

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](https://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](http://osdeconnect.ok.gov) and [oeta.tv](http://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.
- The SBE approved a rule providing an emergency medical exemption for (1) all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, who are unable to take the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading assessment and obtain the score they

need for a driver's license and (2) all 11<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading assessment and drivers' licenses, because the 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

- SDE 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](http://www.Coronavirus.health.ok.gov)
- New SDE webpages - [www.sde.ok.gov/Coronavirus](http://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 SDE 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).