

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.