall. We will reach higher numbers, and the best hope is that we can keep the numbers stable.
- Graduation and Phase 3: is there a lifting on the number of people who can attend graduation? Dr. Wendelboe has indicated that safeguards should not be discarded. We should continue with social distancing and common sense. Continue to be safe and smart about social distancing as you make graduation plans.
- Can districts make their own modified schedule for the Fall? Yes—guidance will be forthcoming at the CCOSA Conference next week. Districts should have Plan A and Plan B. An important consideration is the layout of your campus and the number of students in each class. Mobile classroom units are also an option.
- Can districts proceed with finding their own methods for providing for distance learning? OSDE is working on this. Meetings will require cooperation with multiple governmental entities. No answer today --- OSDE is looking for ways to get reduced rates. Or, possibly a way to use OETA towers for educational materials only, like is done in South Carolina. This will allow content download/upload.
- Flex schedules and meeting days/hours requirements: look to the language in the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board (SVCSB) or create a local policy for when, what, how to measure attendance, etc. This will be in the next round of OSDE guidance. On state board agenda tomorrow is to allow districts to use Saturday as a school day.
- Social distancing guidance is just that, CDC guidance – needs to be acceptable, feasible, and practical within a local community. Rolling down the windows reduces possibility of transmission – use this mechanism in driver's ed or on bus routes. Masks can become a

new staple. If this is impractical in earlier grades, emphasize hand washing. It's important to layer safeguards and to build a culture of care for others.

- Requirements or guidance for cafeterias? Big open spaces are good, but it is better to keep smaller cohorts of students together so that contact tracing is better reflected.
- It's all about layering different safeguards to reduce risks. Zero risk would be closing school. And, we don't want to do that again.
- No uniform start date for Oklahoma school districts. Some schools may want to start the same time as their neighbors, but that is a local decision.
- Two days in/ three days virtual schedule: is this permissible? How would it be coded? Yes – attendance will be based on the local attendance policy for the program being offered and given on the virtual days.
- Driver's Ed can start in June (see <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/FAQS%20FOR%20PUBLIC%20SCHOOLS%20-%20COVID-19.pdf>)
- Masks: what if parent objects? Thinks that it's unhealthy? Superintendent is not aware that masks are not healthy --- unsure that doctors/ hospitals would wear if unhealthy. Brad Clark was asked if district can require wearing of masks: local policy decision, may need to change student and employee dress code policy. Advise common sense application of making exceptions for medical conditions. Will check with health department about the dangers of wearing a mask if a person has asthma.
- What is your opinion of the OSSAA Board decision not to adopt the guidance provided by OSSAA staff? In conversations with Supt. McDaniel, a Board member, Superintendent Hofmeister believed that it was supposed to be guidance, but OSSAA is a separate, private organization. Common sense should prevail as we look at ways to reopen. Everyone is trying to provide guidance that will help each school district keep their staff and students safer. Is thankful for all of the hard work that went into the guidance. Recognizes that each community has different needs, but we should all continue to provide safeguards for those in our care. It is not going to get better for a while, and we will know more once we have contact tracing fully in place. The situation will either be the same or get worse.
- Has there been any contact tracing that goes back to a school activity? Not yet – too early to have these results.
- If parents refuse to send a child to school, should a virtual option be available? Yes – fear may be connected to an immune-compromised family member. We don't know the details, so for those parents and students, districts should provide a distance learning option. It is not optimal for a family to enroll in a whole different school. Children should be able to attend distance learning options in their home districts.
- What is the liability of a district where COVID-19 may have originated in a school? Brad Clark thinks that schools are granted exemption within the Governmental Tort Claims Act that would provide exemptions to liability.
- Are there more details for the Governor's Phase 3 Reopen Plan? It was said this morning at a meeting that we are on track to reopen on June 1. The Department of

Commerce website would provide that information; nothing has yet been posted (<https://www.okcommerce.gov/covid19/ours-plan/>).

- What about teachers who are reluctant to return to school? This is a challenge – must be a balance. A person must fulfill the role identified in his/her contract. If it is possible for the contract to be fulfilled from home, then that should be explored. Some states are encouraging early buy- out for retirement; Oklahoma can't afford that. Oklahoma doesn't have any solutions at this point. Make sure that you consult with local legal counsel and check with local district policy and what it provides for accommodations.
- If people over age 65 are willing, they should be able to return based on any additional guidance from the Governor for Phase 3.
- Child Nutrition waivers: currently are under nation-wide waivers. For example, meal patterns to July 31. All others through August 31. Waivers can be extended through September at this point by the Secretary of Ag.
- Summer leagues and use of school facilities: this is a district decision.
- Edmentum and ExactPath: is this an acceptable benchmark? Not for RSA.
- Budget for next year: FY22 – conflicting opinions about the economy. Governor believes that the downturn will continue and will need additional cuts in FY22. Legislative leaders believe the economy will bounce back more quickly and will be able to help meet the needs in FY22.
- School Report Card for FY21: how will it be modified? Expect there to be an adjustment, perhaps, in Chronic Absenteeism. Safety is more important than a school report card indicator. Oklahoma will participate with other states to find a way to meet federal requirements. No School Report Card this fall.
- Are there uniform procedures for how to deal with a staff member or student who tests positive? Will include guidance that connects school with local health department or state level if the local does not respond quickly enough. Wants the decision to close a class or a pod for a day to be a local decision with professional guidance and input. Oklahoma State Department of Health interim epidemiologist, Dr. Aaron Wendelboe will be on the call Monday, June 1 at 1:00.
- CARES Act funding: any more coming? Timeline about the incentives grant? OSDE has identified the rubric and expectations for the incentives grant. Working on final details and will have more information soon.
- The hope is to have Math and Reading diagnostic tool with personalized learning plan for each student. SDE has not finalized the plans yet. The hope is that it is free or deeply discounted at the state level.
- Monday, June 1 at 1:00 phone call with Oklahoma State Department of Health interim epidemiologist, Dr. Aaron Wendelboe.
- CCOSA Conference Breakout session next week June 4 on the reopening/re-entry plan.

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

- In Oklahoma, there are 5,532 positive diagnoses of coronavirus, 299 deaths, 159 hospitalized, and 746 discharged from the hospital. Numbers are positive and moving in the right direction for Phase 2, which is underway, and possibly for Phase 3, which could begin on June 1.
- Transportation is probably districts' greatest challenge. The ideal plan is to separate students with an empty seat between them and to permit seating only in staggered rows, but for most districts this is not feasible. Districts could also stagger times and routes, but this is not feasible for many either. Also, districts could bring in different students on different days and have A and B school attendance schedules, but OSDE understands that may not be possible in some districts.
- For all districts, it is "doable" to open bus windows whenever possible to limit progression of the virus. There are far fewer cases of coronavirus tied to a person touching things. Cases arise largely from viral particles in the air that are inhaled by others. Circulating fresh air can reduce transmission.
- Talk with parents about the district's plans for transportation so parents can make other arrangements if they choose. It may be that buses will be used only by those who have no other way. Letting parents know of plans now will help them make the arrangements they need. Encourage those who can drive their children to school to do so to create space for those who can't.
- It would also be helpful to have siblings sit together on the bus and to ask MS and HS students to wear masks so you can separate younger students from one another.
- Using CARES Act funds to buy additional buses is acceptable. If you choose to use CARES funds this way, you could use as reasons for the purchase in your application, promoting social distancing and promoting distance learning. If you purchase a bus with CARES funds, you'll have that deliverable long after this pandemic is over.
- Monty Guthrie with OSDE is working on getting quotes for providing Wi-Fi on school buses. In working with bus salespeople, he found that it takes about \$1,000 to make a bus into a hot spot and \$2,000 to provide multiple services on a bus. But it doesn't have to be a bus. Older service vehicles could also be used for a hot spot. Any bus salesman you work with can point you in the direction of a vendor who can handle this type of installation in a bus.
- Regarding OSDE's reopening plan, [the CDC published its plan earlier this week](#), which provides helpful info for schools for summer and fall. OSDE is continuing to work on its framework to open schools in the fall. They hope to have it out by the end of May and think it will be useful.
- Four Child Nutrition Waivers have been extended. (1) waiver for meal service time flexibility (permitting serving 2 meals at a time) extended through 8/31/20; (2) waiver for non-congregate feeding (permitting grab and go or delivery) extended through

8/31/20; (3) waiver for meal pattern flexibility, covering certain meal components, extended through 6/30/20 (could possibly continue to be extended month by month); and (4) waiver to allow parents or guardians to pick up meals extended through 8/31/20. This information has been updated in [OSDE's FAQs](#). Also, a waiver has been extended through 6/30/20 for unexpected school closures for at risk schools, which provides a third meal for schools that were previously approved to provide this.

- Child nutrition folks like to be included in conversations about their district's child nutrition plans. Summer planning and SSO are going full force. Please feed as much as you can in your community.
- In one of these weekly conversations, Superintendent Hofmeister would like the state's interim epidemiologist to talk with school leaders. OSDE folks talked with him and found it very helpful. Will get you the date for this conversation. This call won't be held on June 3 during the CCOSA Conference. It will be exciting to have an all-virtual conference.
- Think about in the foreseeable future if these calls are helpful and if you want to keep going. OSDE will keep putting out written guidance. OSDE will continue the calls if participants want to or can stop and pick them up closer to school starting. In the chat, the indications are that the calls continue to be helpful.

Questions and Answers

- Regarding Incentive grants and the LEA application, when will state pricing for LMS and CMS contracts be available and what state contracts will be available for purchase? OSDE is still having conversations with stakeholders and others and negotiating the lowest possible price. Not sure when this will be available or what will ultimately be available. Details will be in OSDE's plan. You can use the state rate for other tools you might choose.
- Is there an OSDE-approved vendor list or contract for hot spots? OSDE is working on this now. They think they've identified a vendor, and there's some interest at the state level to put some money toward that.
- What will be in the OSDE framework? There will be different categories touching on school operations, public health, school meal programs, transportation, whole child supports (including mental health and social emotional growth), well-rounded academics, including an opportunity for students to have use of an online tool that school districts have received for free that's individualized with a focus on marking the end of each grade level and identifying an individualized student path tailored to each student's weaknesses and closing gaps that s/he can swiftly move through. This is what OSDE wants to do for math and reading K-12. This will be available for all districts and will be part of a contract that OSDE would want to provide free access to use. Attention

to school personnel is another category, including suggestions and considerations. There are areas around distance learning, flexible calendars, and finance and support. Health and safety will be at the top of your minds. OSDE will add to this framework as time passes and data and science tell us more.

- How can districts secure PPE, hand sanitizer and other supplies? What efforts are there at the state level to help with this? Michelann Ooten in School Safety and Security at OSDE has worked on this (see notes of 5/13/20 meeting). OSDE is in contact with Secretary Rogers and others about how to collaborate at the state level to obtain these items. We know you're competing for these items, and OSDE will continue to work on this. Also, one district got PPE, etc. from its county emergency management program. Try that.
- How do districts approach virtual days and putting them into school calendars? OSDE understands this is a real need. This will be fully addressed in OSDE's upcoming guidance.
- Will virtual days count as instructional days for purposes of funding and attendance? The short answer is yes. Attendance is addressed on pages 8-10 of the [OSDE FAQs](#). Much of this is based on local decisions and policies. OSDE is happy to work with districts on this. Districts should have policy in place for how distance/virtual learning days will be implemented and how this will be communicated to parents. There is language in an Oklahoma statute that could be interpreted to prevent virtual for non-resident students. We need emergency rules to address this to make sure it's available to resident and non-resident students. The proposed emergency rules should be available for the May SBE meeting.
- Can districts use unobligated Title funds for technology and, if so, must the district amend its plan to do this? This is a broad question. On Titles 1 and 4, yes, do amend your plan. On Title 2, if using it for general tech, you may want to move the purchase to Title 1 or 4. Title 2 is the most restrictive for this.
- What are the requirements for web filtering and device management for hot spots? OSDE will be addressing this in the guidance coming out.
- Regarding 12-month staff members in vulnerable populations, can districts require them to come back to their building to work? How should they be treated in the fall? This is addressed in the [OSDE FAQs](#) at page 7. It's also addressed in the Governor's executive order and his [OURS Plan](#). This is a local determination, but it's encouraged that you make accommodations for employees in these populations.
- Can a district buy tires or equipment for buses with CARES funds? OSDE doesn't see why not.
- Are bus driver trainings available? OSDE is working on that.

- Regarding Child Nutrition, get your March and April claims in. Districts can pull their numbers for CEP between April 15 and June 30. Districts also need the enrollment list for the same period as direct certification. Reach out to your foster agency and local tribe(s) for their most current information, too. What is the timeline for those recently unemployed parents when there's a month delay to become eligible for SNAP benefits? Get the direct certification info from the WAVE on June 3 or 4 to get the most current information, which will include May data. This could help you capture more students for CEP.
- Can driver's ed begin in June? This is answered in the [OSDE FAQs](#) on pages 33-34. Yes, you can. Try to do the curriculum portion virtually or in small groups, with social distancing.
- Can virtual days count as days and hours? Yes, they can.
- This is in state statutes, found on oscn.net – Brad Clark will post this info.
- Will there be a math online curriculum or tool? Yes, Edmentum has a statewide contract and will have a statewide rate to buy this so districts have access to Exact Path for math and reading. Can start this summer. There are different options available, but districts can use placement points to be on grade level by end of year. This is an adaptive, individualized plan. It can even go down grade levels. It's also a tool to set starting points based on linking studies with STAR reading and NWEA MAP. OSDE doesn't mean to be mysterious, but it isn't quite done securing this. It provides a diagnostic element, and it has virtual differentiation grouping.
- The Math line item in the state budget refers to Imagine Math. This is a very good program. Superintendent Hofmeister has seen success with it. OSDE has confidence that it's worth exploration and would be a good option for students. They're exploring how many schools and students will be able to benefit from the \$1 million appropriation. It was funded by OSDE before the state went through the economic downturn. This is a legislative priority, and they put it in the budget.

Closing remarks

- Superintendent Hofmeister appreciates the really neat things done with graduation this year. It's remarkable. Some are saying they have to do it next year, too! Schools are setting new precedents. There are great media pictures from different communities. They're very special. Districts are going beyond what they imagined. For those trying to have a traditional ceremony as usual, OSDE knows you're planning to be as safe as possible. Thank you for doing so much more than you've had to do in previous years, in new ways.

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

- So far, there have been 4,852 positive cases of coronavirus diagnosed in Oklahoma and 278 deaths. There are 218 individuals currently hospitalized. Positive cases are continuing to decline. A recent poll reflects that 69% of Oklahomans want the economy to reopen; more than the percentage that wants restrictions to continue in place. OSDE is mindful of this, and science will guide its actions.
- Today OSDE released [CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 FAQs FOR OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATED MAY 13, 2020](#) (FAQs), addressing questions that have been posed on these calls. The updates address graduation ceremonies, accessing school buildings, summer school, school calendars for the 2020-21 school year and updated child nutrition waivers. Please review the updated [FAQs](#) in detail.
- Districts hosting in-person graduation ceremonies during Phase 2 of the Governor's OURS Plan, which is anticipated to begin on May 15 and remain in effect at least through May 31, are required to follow specific and detailed protocols found on pages 5 - 6 of the [FAQs](#). OSDE encourages districts to host in-person graduation ceremonies only after Phase 3 of the Plan begins, which is expected to start on June 1.
- Districts may have in-person summer school beginning with Phase 2 of the OURS Plan. However, OSDE encourages districts to hold virtual/distance summer school at least through Phase 2. If districts proceed with in-person summer school during Phase 2, they are encouraged to adopt social distancing guidelines, limiting classes to no more than 10 students at a time OR maintaining 6 feet of space between students. OSDE encourages districts to be aware of the provisions of the OURS Plan concerning reopening schools and providing services. See pages 7 -8 of the [FAQs](#) for more information.
- Regarding school building access during Phase 2 of the OURS Plan, see page 7 of the [FAQs](#). OSDE encourages districts to adopt policies about screening of individuals, including employees, before entry into buildings. Relevant symptoms to look for are found on page 7 of the [FAQs](#). If an individual seeking entry tests positive, they must be denied entry until at least 3 days or 72 hours have passed since their recovery, including the absence of a raised temperature without benefit of fever reducer. An individual who tests positive must also show improved respiratory function. Finally, at least 7 days must have passed since the individual's symptoms first appeared. OSDE strongly encourages schools to close for at least 1 day after being notified that a student, employee, or other person who was inside a district facility has tested positive. Local or state health authorities may determine that additional closure days are needed. During closure, the district must disinfect at least the area(s) the infected person accessed inside the building.

- Regarding school buses, see pages 15 - 16 of the [FAQs](#). OSDE recommends cleaning buses during and after the school day with safe, recommended cleaning products. Distancing practices are recommended on transportation routes with at least 1 seat between students and children seated in staggered rows. OSDE also recommends changing routes as needed to have fewer children on the bus and keeping windows open to recirculate air to reduce the risk of transmission. As to drivers and other transportation staff, districts should also be vigilant about the risk of transmission and develop contingency plans for staff and buses.
- Regarding school calendars, to prepare for the potential for disruption in the fall, consider the adoption of multiple calendars, including one that is primary and others that are contingent. Among the calendars should be those that reflect a traditional plan, rolling disruptions, longer disruptions, an early start, traditional start and late start. OSDE suggests incorporating virtual/distance learning into school calendars. Boards may want to take action to authorize their superintendent to make calendar adjustments on an emergency basis. Boards might also choose to consider the adoption of policies regarding equity in distance/virtual learning and virtual attendance. See pages 8 – 9 of the [FAQs](#).

Yes, districts can put virtual days in their school calendars, and those days count the same as traditional instructional days. Boards may choose to consider the adoption of policy regarding the school calendar, how virtual/distance learning days will be incorporated and how students, staff and parents will be notified of those days in advance. Districts should focus on communication about virtual/distance learning days and set expectations for student participation and consequences for failure to participate. They should also define attendance and presence/absence for virtual/distance learning days for both staff and students. For virtual instruction, districts should seek to make equipment available to students and families without charge, and if they can't provide such equipment, they must be prepared to take steps to ensure that all students have equitable educational opportunities. All graded courses offered must be aligned with the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Districts are not required to provide technology – devices, connectivity and/or bandwidth - to all students, but all schoolwork must be equally rigorous and accessible. If districts do this, virtual/distance learning days count the same as traditional instructional days. See pages 9 – 10 of the [FAQs](#).

When considering development of an attendance policy regarding virtual/distance instruction days, consult other available resources, such as [House Bill 2905](#), which, if approved by the Governor, establishes new requirements for virtual charter school attendance.

Questions and Answers

- When can an in-person graduation ceremony first be held and when is Phase 2 of the OURS Plan expected to take effect? Per the [FAQs](#), in-person graduation ceremonies can

be held when the state enters Phase 2, which is anticipated to begin on May 15. OSDE recommends waiting until after June 1 to hold in-person graduation ceremonies. From earlier conversations with the Governor, he wasn't comfortable with traditional in-person ceremonies taking place until after June 1, but review pages 5 – 6 of the [FAQs](#) if you're having an in-person ceremony during Phase 2. Superintendent Hofmeister appreciates the creative solutions districts have found that provide a safe celebration with social distancing.

- Can a district count virtual days for attendance if it doesn't have one-to-one technology? This question is answered on pages 9 - 10 of the [FAQs](#). How a district measures attendances for virtual days is a local decision. Districts can choose to borrow what will be required of statewide virtual charters under [House Bill 2905](#).
- Can Summer Reading Academies be conducted virtually with the times required by the Oklahoma administrative rules? Yes, they can be held virtually, and OSDE encourages this. The Oklahoma administrative rules require that academies take place over four weeks of four half-days per week. Yes, those timelines are in place and must be followed.
- Is there a limit on the number of virtual/distance learning days that can be included in the school calendar or does OSDE have a suggestion about the number? There is no limit in state statute or rule. This is a local determination as to the needs of and fit for the community. OSDE will be providing additional support guidance for districts and will be covering this, looking at best practices and legal requirements. This information will be part of its school reopening guidance. OSDE plans to get this out before Memorial Day, as fast as possible. OSDE wants you to know what to expect so you have a framework to work from.
- What considerations should districts have in mind when developing school calendars? Should they plan for distance learning on certain days or for a week at a time? Does OSDE have any recommendations? This is part of thinking through how we do school. OSDE expects times of closure in response to the virus. Districts should be planning to keep students connected, and assimilating this model on an ongoing basis could make it more seamless for when they must use it. There are many suggestions in the [FAQs](#) about how to structure school calendars.
- Little League Baseball and Softball leagues are asking about access to district property. Is access allowed? OSDE has had many conversations with epidemiologists about this. This isn't in the FAQs. It's going to be in the framework. There are recommendations about accessing facilities, but not about these particular sports. OSDE is not going to get ahead of conversations with OSSAA. The evidence about the spread of the virus indicates that being outside presents less risk than being inside. Look at this sport by sport. Compare outdoor Little League and indoor wrestling, and you can see lots of

differences. Look at each sport and consider how can we apply social distancing to this right now. Focus on the sporting audience and how they'll be situated. For the Little League players, this might be doable, but what about the dugout? OSDE needs more conversation about this with OSSAA.

- Is there any update about companies providing a state bid or contract for devices or hot spots? OSDE is working on this and wants to have this information when the framework is opened. OSDE hopes some CARES Act funds are used for this and is advocating for more funds from the feds. The amount to schools is a very small portion of the CARES Act. There are currently more efforts underway to get more \$ in the current package under consideration.
- As to CARES Act grants, will additional funds be available from the state for incentive funds and is this limited to state contracts? When will the info go to districts? OSDE hopes to have this figured out when the framework is released, but that may not be possible. It's working to try to expand capacity to offer more resources to districts through other partnerships and trying to leverage every advantage possible to stretch your federal \$. OSDE is aggressively working on this.
- When can non-essential 12-month personnel on continuing contracts return to work? This doesn't change from previous local decisions about essential personnel. In Phase 2 and beyond, the school personnel returning to work extend beyond previously-designated essential personnel. This is a local decision. OSDE urges accommodations for those 65 and older and those who are part of a vulnerable population.
- Can a district make provisions for students whose parents feel uncomfortable returning to school? Can the district place such a student on a virtual program? Yes, if the district is operating a blended program or virtual academy. Yes, also, if the district doesn't have that but the student is on an IEP or 504 Plan, and the team determines that this is needed for individual reasons related to that child. Other than these circumstances, it would be concerning to do this. Districts must have very clear policies about this.

There will be guidance in the framework about blended and fully virtual options. There will be considerations about how to address this issue in the framework.

- How can districts secure personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff members? OSDE recognizes that PPE is costly and wants to be able to point you in the right direction. They're in discussions with the State Department of Health about this. Michelann Ooten in OSDE's Safety and School Security area is its liaison with OMES, and she's helped districts already get PPE. She'd be the one to contact at this point, at Michelann.Ooten@sde.ok.gov.
- OSDE has been and is working with the state epidemiologist, who is a parent of kids in public school. They have a robust team that's suggested ideas to OSDE. The point is to have an aligned response so there will be a very clear understanding of what needs to

occur when outbreaks happen in the community or in school – to a staff member or student. Evidence is pointing to different responses based on what you see. If there are two cases in a school, there will be different responses if the two individuals are in the same classroom or in different areas and not associated. The state will be looking at evidence through contact tracing. It will be learning from other countries and what they're seeing emerge. This info has been gathered for each country, and we are learning from it. They'll be ahead of us by many months so there will be much to see about their experience with school reopening. Other states have also restarted school, and we'll have that info, too. OSDE is trying to provide a very detailed decision tree developed by a group that's very invested in science and research. Districts will be working with health experts – state and local – on these issues as well.

Closing Remarks

Please reach out to the members of Oklahoma's federal delegation about how critical it is that schools have funding in any additional relief package. This is a dire situation. We have about 13% unemployment and a downturn in the economy. We need additional relief. Collections are alarming as compared to other years.

Look at the updated [FAQs](#). Some outdated parts have been removed and lots of new info added.

OSDE is not answering the questions that are asking for speculation. It will continue to think about student needs and how to "find a way." It will be looking and fighting for ways to stretch \$, has applied for grants and is trying to leverage funds for districts to make SDE CARES Act funds go further. OSDE personnel will continue to be available on Wednesdays for these calls even if they don't have all answers. Superintendent Hofmeister thanked everyone for what they were doing and for reaching out to OSDE and bringing questions. Thank you for honoring students graduating. Look for good news regarding the reduction in the need for remediation as students move to post-secondary. OSDE is putting out a news release about this today. Dropping remediation need is a great testament to school efforts.

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Updates

- There are currently 4,201 positive cases, 253 total deaths and 230 people currently hospitalized. Two weeks ago, there were 2,800 positive cases, 164 total deaths and 292 people hospitalized.

- Regarding high school graduation ceremonies, OSDE’s guidance remains the same as expressed during the 4/29/20 call. For specific information, refer to formal guidance from the State Department of Health, the Governor’s Open Up and Recover Safely (OURS) Plan, CDC guidance, and OSDE’s FAQs, plus guidance from other organizations. Don’t allow in-person graduation events on school property until Phase 2 of the OURS Plan, which begins, conditionally, on May 15. Strongly encourage in-person graduation on school property only after June 1, when Phase 3 of the OURS Plan begins, conditionally. If a district plans an in-person graduation event on school property between May 15 and June 1, the district must have appropriate social distancing in place, with everyone in attendance at least six feet apart, not share microphones and limit student guests, because Phase 2 permits groups of no more than 50 people. Think about all aspects of graduation ceremonies and how the virus might be spread. There are many creative things happening in schools. OSDE understands that each district has unique issues to deal with.
- Regarding uniform start dates for the 2020-21 school year, there have been lots of conversations about this possibility statewide. Many districts are already making changes to their 2020-21 school calendars and developing alternate calendars. There is NO consensus on a uniform start date for Oklahoma schools. Let this issue go. It isn’t something to worry about. Think instead about the possible need for intermittent quarantining throughout the 2020-21 school year. Oklahoma districts are unlikely to need a statewide shutdown next year. OSDE will be following the science and data on COVID-19. It’s also working on guidelines and a planning framework (Framework) that identifies things to consider in a number of areas for planning purposes, rather than imposing state requirements.
- Regarding OSDE’s end-of-year distance learning survey, OSDE needs to learn from districts and needs their input. This will help OSDE decide how to invest \$. Send just one response per district. The survey was resent to districts today, and the survey link is in the administrators’ newsletter sent yesterday. Responses are due by 9:00 p.m. tonight. OSDE has about 300-350 completed surveys so far

Questions and Answers

- How does OSDE plan to count virtual and blended instruction days for the 2020-21 school year? OSDE will be specific about this in written guidance. Here, speaking generally, virtual, blended and regular in-person instructional days should all count the same. At least one district is talking about having one virtual day per week or every so often to keep its students accustomed to this system of instruction, and that’s an option for districts.

- What's new about CARES Act \$, LEA applications and when LEAs will receive those applications? The application form is being tested today. Production is anticipated on Thursday and release on Friday.
- Is CARES Act funding the only \$ districts will receive through the Title I formula? No, there's more available from several sources. Districts will receive a portion of the funds going through the state. Another source of funding is the GEER fund through the Governor's Office. Another source through the CARES Act was mentioned for reimbursing expenses students couldn't use that had to be paid back. These funds must be drawn down or spent by December 31, 2020. OSDE doesn't have the go ahead yet to tell districts about this potential sources. OSDE needs to check on this first before providing more info to districts to make sure it understands how this works.
- When can 12-month school employees and teachers be asked to come back into school buildings? Also, can school building be opened for summer programs on June 1? Yes, that is the date the Governor is looking at for (conditional) openings according to Phase 3 of the OURS Plan, and it seems reasonable. Nevertheless, districts must follow all CDC guidance protocols for safety even during Phase 3. We are currently in OURS Plan Phase 1 (schools are closed), and Phase 2 will follow on May 15, dependent on certain conditions being met.
- Will OSDE issue written guidance on graduation ceremonies? For traditional graduation ceremonies, scheduling depends on what OURS Plan phase we're in and the size of the gathering. It's not a smart idea to bring lots of people together even outside until after June 1. Also, make every possible safety provision you can even when there's an "all clear." Make plans for virtual graduation ceremonies in May and plan for in-person in June. Some smaller districts are making plans for in-person ceremonies in May outside with people being separated on a big field and parents in cars. OSDE doesn't plan to issue more written guidance about this. If you want to talk through graduation issues, contact your RAO.
- What is happening with unemployment claims and fraudulent claims? The fraudulent unemployment claims often seem to be submitted using an old address. This happened to Superintendent Hofmeister and is happening across the state and country. This fraud isn't just targeting school personnel. If this happens to you, send the info to the Oklahoma Attorney General and register the fraud with the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission at fraud@oesc.state.ok.us.
- Is there a line item for textbooks in the OSDE budget for this year and will there be flexibility as to how the funds can be spent? Yes and yes. Districts can submit an application for flexibility to SBE. Such flexibility hasn't been uniformly granted. Districts should access the established process, and their applications will be considered on an individual basis.

- What is the state education funding outlook? The proposed percentage cut to the state funding formula for the 2020-21 fiscal year is 4.6%. The budget bill must still be heard in the House, which is expected to happen tomorrow.
- For teacher emergency certification, does the teacher apply or the superintendent? The District makes the request to OSDE's Teacher Certification Section. Around Memorial Day, Teacher Certification will start accepting applications for next year.
- Are there sources of funds to help parents afford devices or internet access? It's OSDE's priority to provide this. OSDE wants federal relief funds to go to provide this at students' homes. OSDE is involved in creative conversations about a potential pilot program. It will also be pursuing a federal Reimagining School grant for connectivity. An association of telecomm companies is providing ideas about community access, like providing access to a whole apartment complex rather than lines to individual apartments. This same concept could be applicable to a neighborhood, too. OSDE is also aware of Data Casting technology that hasn't been used here. OETA is working with groups in South Carolina to see how they're using PBS towers to get learning content to homes without internet access. This issue is as important to Superintendent Hofmeister as having electricity and running water. OSDE is prioritizing this issue in spending and collaboration.
- Should school districts expect additional \$ cuts next spring? If referring to this spring, no. If referring to the future, there could be sectors that are under collecting. The House and Senate Appropriation Chairs seem optimistic about next year. But many school people are also good at predicting. So, brace yourselves for two rocky years. There are no answers, just speculation.
- What does school reopening look like for fall? If things look like they do now, plan for reopening. But we don't know what will happen when people are mixing. The state will have more data by July. OSDE's expected Framework will include items about what to do now, before school opens, when traditional school opens and when something happens. A variety of association partners and stakeholders are helping with the Framework process, which should be ready in mid to late May. It may help districts to build multiple calendars. When thinking about a start date, keep in mind that some schools may need to close for a week or more during the school year. That closing cushion might be provided if a district decides to build into its school calendar a start date that's a little earlier than in the past. Also, think about lost learning and how to close gaps. Don't think many students will be able to close that gap in just one semester. The loss could continue for a year or more.
- What does OSDE recommend about the transportation of students? OSDE is seeking guidance about this, and the issue will be included in the Framework. Public education is meeting public health and talking with state epidemiologists to make sure they have

well thought-through plans and examples. The Framework will cover how to keep kids safe on buses. Also, schools may need to change the way they have kids in the cafeteria. Students may need to have breakfast and lunch in their classroom. There are things we can do to minimize the risk of transmission to students.

- Will the CARES Act cover the funding cuts in the state's budget? No, it's not allowed to be a "backfill." Districts will use their CARES Act funds in the way that makes sense in their community during this virus. OSDE will be going after as many grants as it can and will try to have a more coordinated effort. Why should individual districts try to negotiate deals with vendors when the state could maybe make a better deal?
- Is state testing expected in spring 2021? Yes, expect it to resume. Didn't have it this year due to the federal waiver. We'll have testing in 2021 unless there's another federal waiver. Expect every state to see a decline in achievement and work to lessen that loss.
- Is there any update on ESY and can it occur in a virtual format? Yes, ESY can be provided in a virtual format and, as we move forward, districts can consider other formats, and service delivery could change.
- Will spring 2021 testing establish a new baseline? OSDE is working with others and will provide a fair, valid and reliable decision made by a full team of technical experts. OSDE will lean on their advice.
- When instruction resumes in person, schools may decide not to mix classes and instead try to keep classes separate. Teachers may move from room to room instead of students.
- Are there any directives yet about how to complete the driving with an instructor part of summer driver's ed courses? No, nothing has been released yet. The rest of the coursework can be completed virtually.
- Does OSDE expect sports to resume in fall? OSSAA and schools will decide this. OSDE wants to know, but it doesn't decide. Expect specific guidance to be coming out pretty soon. OSDE understands that districts are under pressure for this, but be careful in making decisions. COVID-19 isn't just about hospitalizations and death rates. People who get sick and survive can have a long-lasting impact. We would hate to see more suffering than necessary. Expect to see creative thinking about getting sports back, but expect guidance about how to address health and safety concerns first. The state will have contact tracing in the future and will be able to find out what event caused an outbreak. Would be devastating to find out that a district sports event caused such an outcome.
- Can districts provide RSA academies in a virtual format? Yes, these are local determinations. OSDE is looking at the required duration for these academies, too.
- School and district leaders are also community leaders. Establish a tailored approach for your school and district. Feel free to run your ideas past OSDE.

- OSDE understands that you want to provide accurate information to your community. You don't want to have to claw back information provided to parents and patrons. So OSDE understands that you really depend on guidance. OSDE is working collaboratively with others on the Framework and guidance, including those at a national level, stakeholders and state epidemiologists. Expect there to be a decision tree to help districts have a more uniform approach to situations, with answers that are tailored based on what is happening in that community.

Closing Remarks

- Take time for some self care. Your school, district and community need you refreshed, clear-headed and clear-eyed, so you can feel like you're part of this big effort to solve problems. Celebrate with your graduates. Tell your community we're planning to respond appropriately to different scenarios. Superintendent Hofmeister expressed gratitude for each school and district leader. OSDE is looking for ways to support you financially as you support others.

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

- There are currently 3,473 confirmed positive cases in Oklahoma and seven additional deaths for a total of 214.
- Last week, the Governor introduced his Open Up and Recover Plan. Has Phase 1 from May 1 - 14 and Phase 2 from May 15 - 31. In these two phases, social distancing will be in place. Oklahomans are advised to avoid situations where it's not possible. The Governor's Plan can be found here: <https://www.okcommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/Open-Up-and-Recover-Safely-Plan.pdf>
- Last Thursday, USDOE released SEA application for funds. OSDE is ready to submit the completed application today. USDOE has committed to turn applications around in three business days. The LEA application will be available as soon as the SEA application is approved.
- Connectivity continues to be a priority. Now through the beginning of next school year, prepare to connect students at their home. OSDE staff believes the Governor shares this same end goal. They also believe the Governor will use GEER funds to expand broadband access. Districts should document the money spent on COVID-19, including on connectivity. Districts can seek reimbursement for funds spent for this purpose back to March 13, 2020
- Thinking about graduation ceremonies, Oklahomans must follow the Governor's orders and CDC and OSDH guidance. Beginning May 1, Phase 1 begins. It maintains Safer at Home guidelines for those over 65 and vulnerable populations. It requires social distancing in public spaces, including parks. It cautions to avoid socializing in groups or facilities that don't allow for social distancing. It states that schools, organized sporting events and camps should remain closed until further notice. This is consistent with SBE's current order to stay closed through May 8 or the later designated end date of a district's academic year. OSDE will continue to review the Governor's order.

Whether Phase 2 begins on May 15 is contingent on certain conditions being met. Phase 2 again maintains the Safer at Home guidelines for those over 65 and vulnerable populations. It maintains social distancing in public spaces. It cautions to avoid socializing in groups that don't permit social distancing. Social distancing must also be maintained in businesses.

The CDC defines social distancing as staying at least six feet or two arms lengths from others. Stay away from others and away from mass gatherings.

If the Phase 2 conditions met, social distancing may be lifted as of June 1.

So, if considering in-person graduation, it should be held after June 1. OSDE personnel have discussed this with the Governor.

- The focus of OSDE and districts should be safety and then how to address widening learning loss. Need to focus on using \$ to understand the depth of learning loss and then mitigating it. OSDE is working on this.

Questions and Answers

- There seems to be some confusion about SBE's first amended order dated March 25. When does that order end – at the end of a district's academic year or June 30? SBE's order continues through the end of a district's academic year – May 8 unless the district decided to end the academic year on a later date. The SBE order doesn't change the Phase 1 and 2 requirements discussed above. So, Oklahomans must continue to observe social distancing as set out above.
- When can staff come back to buildings? It would be best to address this in writing in FAQs. Read the Governor's plan. It has specific guidance for employers. Close common areas. Keep social distancing in place. Read those portions of the Governor's plan when considering bringing non-essential support staff back. After the close of the district's academic year, districts can decide how to bring non-essential support staff back. Until the close of the academic year, only essential personnel should be in buildings. Once the academic year ends, districts must still minimize exposure and reduce traffic/individuals coming in and out of buildings. District superintendents, please think about what could happen when employees start to come out of isolation, and be cautious in your transition.
- What are OSDE's recommendations concerning summer school and activities in June and July? This will be part of recommendations OSDE would like to make concerning different scenarios. Summer could possibly be safe for in-person learning. Others are doing distance learning.
- If district has a small graduating class – less than 20 - and limited guests, is it feasible to do an indoor graduation in an indoor facility by May 15? If graduation can be done virtually in May, that is best. If the district wants a graduation that's more traditional in nature, it really needs to save that until June. However, there isn't a specific admonishment against this, except the limit to groups of less than 10. Superintendent Hofmeister asked the Governor about this. He said he was uncomfortable with this type of in-person event at that time. He said he would be more comfortable if waited until after June 1. OSDE will try to add something to the FAQs about this. Remember, Phase I is not an all-clear. It's an easing in, watching data and not a move back to things as they were before.

- Is OSDE considering a common start date for schools? Yes, it's been discussed. There could be some advantages to this. If start early and have everyone in the same place (say, start August 1), some would be concerned about the extra cost if this means adding two extra weeks to the school year. There is the potential for some school stoppage next year. So an early start doesn't mean that it's an extended school year with greater cost. Superintendent Hofmeister thinks districts would want to get with students ASAP knowing they have big, growing learning gaps. She asks districts to put their preferences for school start in the chat box.
- Is there any more info re GEER funds? OSDE and the Governor have as a common priority the need to have devices, connectivity and an increase in broadband in homes and on school campuses. Looking for a coordinated approach to how to leverage the GEER \$. If the Governor moves a certain way on this, OSDE will want to complement that. OSDE personnel left the recent meeting with the Governor feeling positive about a common approach. Shout out to Warner School District and leader Dave Vinson for 200 homes in the district being wired by a provider. OSDE wants to make meaningful advances toward this goal.
- Driver's ed. There's info about this in the most recent OSDE FAQs (pp. 25-26): <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/FAQS%20FOR%20PUBLIC%20SCHOOLS%20-%20COVID-19.pdf>.
- Might the ACT be administered in the fall as a service to students, but not included in accountability? OSDE is working on this with ACT and the College Board. Should have info shortly.
- As to summer meals, staff members are tired. Understood. OSDE wants districts to continue feeding as long as they can into summer. Perhaps it's possible to close certain feeding sites for a week or two and keep others open and then reverse that to give staff a break. There's probably a need in all communities to feed.
- Many districts are asking about whether nutrition claims will be paid. SDE received \$64 million to pay claims. Funds are available for March through September.
- Can food delivery continue during summer through the Seamless School Option (SSO)? Yes, unless U.S. Secretary of Agriculture says the emergency is over.
- Yes, districts can still provide food even if other communities are stepping up to help you.
- Yes, districts can still do grab and go under the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) through June 30, unless the Secretary of Agriculture says the emergency is over.
- What guidance does OSDE have about requests for use of facilities by outside groups? Local school boards decide who uses their facilities. They have control. If it's not safe, then don't let them use. How can you think it's appropriate to allow use of facilities in a way inconsistent with the Governor's directive? Some may think that it's ok because in Phase 1, recreational areas may be open. But remember, Phase 1 also says schools, sporting events and camps should be closed until further notice.
- What guidance does OSDE have on student retention outside third grade (grades K, 1, 2)? If you're considering retention of a grade just because of COVID-19, that's not really appropriate. Retention is not supported through research. The better approach is to give strategic, targeted support through the next year. Would be very concerned if a whole grade level was retained or

if a school started all kids in the same grade they were in the previous year. On a national level, the conversation is yes, we know there's unfinished work from this year, but fold it into next year. Districts need to plan to go back as early as possible to address gaps. What was appropriate for 2019 summer school may not be for summer 2020. Kids will need years to rebound, the longer they remain disengaged and the gap continues. OSDE is working on a diagnostic tool to provide schools to use without charge to figure out where students are when they return to school for 2020-21.

- What are Superintendent Hofmeister's expectations for distance learning for 2020-21? Expectations are different in different communities. For 2020-21, we're unlikely to see another broad emergency declaration. Get started with school early for 2020-21 because there's still likelihood of some disruption due to virus resurgence. Distance learning will need to be a part of what districts do ordinarily. Use the tools in the classroom and as student or students must be out of school, so they won't lose ground and learning will continue. The system is unlikely to be fully developed in August, but keep trying to ramp up. Districts need to have this type of blended model available no matter what student needs and course needs are. Superintendent Hofmeister emphasized starting early to give the greatest amount of flexibility and avoid having to extend the 2020-21 school year.
- Should districts be coding attendance now? This is fully addressed in the OSDE FAQs (p. 13). There's not a requirement that attendance be put in the state system, but it's important to have it locally, for awards, etc.
- Back to distance learning as a regular part of the school year. Superintendent Hofmeister hopes districts don't think about distance learning as something we're doing till students go back to school. Districts should have this pathway available all the time. Can incorporate this type of time into the school calendar. Use distance learning now when deciding what next year looks like, especially since we'll have funds for more of these opportunities for free. Hope districts will take advantage of this.
- What if a student was already recommended for retention before COVID-19? Can the district retain then? Those situations should be few and far between, but that's a district decision.
- What about education funding for 2020-21? Grateful there were no cuts through June 30. Don't know what budget will be for 2020-21. Agencies have been asked to provide info re cuts at different levels. OSDE has been frank about what cuts will mean for students, what obligations the state already has and how important it is to keep the education budget as close to flat as possible. Teacher pay is an important gain, and we don't want to lose momentum, especially given teacher shortages. OSDE provided this info to the Governor. It's hard to imagine zero losses to education budget over next year because it would cause a bigger cut to other agencies, more like 16% to them. OSDE personnel think the cut to education should be less than 5%. Bracing for the possibilities.
- How would distance learning days count in the 2020-21 school year for purposes of days and hours? They count as any other days count.
- Aaron Espolt comments - Encourages school leaders to use time and resources to plan to enhance distance learning opportunities and make a more effective and comprehensive plan.

Leverage state resources and blended frameworks already available. Include distance learning as part of the way school operates. OSDE is working to better assist you and provide more resources. Contact OSDE and your support organizations for help. OSDE will have a brief survey going to districts this week on some of what you have and are using and whether you're pleased with it.

Concluding Remarks

- Superintendent Hofmeister expresses thanks and appreciation. Look for additional OSDE plans and resources. Stay nimble and make strategic decisions. Keep the questions coming.

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Update

- As of today, there are 2,894 confirmed positive cases in Oklahoma and six additional deaths, two of which occurred in the last 24 hours, for a total of 170.
- The Governor is holding a press conference now regarding plans to reopen the state. This doesn't change SBE's plan, but is relevant to summer and fall plans for districts.
- Many are anxious to know about what to expect for the 2020-21 school year. OSDE can't say what the school year will look like, but likely there will be a closure at some point during the year. It may be isolated to certain students, families, schools, or districts. In that event, OSDE will strive to continue to provide prompt guidance. Districts must focus on developing contingency plans, as will OSDE. OSDE is working to plan with its team internally and also outside OSDE.

FAQ Updates

- There have been some questions about the updated OSDE FAQs that were issued on April 17. The Governor has indicated that his safer at home order will be lifted after April 30. SBE's directive closes schools until the end of the school year, which is May 8 or later, as determined by each district. Any plan to open school buildings to get items from classrooms or lockers should be implemented after the school year ends. Take particular care for those who are vulnerable to the virus. Review and follow the most recent CDC guidance in making decisions. It's not important to clean out lockers and desks while the safer at home order is in effect.

Driver's Ed

- Students enrolled in a school program must complete 30 hours' instruction and 6 hours' driving time with the instructor. To assist those who weren't able to complete the six hours, OSDE will allow the parent or guardian of a student whose course was interrupted to complete the six required hours of driving time. The parent or guardian must attest to completion of the drive time on a Certificate of Completion. OSDE is working on an updated Certificate that will be issued in the coming days.

CARES Act Funds

- The most recent OSDE FAQs have questions answered about CARES Act Funds. Read them closely. The 30-day mark for USDE to make the SEA application available is coming up shortly, and OSDE will be applying for the funds promptly. Should be done by the end of this week. Once approved, OSDE will release the LEA application. OSDE has no further info about this from USDE, but expect more will be included in the SEA application. The funds will be available to be spent through 9/30/20. Superintendent Hofmeister expects that these funds will also be able to be spent going back into March 2019.
- A new funding package was approved by the U.S. Senate last evening. OSDE understands that this package doesn't include additional funds for schools. They hear that more packages are coming and that there will be funds for local governments, including funds for e-Rate.

SBE Special Meeting on April 23

- OSDE will recommend extending due dates for audits of districts expending less than \$750,000 in federal funds through June 30.
- OSDE will recommend a temporary certification process for those whose path to certification has been interrupted, such as person who couldn't take the certification test or couldn't complete student teaching.

State Budget

- You've seen in the news the state's financial predicament. Grateful to legislative leaders to hold education flat for the remainder of FY2020. Will be incredibly challenging to do the same next year. But House and Senate leaders want to protect education to greatest extent possible. There are rumors of big cuts swirling around.
- Districts should do these things: (1) Plan for the worst case scenario. (2) Encourage legislative leadership to stand strong for education. (3) Tell your stories. Many legislators weren't around in 2016-17 to see the impact of revenue under collection and may not understand the impact of significant cuts. Let them know how cuts will impact your district. Keep advocating. The learning loss is real and won't be resolved in the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year. The legislature must invest in what it will take to close gaps.

Questions and Answers

- Can districts hold in-person graduation ceremonies after the safer at home order is lifted? Everyone must still respect social distancing. Shouldn't make plans for big ceremonies for some weeks unless they're virtual. In-person ceremonies might be possible in June or after.
- What is the worst case budget for education for FY2021? Can't speculate. Districts need to think about how to approach learning with different scenarios that are possible, and must think about different budget outcomes the same way. Remember, the legislature has a strong desire to hold education flat, and Superintendent Hofmeister thinks they'll try to do that or come close.
- What about summer driver's ed? How should districts plan for that? OSDE will have more info on this as that time approaches. The form OSDE has worked on with the Department of Public Safety should work for now.

- What about emergency certified teachers finishing their second year who are unable to take certification exams? It might be appropriate for the district to request a third year for emergency certification for the teacher to take the exam then.
- Should districts plan for distance learning for the fall semester? It's likely there will be a need for some form of distance learning in the future. Further outbreaks of COVID are expected. To avoid interrupted instruction, districts must plan for this and invest in opportunities for virtual learning. That's why OSDE is working on closing the digital divide with the Governor. Districts need to have a way for students to have online learning if needed. It's a priority in OSDE's proposal for the use of the Governor's GEAR Funds. OSDE is also working on ways to have vendors that are already working in the state offering a state rate for districts. Wants this done and to districts by June.
- Is there any possibility for funding assistance for remediation and salaries in fall 2020? Because state funding is so unclear, will address as to federal funds. The CARES funds are fairly flexible, including for continuity of service by staff. That should help. It may not be enough to make up for any state shortfall, but should help.
- District plans to change to summer lunch program for May and June. Can they do the same for July and August? If the district is talking about the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), the application will be available later for the new fiscal year that includes July and August. Districts will get a notice when it's available in CARS. If the district is referring to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), reach out to Dee Houston and let her know you want to serve in July and August.
- Is there any new info available about the third-year emergency certification process or background checks? The third-year emergency rule was passed by SBE at its March meeting. Background checks are addressed on page 27 of the FAQs issued on April 17. There are remote locations available to do background checks. The requirements can't be waived – they're statutory.
- Will districts encounter problems if the cost of meals is higher than usual? Will those claims be paid? Yes, they'll be paid at the free rate of reimbursement. Doesn't think this will be a red flag. OSDE understands you'll potentially be serving more kids – other siblings, children in private schools or charter schools. OSDE is celebrating that districts are serving more meals than normal and sent out a press release about this today.
- What about raising teacher or other adult meal prices? There's a specific formula that indicates the minimum that must be charged. Districts can charge more than that.
- Are there more summer feeding training programs? No, as 13 or 14 have already been held. April 30 is the deadline to apply for summer feeding. Time is needed after that to review and approve. Can't waive this regulatory requirement. Districts can't be permitted to start serving before they're approved.
- Can Project 615 funds be carried over? These are PD allocations to districts. Districts can't carry them over because Project 615 is already comprised of carryover funds. OSDE will be adding \$ to Project 615 for 2020-21.

- Is there RSA guidance on summer school opportunities? RSA guidance has been put out on the website and there have also been a couple of webinars. Will provide links to FAQs and webinars in the chat box.
- What about bus driver permits that expire before training occurs again? Permits last six months and cost \$60. This is a Department of Public Safety issue. OSDE will contact DPS for clarification.
- The CARES Act directs that funds be used for continuity of staff. Can districts pay for new staff or staff paid out of other funds with CARES Act funds? Supplement, not supplant doesn't necessarily apply to CARES Act funds. So, if the district needs to continue services of someone under contract using CARES Act funds, that is acceptable.
- What about custodians returning to schools to work if the safer at home order is lifted after April 30? Custodians are cleaning areas now where essential staff is in the building. Whatever custodial work is needed in compliance with the current SBE order is allowed, as long as social distancing is observed.
- Secretary Ostrowe is working with OSDE and others about plans for the Governor's GEAR Funds. Waiting to see what telecomm companies are offering for hot spots. Will pass along this info when it's available.
- As to TLE and emergency certification, what documentation can be provided to show progress and what documentation is required for the portfolio of work (required by emergency rule re third-year emergency certified teachers). The content of the portfolio is up to the emergency certified teacher and district. It could include PDs attended, coursework, attempts to take the certification test, etc. There's flexibility. OSDE will put Dr. Robyn Miller in touch with the person who asked the TLE question.
- Aware that OSDE will continue to get lots of questions about in-person graduation ceremonies. OSDE received a question about holding an in-person ceremony as early as May 9 on District property. See previous remarks about this. Please don't jeopardize the health of people you've been trying to protect by doing an in-person ceremony too fast. Think creatively. One small district asked about possibly having parents in cars to observe a ceremony. That's a creative thought.
- The Governor is right now putting out a plan to reopen OK. OSDE will look at this info and see if they need to change anything. But Oklahoma is still in the midst of a pandemic.

Closing Remarks

- If Superintendent Hofmeister said anything that seems different than the FAQ info, refer to the FAQ info.
- OSDE will update FAQs as needed and based on information from the Governor.
- Be careful about physical gatherings. Physical gatherings for graduation don't seem possible now unless the class is very small and parents are staying in their cars. Look at the CDC guidance and most current SDE FAQs and be cautious about planning for the future.
- Very proud of districts' work. The focus is turning to loss of learning. OSDE knows that leaders' jobs are more complex due to funding issues. SDE is there to support you.

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Updates

- 2,263 Oklahomans have tested positive, with 123 deaths and 245 currently hospitalized. The models used by the Oklahoma State Department of Health have changed the peak date for COVID-19 to April 30/May 1. The models have also reduced the number of Oklahoma's expected fatalities from 965 to 929. Continuing to monitor data to see when things can reopen. State unemployment is "staggeringly high." 12% now as compared to 4% at end of February 2020. There are projections of 30% unemployment in Oklahoma and nationally by end of calendar year.

Abuse and Neglect

- In Oklahoma City, domestic abuse calls are up 16% for the first week of April as compared to a year ago. Domestic abuse arrests are up by 21% over the same time period. There are fewer reports of abuse, however. So, school personnel need to focus on relationships and trauma-informed principles. The social well-being and physical safety of students are equally important. Report what needs to be reported. See the helpful resources at sde.ok.gov/counseling#covoid19.
- There's no greater intervention than a student having a safe relationship. School personnel need to try to maintain their relationships with students and with families, even if parents aren't responding or are unfriendly. This can reduce the risk of negative mental health outcomes. Remember these three easy steps:
 1. Continue communication with students and families to max extent possible.
 2. Encourage students to reach out to classmates. Teachers may want to consider a class letter-writing project.
 3. Build hope in students to set new goals while teachers help build pathways to achieve those goals.

Budgeting

- The Governor signed SBs 617 and 1053 last week to prevent education cuts through April 30. Superintendent Hofmeister has asked him to do the same through the end of FY20. That hasn't happened yet, but will keep working on it. State aid payments will be posted 4/16.
- Budget negotiations are ongoing for FY20 and FY21. FY21 will be a difficult time for the state. Districts need to think conservatively to be ready for any scenario.

Connectivity

- OSDE and the state are working on plans to provide additional connectivity for summer and fall. The four major communications companies in Oklahoma are to provide a state rate and significantly reduced rate for hot spots. Hot spots may be hard to come by now. But the companies can provide cell phones now. The companies are crafting proposals based on the recent district technology survey results. Hope to provide additional access points to connectivity across the state through one or more state-level contracts. The access points could be installed in public buildings, including K-12 and career techs, and even on school buses. Conversations are ongoing. This is not just a rural issue. We need to overcome our connectivity and device barriers.

School Year Feeding and Summer Feeding

- Very proud of districts. Almost every district in the state is offering meal options along with distance learning. Only 33% of Oklahoma districts had summer feeding options in summer 2019. That was before the pandemic and high unemployment. Districts have two options to continue feeding programs through summer:
 1. Keep doing what you're doing (Seamless Summer Option). No additional application or action needed to do this.
 2. Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Need to complete application due by April 30 to do this. Can't waive timeline. SFSP provides higher reimbursement rates and meal pattern flexibilities.

Driver's Ed

- Aware districts are concerned about students completing the driving hours to meet driver's ed requirements. A solution is still in the works. OSDE will release new updates to FAQs by end of week. Hope that this topic can be addressed in that update. OSDE is still working with the Department of Public Safety on a resolution.

Questions and Answers

- When might we see schools reopening? This year, summer, or next year? Not this school year. That's already been defined. OSDE is doing this work in phrases:
 1. Close schools, plan for Phase 2 and provide food to students.
 2. Reengage students in learning and get seniors ready for post-graduation opportunities.
 3. Recovery of ground lost during crisis. This includes the CARES Act, comprehensive planning and work through summer and into fall to open schools. It's harder to reopen school than close it. OSDE will put student needs as top priority in planning. Plans will be based on different scenarios. OSDE will be seeking input from district leaders to address policy issues and practical ones.
- Can students clean out personal belongings? Will OSDE provide guidance? Yes, OSDE can provide guidance if needed. There's a clear need to maintain social distancing now. Districts should examine what a "cleaning out" plan should look like. Some districts have already done some of this with emergency items like student meds and glasses. Appointments and outside pick-up of items have been used. Don't do anything now to negatively affect efforts to flatten the curve and potentially increase the COVID-19 mortality rate.
- What about inequities between working support personnel and others? Some are staying home and getting paid and others are in very tough situations on the front lines. This includes child nutrition workers, for instance. Some employees just can't serve due to high risk. Others can. Still others are volunteering. OKCPS has shared that by 4/17 it will have served a half million meals. They had 1,000 masks made by volunteers and staff. Districts have contracts with staff. SBE's action to physically close schools and require distance learning doesn't remove the contract obligations of school staff members. Pull on your relationships and existing trust with personnel to be gracious and create teams to do this work. Shawnee SD – with far fewer students than OKCPS - will have served 100,000 meals by day's end 4/16, with certified and

support personnel working in shifts. This situation is inequitable. But this is what happens in the reality of a crisis. You find a way.

- What graduation ceremony ideas are schools using? Is it possible to have a graduation later this summer? Yes, some schools are having a virtual graduation at the time their graduation was initially scheduled. Some are also setting dates in the future for an in-person ceremony. Some of the in-person events are at the end of summer or even on fall break. We're hoping we'll have an "all-clear" by then; may even have an "all-clear" in the summer. One superintendent shared that the district is planning two graduation events (virtual and then in-person) just in case they can't do just one in-person event in summer 2020. Without the virtual event first and due to the long passage of time, they're concerned they may not ever be able to get students together for anything.

Closing Remarks

- Please email additional questions or put them in the chat.
- General Fund Balance penalty waivers and CARES Act requirements will be added to OSDE's updated FAQs.

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

- 1,524 confirmed positive cases in OK; total of 79 deaths; 390 cumulative hospitalizations
- Governor expressed optimism about future decreased cases in light of decreased hospitalizations between last week and this; Sup Hofmeister credits school efforts as helping reduction
- 12,000 negative tests from private labs received by state; still processing that info
- 17 states have cancelled school for remainder of year, with no student access to physical school buildings
- 43 states have stay-at-home orders
- OSDE released updated FAQs 4/7 – many questions can be answered with info in FAQs
 - <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/FAQS%20FOR%20PUBLIC%20SCHOOLS%20-%20COVID-19.pdf>
- OSDE wants to use these future weekly calls for clarifications

Support Staff

- Governor Stitt added to executive order on 4/3/20 allowing support staff to be paid even when not logging regular hours
- As a result, districts are authorized to continue to pay full-time and part-time support staff through the current fiscal year
- This allows flexible benefits to continue and teacher retirement eligibility to continue

Storm Shelters

- If district has a policy for public use, then can make storm shelters available for public use as needed

- Districts must communicate well with emergency providers about this and follow CDC guidelines in shelters, included social distancing between family groups

CARES Act

- [On 4/7, OSDE received preliminary approval for federal waivers for flexibility in use of existing federal funds](#) (the complete list is found on page 14 of OSDE's 4/7/20 updated FAQ)

MOE and the CARES Act

- To receive ESEA Emergency Relief Funds or Governor's Emergency Relief Funds, states must assure they'll maintain support for K-12 and higher ed in FYs 2020 and 2021, at least to average spent in last 3 fiscal years
- USDE can waive this for states that experienced a "precipitous decline" in financial resources; more on what that looks like later
- State and local funds spent on supplemental expenses made as result of Presidentially declared disaster can be excluded from other programs' MOE calculations (such as Title I and other ESEA programs)

Cybersecurity and Interacting with Students Online - Tips

- District personnel must be aware of district student privacy/FERPA policy
- Discourage non-students from observing online group, but it's ok if there's no disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from student education records, like student grades
- Share call-in credentials with only those invited; don't share the info on social media
- If teacher/service provider is recording group lesson, make sure everyone involved knows not to share the info on social media
- Document one-on-one conversations with students, including time conversation started and ended and what was discussed; make this available to student and parent
- Be careful about providing pictures of student participating online; look at district student privacy/FERPA policy to see what is permitted, as student photos may be identified as directory information (if so, make sure and check whether the parents of participating students have opted out of the designation of directory info for their child)
- See OSDE 4/7 updated FAQs for further information

Child Nutrition

- USDA has issued a number of nationwide waivers, including (1) waiver of some required in-person audits and substitution of desk audits and (2) waiver of 60-day reporting requirement for claims concerning operations in Jan and Feb 2020 – districts are getting 30 additional days to claim, but should try to submit claims on time
- The desk audit applies to some agency and some district in-person audits
- Waivers are effective through the fiscal year or until the public emergency ends
- Thank you to districts for good work on nutrition; please pass that on to child nutrition staff

Success Stories

- OSDE loves hearing your success stories

- People in the field are doing innovative things
- Reach out to OSDE communications office to share info; they want to offer congratulations to districts, too

Questions and Answers

- School nutrition programs that consist of supper and snack can continue past the stop date for the district's school year to the end of the fiscal year
- All new waivers are addressed in OSDE's 4/7 updated FAQs
- Are support employees viewing the support employee pay directive the Governor issued via executive order on 4/3/20 as not requiring them to work even if they are considered essential? If that's the case, that's not what was intended. OSDE can reach out to AFT, OEA and POE to clarify, if needed and helpful. SBE in its 3/25/20 directive states that nothing is intended to interfere with the contracts already entered into between personnel and their districts and that district employees are expected to carry out their contracts. The two-week closure after spring break made the governor's executive order necessary, because districts weren't sure how to handle support employee pay/benefits during that time. OSDE understand the potential misinterpretation and that this situation can be difficult for districts, as some essential employees may be under quarantine. The Governor's 4/3/20 executive order about support employee pay is supplemental to what SDE and SBE have said. OSDE may need to highlight the info in SBE's 3/25/20 directive about no interference with personnel responsibility under contracts with districts to address any misunderstanding.
- Districts must work through challenges to continue child nutrition. If there are issues, then contact and work with OSDE to problem solve. Don't stop providing services while the situation is resolved. The theme for this week is "Where there's a will, there's a way."
- Must district boards of education approve staff sick or emergency leave for COVID-19? This is a local decision.
- How do districts handle seniors wishing to graduate early? Graduation depends on the awarding of credits just like it always has. That's a local determination. OSDE has been consistently encouraging flexibility in awarding credits. Don't negatively impact students.
- Regarding RSA, OSDE thinks it's best handled through district determinations through the remainder of the school year. Sup Hofmeister asks if this is something districts are unable to handle this way. Comments in the chat box don't indicate problems.
- Can districts serve three meals to students through the summer? As of now, once school is considered out, the district can serve just two meals per day (breakfast and lunch, breakfast and snack, etc.).
- Any word on driver's ed 6-hours with an instructor driving requirement? The Department of Public Safety isn't waiving this for private schools or commercial schools. OSDE is trying to figure out what recommendations to give about this.
- Any update on budget for this year? Under the impression that the House, Senate and Governor are committed to figure this out in a way that leaves districts in good shape for the remainder of current school year, but no idea what mechanics of this will look like. Board of Equalization will meet, and a revenue failure will be declared. Concerned about FY20-21 and

FY21-22. Bracing for significant reduction for FY20-21. Think about that for what your fall 2020 will look like. Hearing that schools will get consideration from the legislature for 1017 funds for the remainder of the school year.

- What must a second-to-third year emergency certified teacher show as progress to be reviewed for a third-year emergency certificate? Also, is this automatic or by application? This is application-based, not automatic. Still working through the requirements. If don't have complete TLE this year, can use most recent benchmarks even if full year not completed. If teacher attempted assessment, can use that.
- What about moving prom and graduation dates to June? What is OSDE seeing/hearing about having big gatherings then, under anticipated CDC guidance? If districts are making plans for June now, be flexible because might need to change event dates to later. Governor said peak in Oklahoma hasn't happened and that peak looks more like mid-May because the curve seems to be flattening. Previously peak in OK was estimated to be August. This indicates efforts are working. It's risky to think about 100s gathering together in June. Once hit peak of virus, you still have more to go. Think about 3-week distance without reported cases before get the all-clear. Have received no guidance on this from CDC or Dr. Fauci. Expects summer school to be distance learning.
- When expect CARES Act funds? Not expecting by end of this week, which is 2 weeks from passage. USDOE says it's working as fast as it can.
- What about supplement and supplant as to CARES Act? Don't have specific info about this, but CARES indicates the \$ is for relief.
- Is the Personal Financial Literacy requirement waived? No, SBE can't waive this because it's in state statute. However, districts have flexibility in meeting requirements. There are free online products, or districts can provide paper materials to complete if students have connectivity/device issues.
- Is OSDE considering a temporary or provisional certification for those on track but unable to complete certification due to COVID? Yes, SDE is considering and will be issuing guidance soon and taking info to SBE at its April meeting.
- What about CSI schools in the CARES Act? To get CARES Act funds, OSDE had to provide assurance that it would continue to work with federally-operated schools.
- OSDE has applied for every waiver it can apply for. Have identified other areas in which it wants flexibility but must wait for the actual waiver applications.
- Are there any changes regarding the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in the child nutrition area? If a district wants to elect CEP, there is a new waiver in place for the deadline. The district may pick any date from 4/1 to 6/30/20 to pull data and print school enrollment for that date. Must let OSDE know what you're electing by 8/31/20. This information will be posted in CARS.

Closing Remarks

- Email Sup Hofmeister if have other questions
- Have another Zoom call later with Governor's staff and Secretary of State to work on student internet access/device access issues. May reach out to districts for info – please respond swiftly. This is an equity issue that needs to be solved.

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

New Information

- New OSDE FAQs were issued on evening of 3/31/20. Please read. Added new searchable table of contents. Will continue to update these.
- 719 confirmed positive cases in Oklahoma, with total deaths 30. Additional drive-through testing now available. Governor is having news conference today at 3:00 p.m.
- OSDE hosted distance learning webinar afternoon of 3/29/20. Can view on YouTube – go to OSDE page. Thanks the partners and superintendents who presented information.
- OSDE also hosted introductory webinar to OETA learning resources. View on Facebook.com/oklasde in the videos section.
- Received approval of waiver from U.S. Department of Agriculture to serve meals to students from schools with less than 50% free and reduced rate. Thanks Senator Lankford for help.
- Department of Transportation Safety is permanently waiving state requirement for providing proof of reading proficiency for 8th graders who would have taken the reading test this year. No driving tests are being given at this time.
- Regarding the CPR graduation requirement, this is a statutory requirement, but the statute has an exception for students enrolled in virtual charter school. OSDE views this exception as equally applicable to students attending brick and mortar schools but receiving distance learning during this closure. So, schools must advise on student transcripts if students took the CPR course or received an exception.
- During distance learning, give students the opportunity to earn grades, especially those in high school. Students must not be negatively impacted by district decisions on grading. This could occur for purposes of the NCAA, as to grade point averages, or OK Promise. Encourages schools to provide letter grades rather than Pass/Fail.
- Regarding staff and families accessing items in buildings, follow the CDC guidelines for pick-up and drop-off. Concerned with reports of schools requiring large numbers of teachers to come to school. If must enter a building:
 - Allow by appointment only;
 - Disinfect commonly touched items frequently;
 - Take temperatures so no one with a fever enters;
 - Wear disposable gloves when handling items in buildings, if possible;
 - Deliver items to families curbside or outside;
 - Don't make physical contact with anyone outside your immediate household.
- For teachers on alternative certification or the para to teacher path looking to satisfy college coursework requirements, offering two classes this summer. Go to OSDE's teacher certification webpages to find the applications.
- Had a conference call with White House today. Dr. Fauci spoke. He said: In next two weeks things will get worse before they get better nationwide. 50% or more of the nation will have increased infection with 100,000 to 200,000 deaths if we continue to act to mitigate the spread. Observe CDC guidelines. Don't travel. Stay home. Wash hands before entering and after exiting buildings and after touching common objects. Stay six feet apart from others. We must

continue to adhere to this guidance even if the curve starts to flatten or there will be a threat of resurgence. This is a strong, extraordinary nation. We'll get over this. In Oklahoma, we're in the beginning. Not sure when our peak will happen, but we can impact now what the peak will look like here.

- How will we leverage the weeks ahead to keep learning going? This is tough. We haven't prepared for it, but it's here. However, people are committed. Trying to look too far ahead may seem overwhelming. Think one day at a time.

Questions and Answers

- For otherwise essential employees who might be 65 or older, should they be designated as essential or asked to stay home? They shouldn't be at school. Make needed adjustments to keep essential services going.
- Employees have asked for a letter stating they're essential in case they're pulled over. Is that necessary? If that happens, showing a school badge should be sufficient.
- Is enrollment of new students considered essential business? Yes. Schools have a duty to facilitate enrollment for new students.
- What about tornado season? Should schools open shelters in school buildings? Yes, if the tornado is an immediate threat. Still must try to follow social distancing rules as much as possible.
- According to the Hospital Association and Care Providers, a number of districts have stepped up with medical items, but they still need items if schools have them.
- What about the emergency rule providing a third year for emergency certified teacher under certain circumstances? What if the teacher is moving to another school district? The Rule doesn't require the teacher to have been employed in the same school district for the two years prior to the request.
- What about completing hours of driving experience for drivers ed? OSDE is having conversations w/the Department of Public Safety about how to complete or otherwise handle the required six hours of driving experience. OSDE is trying to get a recommendation to provide districts.
- Is there a deadline to provide distance learning plans and assurances to OSDE? Deadline is April 6. Have received 370 at time of call.

Child Nutrition

- Regarding the new waiver mentioned above, all students regardless of free and reduced status can get a meal wherever they go.
- If meals are maintained at the proper temperature, can serve them the next day. If give leftovers away, can't count the meal as reimbursable.
- Child nutrition workers are anxious about being in buildings, and districts are worried about being able to continue to provide meals. Not sure of best answer. Using volunteers might be a possibility. Where do we get more people? Not sure. Perhaps people who have been laid off from restaurant work but have appropriate licensure.
- Can buy masks with child nutrition funds, also gloves and thermometers.

- Districts in neighboring communities can help provide meals.
- Meals to You is another possibility. Info about this is in the March 31 FAQs. There are conditions about which districts can opt into this program, including need for a rural designation.
- Can districts give a one-time stipend from CN funds to child nutrition worker coming in to work when others are at home and still getting paid? Asked for additional time to look at this.

More Questions and Answers

- Teachers are unable to take certification tests because they've been cancelled. SDE is aware of this and has had conversations about how could help, maybe with a temporary certificate if the candidate has done everything except passed the test.
- Regarding the CARES Act and revenue that may be coming, federal relief funds will be distributed no later than April 24. Distributions are based on 2019 census configuration data. Eligible expenditures will be defined in guidance. Cost above baseline in most recently published budgets. Things that look like replacement of lost revenue won't qualify. Looking at \$160 million. State can keep some of this. About \$145 million will go through Title I formula used in FY 2019. OSDE has been told to expect in about two weeks, and it will disburse funds to districts about a week later.
- Wouldn't expect many student transfers at this time. There could be enrollment fluctuation in response to distance learning. Want to protect districts from financial fluctuations and with ADA and ADM. Latter two are stabilized by SBE determining that the school year ended before school closure orders impacted districts.
- Are there updates on connectivity and federal funds for connectivity? OSDE is interested in this being allowed and provided across state, especially in areas not previously served. This is a high priority. This crisis has highlighted existing inequities. Will work hard to change this based on the information in the technology surveys districts completed recently.
- Is there anything else about support staff issues and people not being able to work during this time? OSDE is committed to finding a solution. The Legislature wanted to help, and OSDE crafted language to help. This issue is still high on the priority list. OSDE hopes to have good news very soon – by end of this week. Want support staff to be safe. Many of them are concerned about risk of being in buildings. If employees are at high risk, they shouldn't be asked to be there.

Closing Remarks

- Extend grace to those around you. Take care of yourself. Priority is safety of children, families, staff, community. Learning is secondary. But learning is important now to keep connections. If things don't work out beautifully, that's ok. Do the best you can. Admires your leadership. Take it one day at a time and we'll get through it. Join OSDE's webinars for other content areas. Contact OSDE with any unexpected hurdles.

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Oklahoma Resources for Distance Learning

- Appreciate work and planning. Lots of resources – so many it’s tough to navigate. Want to highlight those you need and important info in FAQs.

Aaron Espolt/Distance Learning Framework

- This call is for specific guidance to get ready for April 6.
- Appreciate partner organizations.
- OSDE’s Distance Learning resources became live on Friday, March 27.
- They encourage local control that leads to the best fit for your district and community. This isn’t an all-in-one framework for how all districts should do distance learning in their communities.
- Stability and relationships come from schools, but doesn’t have to come from a school building. OSDE wants great things to continue happening for kids.
- OSDE doesn’t want the Distance Learning Framework documents to become overwhelming. Here’s a breakdown of what’s included and its purpose.
- If they choose, districts can give the Surveys to staff and/or community. They’re intended to give info to the district for planning. Some have made their own surveys, and that’s fine. If don’t use surveys, do involve stakeholders in some way.
- Resources for Administrators – lots of info here. There are important considerations before you begin – What is the vision? What will the plan look like? How do you engage staff and students? There’s also an optional five-day plan you could use for the week of March 30.
- Resources for Teachers – lots of info about grade bands and content areas. Info is added daily. This is a resource for teachers, curriculum directors and school leaders. There is nothing mandated about what subjects must be covered. Some districts are using teachers that won’t be providing distance learning for wellness checks, to focus on students’ relationships and well-being. They could do senior credit checks and help with post-secondary opportunities.
- Special Ed and EL Resources are included, as is Child Nutrition. There’s also a section for Social-Emotional Resources and Family info.
- This isn’t a one-size fits all. This gives districts autonomy to fit their own needs.
- OSDE’s FAQs are continually being updated. As new questions are asked, new info is added, so keep checking on them. The Assurances are on the SDE FAQ page.

Tiffany Neill

- In the Essential Resources for Teachers, there are some important resources for teachers and curriculum folks, including schedules.
- There’s a sample schedule for instruction for different grade bands and high school levels.
- There are also resources for grade bands and content areas, including a supports page.
- For every grade band, there’s a guidance document.
- Within the document, there are prompts to help teachers decide how to provide supports, with and without technology.
- For every grade band and for disciplines at the middle and high school levels, there’s a link where teachers have been sharing tasks students can do at home, many without the need for technology. SDE will make these searchable by districts and teachers.
- All of OSDE’s Friday, March 27 virtual meetings were recorded and they will be posted this upcoming week.
- Also, OSDE’s new partnership with OETA is launching Monday, March 30.

- OETA is devoting 3 different channels to instructional resources from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F.
- Also, there's a website where teachers can get resources supporting the OETA programming.
- Join the webinar Monday, March 30 at 2:00 p.m. or take a virtual course to find out how to leverage these resources. There will be meetings every week for teachers that will be recorded.

Sherri Durkee, Sand Springs Public Schools

- Make sure people know that flexibility is driving everything.
- All staff and parents are experiencing a high level of anxiety, so emphasize making connections.
- Sand Springs has used Google Classroom for a long time, but staff members have different levels of experience with it, so developed all levels of PD for them.
- The district is also using existing PLC grade and subject-level groups and co-teaching to provide support for staff members.
- The district is shopping for hot spots right now.
- It's developing work packets that will be available for pick-up along with meals.
- The district isn't going to be teaching a full day of school on line. Suggests that others look at time expectations on the SDE and CCOSA online models, and not put so much pressure on teachers to expect full days of instruction.
- As to graduation requirements – don't make this time period beginning April 6 punitive for kids. Make it a safe way to connect. If kids were on the way to graduation or earning a passing grade by March 12, they shouldn't be penalized.
- Take stress away from staff. Be very cognizant of the way people are feeling and the amount of stress they're under.

Scott Farmer, Fort Gibson Public Schools

- Keep in mind this community is a little special because at this time last year, about 200 kids' homes were underwater. This is the district's second year in a row with little closure. The district must step up again this year to be the center of community and put a "loving arm" around kids.
- The district established overarching themes and goals and shared documents among areas, and then with community. Happy to share that information with other districts.
- Providing kids with hot spots.
- Last week tech director did quick link for all for PD this week. On Monday, March 30, doing all-district PD (like back to school). Tuesday is PD by site. Wednesday and Thursday are for grades and subject levels. Friday is for contact with kids. Distance Learning starts on Monday, April 6.
- Yes, some students and teachers don't have internet. Some teachers have very little experience with technology. Surprised how well everything is going together. Personal experience in Supt's own family shows that this can be done. CCOSA and SDE have good supporting documents coming out.

Scott Parks, Howe Public Schools

- Small district – 650 students.
- Began with research and started with surveys to staff and families.
- Found some lacked quality connectivity, even teachers. Challenges with the district's one-to-one laptop plan.

- Getting familiar with WebEx platform to try to make administrators comfortable with that and with objectives.
- Wants this to be very doable. Wants administrators on same page and to bring staff together.
- Support and certified staff had different concerns, so split those into different groups for discussion. In both, focused on how we can do this.
- Support group was concerned about pay. Told them they were needed in this Phase 2 to accomplish outcomes.
- Wanted to launch this in a new way. Used a caravan of cars with banners on bus routes to show off new approach. Kids could see their teachers out there in new way. Kids also had banners.
- Now in planning stages. Principals are convening whole groups. The Monday afternoon planning group is getting together.
- The approach focuses on enrichment and maintenance. Not doing a lot of drill and practices. Focus on making sure parents are set up for success.
- The district set up a communication portal for parents – putting what the district is doing on the first page of the website to make sure parents are well aware of what it's doing.
- First grade example – Teachers bummed not getting to do end-of-year animal project. Asked teachers to re-invent it and they are. Figuring out how the three students with no connectivity can participate. Will do a book with activities all can do with their animals.
- Don't rule anything out. We can do graduation. We can create a dance hall for prom. Focus on relationships and infuse enrichment and academic activities.

Questions and Answers to the Three Supts

- How are you communicating to staff and community about continuing learning for kids who don't want to do anything? Remind people if we were having school, still would have kids who don't want to do anything. To best of ability, try to engage. With enrichment, try to get kids interested in the things they like. If set bar at 100%, might not get there. But try to engage as many as you can. Also use this as opportunity. Support those on track to graduate. For those who need to go back and revisit something or relearn something, this is a new opportunity to help them reengage and strengthen personal connections. We've been freed of testing requirements – take advantage of that.
- For students with connectivity, when we're having teachers connect with them that way, what does it look like? Doing a four-day school week with one day for teacher planning. On that day, teachers get together by department to plan. Teachers put the information on Google Classroom so kids can see the whole week. For packets, they're passing out two weeks of work at once. Not asking parents to return completed work. Instead, parents mark on the cover sheet twice per week whether work was completed. They can show the district the completed cover sheet in any way they want. It isn't physically returned to the district.
- As to packets, what are you doing when there isn't even connectivity by phone, let alone computer? Innovate. There's really no wrong way of doing this, except doing nothing. Be as creative as you can be. Look at OETA resources and see if that's a fit. Focus on reading. Sometimes the problem isn't complete lack of phone connection, but lack of sustained phone connection. Texting may be possible. Look at teletherapy opportunities with SLP and paraprofessionals. The district has computers it can provide to those who need one (got this info through survey).

Other Questions and Answers

- To take advantage of all SBE waivers, districts have to complete the assurances. Don't need a board meeting to approve it.
- There's March 27 guidance from Governor or Secretary of State and State Epidemiologist about coming to school buildings. Should take temperature of each person trying to come in. Turn people away if they have a temperature. Wear gloves. Have teachers and others who want to enter the building make an appointment. Use common sense to prevent continued spread of virus in schools.
- As to handling paper, the State Epidemiologist and Dr. Fauci say to limit contact via paper as much as possible, but you're unlikely to pass the virus by touching paper.

SDE Partner Organizations

- OPSRC – Has daily Zoom 12 to 1, especially for teachers afraid of technology. Available for help desk tickets on different topics. Has quotes from vendors for hot spots and tech. Has training available.
- OSSBA – Has templates online for board resolutions, including for support employee pay. Has new template for a district to introduce its distance learning plan to the community. Has an online forum for superintendents. Get on OklaEd chat tonight to talk about distance learning.
- CCOSA – Has a Tier Plan that aligns with and supports OSDE's guidance. Includes a short, "Have You Thought About This?" resource for members that includes key points to help schools organize and be more efficient in implementing the OSDE Guidance:

1. Do this first—find out what technology is available and what support is at home—SDE survey will provide this info.
2. Then, next—what support the district provides. Create expectations for all involved. Use a Tier system to help assess contact teachers and school leaders will have with students/parents/guardians: Determine method of delivering learning content.

Example:

Tier 1-For students with full internet access, place them on an online platform, starting them on the online course near the place they left off in class.

Tier 2- For students without home internet but access to smartphone connectivity, teachers can use FaceTime, Zoom, or another delivery model.

Tier 3- For students without any access to internet, teachers can provide textbook and/or learning packets with as much equal learning content as the online course, sent home and returned via mail, delivered along with meals, or sent through text attachments.

3. Then, what—Standard for Teacher Content Delivery Rubric: This helps districts assess where they are for delivery of content.

CCOSA can also connect school leaders with supts and principals who've experienced distance learning, has a robust blended learning committee in place with administrators, tech directors and online providers to guide schools and is facilitating regional weekly meetings of each association to gather feedback and assist.

Closing Remarks

- Reiterating guidance from Secretary of State and State Epidemiologist, they don't want people in buildings who haven't had their temperatures taken. Want them to wear gloves and make appointments. Having 25 people in the building leaves the same mark whether they're there at the same time or separately. This is necessary to prevent spread. Use common sense and watch for continued guidance.

More Questions and Answers

- Do the orders to stay home from the Tulsa and OKC Mayors change what's going on with districts and child nutrition in those cities? No, it doesn't.
- What are legal issues regarding connectivity between teachers and students? If teacher is on-line and sees something that looks like abuse, they have same reporting obligation as at school. If sees something that makes them uncomfortable but not abuse and neglect, report as usually required by district policy.
- Don't have a specific day or open time to have students or teachers pick things up from school. It's premature to clean out classes and lockers at this time. Shelter away from others now. That's what's needed to flatten the curve. If there's a critical item like medication at school that a family needs, require an appointment and deliver the item to them outside. Stay safe and at home as much as possible.

Further Closing Remarks

- Will be gathering more technology info later, but have enough at this time. OSDE wants all students connected. Will identify where inequities are and will have large state-wide shift and commitment to correcting this. Won't happen in two weeks, but will be working toward it for the fall.
- Treat paper like any other inanimate object – wash hands before and after touching it.
- OSDE appreciates commitment of school administrators and partners. Take care.
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Friday, March 27, 2020

Introduction

- Thanks to districts for their preparedness and innovation. Also thanks districts that made medical device donations.
- Thanks and welcomes Senator Lankford

Senator Lankford's Remarks:

- House passed the CARES Act today and President will sign in a couple hours.
- It includes a direct payment program. In about 3 weeks, \$1200 checks will go out to eligible adults with \$500 provided per child.
- 13 billion \$ set aside for schools.
- Additional \$ set aside for health care, etc.
- Gives states max flexibility RE: education funding
- \$ going out to schools through established formulas
- It will be about two weeks before regs can be created and before funds can go out.

- What about carryover of unused funds from 2019-20? Waivers have been turned around very rapidly. Changes have been made quickly. Supt. Hofmeister thanks Lankford for helping with speed of waivers.
- What message does Sen. Lankford have? Thank you to superintendents. Appreciates school engagement. In most communities, schools are center of community. Thank you to schools for helping families know to stay separate (social distancing). We don't know how far virus has spread in communities because of lack of tests. Testing has now expanded in Oklahoma, and more cases will be found in communities. So, schools can continue to encourage social distancing. Teachers have made recommendations for resources to parents to help them support students at home. Federal government will continue to be a resource for information.
- Will there be another federal package (a fourth)? Senate and House just passed the third in form of the CARES Act. Senate and House not expected to go back into session for four weeks. As to the CARES Act, Oklahoma has been allocated 1.25 billion dollars for COVID-19. Much of this is going into nursing centers and health care centers. There's a grant program to small businesses and non-profits to keep businesses afloat. There's also a loan-only part for larger companies. When get about halfway through drug trial, manufacturing of the drug will start, which will lead to a vaccine about six months earlier than the usual process would permit. This will help with individual engagement and the economy.
- What about less than 50% free and reduced per site issue? Haven't received the waiver yet to permit all students in that site to be fed. Supt. Hofmeister asked for Sen. Lankford's help, and he agreed.
- Supt. Hofmeister also asked about what would happen with school feeding in shelter in place situation and said would keep him apprised.
- Is there a possibility of legislation for rural schools to provide access and devices as other areas of the state? This is an equity issue that Supt. Hofmeister is concerned about. Sen. Lankford says this is one of the gap areas discovered. Feds have worked on broadband issues through Oklahoma. Devices have been a state or local decision, typically. This is a greater challenge.
- Sen. Lankford reiterates his gratitude to school district administrators. He understands. Please stay in contact with his team. Contact his field reps and/or State Superintendent's office.
- There are rumors about what the CARES Act contains because it's new and big. If have questions, call his office.
- The storm will pass and we'll learn lessons for the future.
- Supt. Hofmeister thanks Senator Lankford.

Updates

- New guidance is out. Distance Learning Framework is out on SDE website.
- The Assurance document is also live and must be completed before April 6. It's part of the COVID-19 resources on SDE website and was or will be emailed out to districts.
- Schools' portion of CARES Act funds is 13.5 billion \$. There are some set-asides for some areas, like BIA and hard-hit COVID areas. 11.9 billion \$ will be distributed to LEAs using Title I formula. SEAs can decide to reserve some funds for certain uses.

- As of today, 322 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Oklahoma, with eight deaths. There are cases in 40 of 77 counties.
- SDE sent out updated FAQs evening of March 26, regarding attendance, grades, graduation, connectivity, partnership with OETA.

Questions and Answers

- Info on Distance Learning Framework is on SDE website, [sde.ok.gov/distance learning](http://sde.ok.gov/distance-learning).
- The district does not have to submit its distance learning plan to the SDE but must describe it in the Assurance document.
- Can a student receive a lower grade than they had on March 12? This is primarily a local decision. SBE said don't negatively impact students as a result of where we are with COVID-19. This includes lowering grades. Districts are not required to give a letter grade. They could give pass/fail grade, but this could result in unintended consequences, especially for high school students. Districts strongly encouraged to continue issuing letter grades. At least one district is permitting students to go back and turn in missing work by a specific date; they are using this time for remediation. Be sensitive to this need for students to continue working on a topic and turn in work to learn and improve their grades.
- The flexibility schools need to complete the school year is in SBE's order. If proposed retention under RSA, team must meet. Otherwise, most recent assessments and benchmarks can be used to decide RSA issues.
- Is SDE approving distance learning plans? This is not a requirement but would be ideal in terms of feedback.
- Will be looking at results of technology survey and what might be required in districts. Results will be given to a state team working with Governor's office to see how we can get needs met. Goal is to get all students' needs met. This process will help us direct funds where they need to go. We have new federal funds in CARES Act to help with this.
- Personal Financial Literacy wasn't waived because it's in statute and SBE can't waive it. Local districts are encouraged to make sure students complete what they need to, especially graduating students.
- There are 23 credits required to graduate in Oklahoma. Some districts require more. In guidance, will encourage districts to reexamine higher credit requirements to permit graduation. The 23 credits can't be waived. Accreditation audits won't continue for the 2019-20 year at this time.
- Can districts focus on core subjects in distance learning or must electives be addressed? Don't need to address electives. Look at Distance Learning Framework.
- Want persons back in buildings to prepare resources? It defeats purpose of closure if people come back in, even one at a time. The fact that people need to do it doesn't help flatten the curve. We're trying to avoid that. Of course, there may be occasions for administrators to be there. Also, there is a risk associated with passing learning packets back and forth. Waiting on further information about this. Be cautious about things that many people are touching or accessing. There's more info about this in the updated FAQs SDE issued March 26.

- Any estimate what part of 13 billion \$ will be distributed to Oklahoma? No. Oklahoma would use FY19 Title I formula.
- Beginning Monday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., OETA will adjust programming to instructional, including PBS Kids, NOVA, etc. Just need a TV and an antenna to get this. Will have a live training at 4:00 p.m. March 27 and will post it on SDE YouTube channel. Also developing other resources that will help teachers communicate about how to use OETA learning resources. See osdeconnect.ok.gov and oeta.tv

Closing Remarks

- Let SDE know if schools want to keep having these conference calls.
- Reminder of need to donate medical devices to nursing homes and hospitals in their communities. You can drop them off at those sites.
- Email or text your questions after reading FAQs and Distance Learning Framework.
- This is worth the struggle to keep students and families safe. Stay healthy. School is not the building, but the people. We appreciate you.

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

- SDE will be issuing guidance about issues on different days throughout this process.
- As of today, there are 164 positive cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma and five deaths.
- Governor Stitt has issued a “safer at home” order through April 30, 2020, covering vulnerable populations. He has also ordered the closure of “non-essential businesses,” including gyms, hair salons, tattoo shops and museums, for 21 days, beginning on March 24.
- 50,000 watched the SBE special meeting held on March 25.
- At the meeting, the SBE took action on [multiple waivers](#) to provide districts with greater flexibility.
 - The SBE also issued an [amendment](#) to its prior school closure order. The amended order suspends in-person instruction and extracurricular activities and events and closes school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year (recommended ending date on or after May 8-15, 2020) for general student and personnel attendance. The only exceptions among Oklahoma public schools and their staffs shall be those who are to provide nutrition services, essential core services (governance, HR, billing, maintenance and continuity of building functions, staff to maintain building access control and security measures, student enrollment) and staff for purposes of facilitating or supporting required delivery of distance learning. Districts must comply with CDC guidelines and apply a health and safety policy that ensures students, staff and families are not exposed to potential pathogens that could lead to illness.
 - Districts may continue the regular school year after the SBE’s recommended May 8-15 ending date.
 - Now through April 6 is a dedicated window to provide OSDE with expedited waiver requests and assurances and prepare for and begin distance learning.

Preparation could include immediately convening staff development. Staff development must be done virtually to the maximum extent possible.

- In exchange for the waivers granted by the SBE, school districts through a simple assurance statement must provide certain assurances, including that they will develop and implement an approved distance learning plan, complete and return the technology capacity survey OSDE provided to districts on March 24, and comply with FERPA and the IDEA, including the most recent guidance documents issued by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - The SBE adopted an emergency rule providing a third-year extension for emergency certified teachers. To obtain the extension, the emergency certified teacher's district must make a recommendation and agree to hire the teacher for the 2020-21 school year. The emergency certified teacher must also have a certain TLE score and have a portfolio of work that demonstrates sufficient progress toward regular certification.
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- The SBE approved a rule providing an emergency medical exemption for (1) all 8th grade students, who are unable to take the 8th grade reading assessment and obtain the score they need for a driver's license and (2) all 11th grade students, who are unable to take the U.S. History test required by state law for graduation.
 - Superintendents should have received the OSDE technology capacity survey on March 24. By March 25 at noon, OSDE had already received over 300 responses. The due date for response is March 27 by 9:00 a.m. OSDE needs one survey response per district. Regarding technology, there will be opportunities for district partnership with other partners. A stimulus package moving through Congress should also help.
 - Aaron Espolt and other OSDE staff have been developing Oklahoma's distance learning framework and resources. The information should be on OSDE's website by Friday, March 27, and will be robust and valuable to schools.
 - OSDE has been asked if COVID-19 can survive on paper. The best information available now from the World Health Organization is that any exposure risk is very low. OSDE has also sought guidance on this question from the state epidemiologist.
 - OSDE is still working diligently to find a solution regarding support staff pay issues.
 - Senator Lankford will join the OSDE conference call scheduled for March 27 to discuss the federal response to COVID-19 education issues.

Questions and Answers

- Can teachers and students come back into school buildings to get personal items? OSDE suggests that districts not provide an open window so that lots of people could be coming in at once. Instead, fulfill requests by staggered appointments. Ask individuals to email requests and then coordinate an appointment time. Districts should try to arrange a swift handoff, even curbside. Remember, everyone who comes into a school building leaves a trace of potential contamination or contagion. Schools could also leave doors open so people don't have to repeatedly touch doorknobs or pushbars. Avoid an "all call" because probably everyone has something they want to get back.

- Can teachers teach from their classrooms without students present and broadcast virtual instruction? It's worrisome to think about many teachers in their rooms in a building doing this all at one time. According to the amended SBE order, schools are closed for instruction by teachers for students. Teachers can borrow equipment, including technology, for use at home.
- If the previous district calendar called for school to end on May 1, does the district need to go all the way through May 8? What if the district was scheduled to be off on Good Friday? The SBE order is broad and wide – schools have lots of flexibility. But SBE emphasized May 8 as the earliest day to end school to have a specific window for all. It wants students to recover their lost learning time, so suggest continuing through May 8. There is no need to submit changes in school calendars to OSDE.
- Extracurricular activities and events are included in SBE's amended order, which applies to in-person activities through the May 8 – May 15 window. OSDE and OSB don't have authority over scheduling of state tournaments or events. But it's anticipated that OSSAA is adhering to CDC guidelines. Some things might be able to be done virtually.
- What is the concept behind the waiver request and assurances? SBE's waivers are very broad. There's no longer a requirement for a six-hour instructional day, for example. The assurance document is in exchange for these waivers. OSDE will have expedited review and turnaround of the assurances so the district's distance learning plan can be implemented.
- What is required in the distance learning plans? Do seniors who have enough credits to graduate have to participate? Grades and awarding of credits is primarily a local district decision. To the extent possible, there is to be no negative impact on students graduating – those who are on track now and those who were on track as of March 12. OSDE's framework and guidance will have recommended time for work through the day and the rest of school year. Find what works best for your local district. Are there any mandatory requirements for distance learning? No.
- What subjects are to be covered in a district's distance learning plan? This is not covered in this guidance. It will be determined locally.
- Where can districts get the assurance document? It's in the process of completion and will be out on March 25 or 26. The assurances will be expedited and turned around very quickly. The assurance document will have a question included about using tools for distance learning. The entire document will be as brief as possible.
- How will truancy and attendance be treated? The ADA and ADM timeframes have been shortened from the beginning of the school year through March 12. Attendance isn't really required from a state perspective. Some districts have local attendance policies they will have to address.

Special Education

- As to initial evaluations, SDE will put out guidance on March 27. Nothing about timelines in the IDEA changes. If an initial evaluation must be done in person, it has to wait. As it stands, if there's a referral for an initial evaluation, do a Review of Existing Data, meet and decide if further assessment is needed. If so, get parent consent and try to complete within 45 school days. If that can't be done, SDE and OSEP recognize these are exceptional circumstances. Make sure and communicate with parents.

- What about paras? Can paras work with students in their homes? This is an IEP team decision and parent decision. Todd Loftin doesn't think this is best. Services will look different from student to student. IEP teams will decide how services will look. If a student needs a person with them, how could something comparable to that be done? What about technology? SDE is working on guidance on other ways to deliver learning. Remember to look at what the IEP says about who provides instruction. If the IEP says that a certified person provides it, then that's the expectation, instead of looking to a noncertified para to provide it. The expectations for distance learning are not for students to be working for x hours per day at a desk getting instruction.

Child Nutrition

- What waivers are still outstanding? OSDE submitted a second request for waiver for 50% free and reduced requirements by site today. Hoping that this second request takes care of it. Today got a nationwide meal pattern waiver. SDE has to do lots of tracking for that one. Information will go out to everyone on March 26. Districts will have to send things back to SDE for the meal pattern waiver. Information about the nationwide waiver for enrichment programs already went out. All of these nutrition flexibilities will be very important with family job losses. Will want to address this with Senator Lankford Friday.
- How can nutrition programs be continued if a shelter in place order goes into effect? This depends on what the shelter in place order says. According to Governor Stitt's order of March 24, school meal programs continue and are exempt from the order.
- When the 2019-20 school year ends, do nutrition programs end? NO, the seamless summer option permits meal programs to continue.
- Does each child have to be present for parents to pick up meals? Still no federal answer. At this time, yes, the child must be present. OSDE has been asking for clarification for quite some time.

Emergency Rule – Extension of Emergency Certification

- What does progress toward standard certification look like? No exact answer today.

Driver's Licenses and 8th Grade Assessment

- The Department of Safety Transportation will take the emergency rule adopted today and apply that to relevant students.

Personal Financial Literacy

- SBE can't waive the requirement to complete personal financial literacy instruction, but local districts get to determine if students have completed the curriculum.

OETA

- What is OETA expected to offer? It has a large catalog of student and children programming – grade and subject specific. OSDE folks are working with OETA to see what's being taught there so can decide what is appropriate to offer. OETA is clearing daytime programming to offer instruction.

Students Returning Work

- What if students don't return work sent home as part of distance learning? Draw on the same strategies you use when students are in school. Focus on your relationship with child. Adapt what works in a physical setting to virtual setting. There will probably be more crossover than you think.

Mental Health Issues

- There are many stressors during this crisis. Are there any plans to provide additional resources and supports for schools and families? SDE addresses SEL in the distance learning framework. Many SDE folks are also working with counselors to continue the kinds of things done in the physical setting in distance learning settings. Everyone is feeling an impact of some sort during this crisis. Loss of jobs and uncertainty of income greatly impact families. Remember, we have the same abuse and neglect reporting obligations now as before.

Closing Remarks

- Has confidence that the folks on the call will think through the things needed as we move on. Although we may not anticipate everything, we'll be flexible, communicate and share info to help others and the state find answers.
- This call was recorded, as are all, and can be found on the OSDE YouTube site.
- Get the technology capacity surveys in.
- OSDE is hearing incredible stories about graduation ideas and other issues.

Monday, March 23, 2020

- Compliments to those providing meals to students and those planning to do so.
- Will propose a continuous learning plan to complete the remainder of the 2019-20 school year to the State Board of Education at a special meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, at 9:30 a.m. The SBE meeting will be live-streamed on SDE's Facebook page.
- Under this plan, school buildings wouldn't reopen for student instruction and extracurricular activities wouldn't be held.
- The mode of instruction would be with distance learning. "While the education of schoolchildren will resume with distance learning, there will not be traditional, in-person instruction or extracurricular activities, instead following critical safety guidance from the Centers for Disease Control with regard to social distancing for students, staff and school families." From SDE press release: <https://sde.ok.gov/newsblog/2020-03-23/hofmeister-proposes-state-board-education-approve-continuous-learning-students>
- Everyone would continue to follow critical CDC safety guidance re: social distancing and sheltering at home, if ordered.
- Under this plan, districts would be required to use all effort to provide continued instruction for students through alternative delivery methods.
- SDE is in the process of providing frameworks to districts about distance learning.
- Whether to provide credits for instruction since the emergency declaration is a local decision.
- SDE doesn't want any negative impact to students who were on track to graduate prior to emergency declaration.
- At the March 25 meeting, SBE will consider waivers for:

- Required instructional hours and days
- Required minimum length of school day
- Accreditation
- Restrictions on funds, specifically textbooks
- RSA
- PE requirements
- ADA March 1 date
- TLE requirements
- School Board member training requirements
- At the meeting, SBE will consider an emergency rule providing a medical exemption for all students for mandatory exams. This is intended to provide an exemption from the state law requirement for a U.S. History assessment. Federal Assessment and Accountability waivers for all federally-mandated assessments were granted last week.
- Concerning the 8th grade reading assessment and drivers' licenses, because the 8th grade assessment is not being administered, SDE and the Department of Public Safety will be looking for another solution. DPS is meeting on this.
- School districts shouldn't administer the end of year RSA assessment. Use other data gathered throughout the year (diagnostic screener results, mid-year RSA assessment data, etc.) to help guide promotion/retention decisions; virtual meetings only for Student Reading Proficiency Teams (SRPTs) instead of in person.
- SDE will take an emergency rule regarding emergency certification to SBE on Wednesday. It would provide a third year for emergency certified teachers completing their second year of emergency certification with a recommendation from their district and if the teacher is making progress toward regular certification. Also, the Governor's recent executive order re continuation/extension of licenses will cover this group of teachers for its timeline plus 14 days.
- SDE will want assurances from school districts in exchange for the flexibilities SBE may authorize. SDE doesn't anticipate a long document, but it is expected to cover, among other things, assurances concerning compliance with requirements for students with disabilities.

Child Nutrition:

- As of the time of the conference call, districts can't provide Saturday and Sunday breakfasts.
- School districts with the seamless summer option can provide breakfast and lunch five days per week. At this time, if a district wants to start the meals on Tuesdays instead of Mondays, they can only provide the meals through Friday – the last workday of the week.
- If already approved for at risk program free and reduced, districts can claim a third meal. SDE will give further guidance about how to claim this later.
- No answer yet whether kids have to be in the car with their parent to get their meal or whether the parent alone can get it.
- SDE is setting up a call for Tuesday about the Meals to You Program. If a school is eligible, it can opt into this program. It covers meals mailed directly to families, five at once. The SD applies on behalf of children. A small part of the application must be done by parents. There will be more info after the Tuesday call.
- If Oklahoma gets a "stay at home" order later, schools can still deliver meals depending on the language of the order put in place. SDE will keep working on this.
- There have been some issues getting milk for schools/students. SDE has submitted a meal pattern flexibility waiver.

Special Education:

- Safety is the immediate priority.
- Education will be provided in Phase 2, beginning April 6, to the most appropriate extent possible.
- SDE will put out guidance addressing behavior management, related services, secondary transition and holding virtual IEP meetings.
- SDE will know more about IDEA finance issues after a Tuesday call.
- SDE will put the Supplemental Fact Sheet issued by OCR and OSEP on March 21 on the SDE website.
- Regarding IDEA timelines, the US Department of Education has no authority to waive timelines set out in federal law. Only Congress can do that. So, the timelines are still in place.
- SDE encourages virtual meetings to meet timelines, and districts should support teachers as they try to schedule and hold those meetings.
- District personnel should be in contact with the parents of students with disabilities to let them know what the district will be doing about meetings and services. After schools reopen, districts will assess students and consider the need for “compensatory education.”
- Expect guidance on virtual IEP team meetings soon. There are components in EdPlan that help with this.
- Other organizations are also putting out helpful information. So check and see what your professional associations have issued.
- Phone and video conferences are fine for IEP meetings with parent agreement.
- Expect flexibility on state complaint and due process hearing timelines.
- An amendment to an IEP doesn’t require a meeting. Teacher and parent can agree to the change, revise the IEP and then send the revision to all IEP team members. All IEPs do not need to be changed because of the closure of all schools.
- IEP and other meetings CAN be held at this time through April 5.
- Schools should also think about Extended School Year needs and how ESY might be provided. Could be done virtually.

Other Questions/Answers:

- For new graduates who might not be able to take a certification test due to COVID-19, it’s a good idea to apply for emergency status.
- Personal Financial Literacy and CPR are state graduation requirements, so the SBE can’t just waive the requirements. However, districts can decide whether their graduating students (and others) completed the necessary curriculum.
- SDE is seeking a waiver from SBE for the completion of evaluations for teachers for 2019-20.
- Do districts need to apply for all these waivers? No, the waiver requests being taken to SBE for approval don’t require districts to submit an application. Like school calendar, SDE is asking for across the board waivers for all so there is no need for individual requests.
- SDE is seeking an audit waiver that waives the requirements for an audit acknowledgment form from each local board of education.
- SDE is seeking a waiver for accreditation audits for end of year. The emergency drill requirement falls under this.

Distance Learning:

- Many students don't have devices or connectivity. SDE understand this. Districts are in different places on this. SDE won't be requiring one specific thing from all districts beginning April 6. SDE will be providing a framework, grade by grade. It's almost complete and will be ready this week. Begin planning now within districts. Don't gather in person with teachers to discuss. SBE will enter a new order about what are permissible activities within schools at March 25 meeting,
- What about equity? SDE wants to reach as many students as possible and identify where we're not where we want to be. The Career Tech Department will be providing guidance about how career tech students can complete programs. Some districts beginning April 6 may be focusing on enrichment activities. SDE will be working with other professional organizations on distance learning and with PBS and other outside organizations.
- What is being done on effort to seek enhanced connectivity? SDE is looking at potential federal relief. This is a state level issue and not something that districts can address alone. There is no complete answer at this time. Districts need to be working on their distance learning options.
- What about student grades? SDE will answer this after other groups and leaders (Higher Ed, guidance counselors and principals) have weighed in on this. SDE doesn't want to create unintended consequences by any action it takes. Grades will be addressed in a later FAQ.
- Cox Communication is offering 30 days' free Internet to low income families.
- Districts need to be creative about graduations. Will ask districts to share what they're planning. Anticipate limits on group size meetings will still be in place at graduation time so virtual options will be needed.
- What about virtual PD for staff? Expect SBE to lift the current prohibition on PD at March 25 meeting. SDE will encourage districts to start this PD in preparation for distance learning as long as PD is done virtually, etc.
- SDE is in daily discussions re summer school and whether it will be doable in person. Virus may not peak until August or even January in Oklahoma. Think about how to use the summer, but there's still so much up in the air. Can provide support and connection at least. Also think about fall. If there are still COVID-19 concerns then, we'll be working on connectivity and other issues. If not ultimately needed in connection with this virus, then will be a step ahead for later.
- Individuals who facilitate student enrollment can be identified currently as performing an essential administrative function.
- What about support personnel pay? Some support employees may not be needed for work in Phase 2, beginning April 6. It's inequitable that some may be working and paid and others may not be working and paid. Legislators are not as on top of this issue of pay now because they're not in session. Is there a federal remedy? Perhaps. Districts will need to tighten their belts. 2020-21 will be a tough financial year, at least from a state budget perspective. This support pay issue is for districts to decide now. There is no statewide answer at this time.
- In conclusion, shift gears to distance learning. Do that work other than in person, using whatever media possible. Work on getting kids who were on track before graduated. Keep up with IDEA guidelines. Get ready to finish the school year with help from new partners.
- Next SDE conference call is March 25 at 3:00 p.m.

Friday, March 20, 2020

- Two-week closure after spring break is very important to reduce spread of virus. Only very essential functions can be performed at school. Nonessential staff should stay at home. Future planning should be done virtually.
- SDE is working on remedies to be able to provide pay for support personnel.
 - Legislature has closed, so this probably won't happen as quickly as desired.
 - Don't call staff back in.
 - SDE said school districts can liberally award leave to these personnel. School districts may have ability to award additional 10 days sick leave for support and ten days emergency leave. This is a local decision. Seek your district's legal counsel for more clarity on what you can and can't do.
 - Boards should decide sick leave issues but could grant authority to Superintendent to decide that between board meetings.
 - Federally funded employees should be treated the same as state funded employees.
- This time is all about safety. Beginning April 6, schools will be planning to transition into how to continue learning, enable graduation, facilitate scholarships, etc. Think now about planning, especially for graduation but also about learning for all others.
- SDE has submitted a waiver for assessment and told vendors not to ship tests.
 - If no assessments, there will be no school report cards.
 - SDE will address RSA and 8th grade reading/driver licenses in a later call.
 - Info about how to take AP tests at home will be available by March 26.
 - DOE is prepared to expedite waiver requests on assessment and accountability.
- Distance learning is going to look different in different places. Understand this will be very challenging for somewhere IT is lacking. SDE will be seeking federal assistance and looking at how to do distance learning for younger students. Be creative and plan-- Must be done remotely.
 - Look for a survey that will be coming about student connectivity. Return it quickly to SDE.
 - Will enable use of RSA funds for mobile devices and mobile hot spots.
 - Will provide guidance about which federal funds can and can't be used for distance learning.
 - SDE will be sending out guidance for students with special needs and distance learning.
 - It is unlikely that school buildings will be open for class in a typical way beginning April 6, so make plans now about how you'll deliver distance learning.
 - SDE will provide more formal info about distance learning, beginning with the survey. They're not going to make you figure it all out for yourself.
 - Distance learning really won't be equitable but try to serve everyone.
 - SDE wants distance learning for students to begin no earlier than April 6 in event schools can't reopen in a typical way. The expectations for schools are being established.
 - Enrichment may be initially what can be provided.
- In schools, act as if you're a virus carrier in doing everyday things to protect others from transmission.
- Custodians can perform essential functions, but don't bring all custodians in to do deep cleaning everywhere. Do cleaning to support essential functions only.
- No school district-provided instruction until April 6.
- Medication can be picked up at school district office - that would be an essential function.
- SBE at March 25 meeting will take up lots of waiver issues, including waiver for CPR requirements, school calendar, etc.

- If parents ask teachers for assistance, teachers can voluntarily do that. Or teachers can voluntarily reach out to parents, without parent request.
- Child Nutrition - Recommend that schools apply for seamless summer option (SSO) for child nutrition now
 - School nutrition waiver for schools below 50% hasn't been approved yet.
 - Can serve meals to students age 19 if they're enrolled and attending, like a student who was retained in an earlier grade.
 - There are special nutrition age rules for students with disabilities.
 - For more information, you can access the most current details [here](#).
- Superintendent Hofmeister encourages everyone to do what's right. Appreciates leadership.
- Accreditation waivers will be on SBE agenda March 25.
- No principals or secretaries should be in school buildings to answer calls, and no teachers at school. These people are necessary for the second phase of this effort, beginning April 6.

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

- New State Department of Health website - www.Coronavirus.health.ok.gov
- New SDE webpages - www.sde.ok.gov/Coronavirus
- Big factor in mandatory school closing was grandparents raising grandchildren and number of people with suppressed immune systems. Also, new guidance from CDC and White House. Mostly community spread of virus.
- Dates for school closures are March 17 with return on April 6. SBE is meeting March 25 and will consider extension. Only limited ability to do school work now. Intended to allow essential support employee duties that could enable pay to continue.
 - Cites state law RE: continued teacher pay - Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 6-101(H) ("No school district or any member of a board of education shall be liable for the payment of compensation to any teacher or administrator for the unexpired term of any contract if the school building to which the teacher or administrator has been assigned is destroyed by accident, storm, fire, or otherwise and it becomes necessary to close the school because of inability to secure a suitable building or buildings for continuation of school. **Teachers and administrators shall be entitled to pay for any time lost when school is closed on account of epidemics or otherwise when an order for such closing has been issued by a health officer authorized by law to issue the order.**")
 - SDE engaged with Legislature right now to get something done regarding continued support employee pay for support employees who aren't working.
 - Substitute pay - not sure there will be a legislative remedy for this.
- Virtual schools are also closed to protect staff who would see students and students who might receive in-person services.
- There are emergency provisions that can only be accessed in statewide closure, like teacher pay.
- Instructional activities must cease given language of SBE's motion.
- Can students participate in extracurricular practice if not required? Answer is no.
- IDEA timelines are still in place. IEP meetings can/should be held immediately upon return to school. Communicate with parents about how meetings that are coming up during closure will be handled. During this 10-school day closure period, MEEGS and IEP meetings can't take place under SBE's language about permissible activities. [PLEASE NOTE that SDE changed its position on this in a subsequent FAQ.]

- SDE will have more definitive language about assessment after March 25 SBE meeting.
- Seeking legislative solution on how to pay support employees who aren't working.
- Will be taking to March 25 SBE meeting whether missed days due to closure must be made up.
- If below 50% (by site) can't do free and reduced unless waiver is approved or federal law is changed per bill currently moving through Congress. If elementary is over 50% but feeder middle and high schools are under, all three schools could do free and reduced.
- Waiver to serve two meals at once is being submitted to Dept of Ag today.
- Would SBE extend two years for emergency certified teachers if Legislature isn't able to complete the bill moving through the process? Yes, would consider that.
- If other support staff (not child nutrition) are used to prepare meals, then they can be paid.
- Currently unsure about whether school building projects can continue during this closure.
- Teachers can't "formally" continue instruction during this time. Don't want anything that seems like it's required by their districts. Look at specific SBE-approved motion to see what's permitted. SDE won't be policing this, though.
- Don't vote to change 2019-20 school calendars to reflect this situation at this time. Wait until after March 25 SBE meeting.
- SDE plans to send updated FAQ out today.
- Get rid of expired consumables that expire during closure. Don't serve them.
- Students 18 and under attending Oklahoma School for the Deaf and Oklahoma School for the Blind can get meals in their resident districts.
- If a student who has COVID 19 and school district wants to address that issue with school community, SDE will put out relevant HIPAA and FERPA info in next FAQ to guide them. [SDE subsequently did this.]
- Districts don't need a declaration from a state health official to pay teachers. This is per state statute, Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 6-101(H).
- OEQA is putting online info about certification tests. Check that to see if scheduled test will take place. SDE Certification office will be closed during closure period.

Friday, March 13, 2020 – Before SBE closure order

- Limit gatherings - no large groups of students in and out of school (more than 100?) such as in halls, cafeterias, etc.
- Distance Learning - Not recommending all districts shift to distance learning to make up days because of equity issues (unless your district is prepared for that and has addressed equity issues).
- Assessment - the state is exploring flexibility in assessment in case needed; no decisions have been made yet.
- Possible Reports to SDE - School Districts should prepare for submissions they might have to make to SDE for student emergency medical situations for assessment.
- Community transmission - is of unknown origin;
 - if 2 community transmissions occur in community, there is a presumption that 1% of community members have coronavirus (based on model of 800,000-member community like Tulsa)
 - When community has that situation, school should close, perhaps for remainder of school year.

- Community transmission doesn't include cases when you can trace origin or those involving travel.
- Child Nutrition - Recommend that schools apply for seamless summer option (SSO) for child nutrition now
- SDE has asked for waivers already for communal feeding and for meal pattern flexibility.
- SDE preparing to ask for waiver for chronic absenteeism regarding date range (through March 1 only)
- At this time there isn't a recommendation for stopping school transportation.
- If schools close for remainder of school year, schools will still get state aid as expected.
- If large scale school closure, SBE has authority to waive 180 days or 1080 hours requirements.
- There will be a similar SDE call every week..
- Schools, make sure you put out the most current info to school community that is consistent with CDC.
- SDE working with College Board to create emergency testing window for students to take ACT.
- CDC has put out a document with tiered levels of response for districts in different situations (more current than the first link in SDE's FAQ issued March 12).