

Superintendents' Question Set B

Curriculum and Instruction

1. "What are the plans for the new Summer Reading Camps and Summer Achievement Programs for K-3rd graders that are non-proficient in reading?" The last benchmark assessment was administered to our students in December. If that data is used to invite students to the Summer Reading Camp, then our number of students could be greatly inflated. See Technical Guidance Manual pg. 6 under Additional Guidance and Other Considerations
2. What about credential testing for CT? See Technical Guidance Manual pg. 3 under Earning Credits and Graduation Requirements
3. If we go to Pass/Fail, will this be okay for AHSAA in determining 8th and 9th grade eligibility next year? See Technical Guidance Manual on pg. 3 under AHSAA/NCAA Considerations
4. What does in "good standing" mean for seniors? Passing with 60 higher? Follow LEA grading policy. This is not determined by ALSDE.
5. What are the boundaries for using fourth nine-weeks for those students who want to enhance their grades beyond "in good standing"? Follow your LEA policies and procedures for credit advancement and/or enrichment/GPA opportunities.
6. What are the specific requirements for seniors? Are we only focusing on courses needed to meet graduation requirements? For those classes not required for graduation, can districts move forward with granting credit and issuing a final grade? See Limited Scope of Delivery information on the LEA Academic Continuity Plan.
7. What are the expectations for grading assignments, especially for students who have to have hard copies? Districts will determine this component in their LEA Academic Continuity Plan.
8. Here are the thoughts of some rural superintendents in the Wiregrass. We would like for this option to be considered. There is no way for us to do virtual education. Even if we had devices and hotspots for all our students, there are places in our counties where those hotspots won't work. There is no service. You know this from where you live. So... if we can't do virtual, we would need to make packets. Deliver them. Who knows who does the packet, if it even gets done. We won't get them all back. What teacher is going to want to touch the packets because who knows if anyone in the home has the virus? It would be a

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nightmare having to Lysol all those pages so teachers could handle them. We say give us the option to just graduate the seniors who are on track to graduate. Forget school for this next 6-7 weeks for the others. Come back next year and meet the kids where they are. Teachers are experts at that anyway. We could make up this time by going more days next school year, if needed. I know this option might not be right for every district, but for Geneva Co, Coffee Co, Dale Co, etc., it is what's best. Let that be an option if we don't physically go back to school this year. I have talked to supers down here, and a lot agree this is our best option. I want to know if there is some way to compile what everyone is doing. I would like to reach out to other districts if they are doing something, we are interested in doing. Kind of a best practice thing... why reinvent the wheel when others are already doing something, they are willing to share. Not to mention, we don't have a lot of time on our hands.

Based on the Governor's State of Emergency orders as of March 26, 2020, schools will reopen in a non-traditional manner beginning April 6. Through the completion of the LEA Academic Continuity Plan, districts have flexibility to develop instructional delivery methods to meet the needs of their students and communities.

9. Are there any stipulations now, based on the situation we are in, that will affect the implementation of the Literacy Act? See Technical Guidance Manual pg. 6 under Additional Guidance and Other Considerations
10. The same concerns but to a lesser degree exist for meeting federal guidelines for LEP or ESL students. We need direction. See Technical Guidance Manual on pg. 6 under English Language Learners
11. Effective instruction for struggling readers is based on direct instruction, observation, and immediate/appropriate feedback to correct errors. If schools are expected to continue services, what resources will be available to support all students? That will be decided by the LEA in their Academic Continuity Plan.
12. Distance learning can be a great resource if available to all students. However, accountability can be an issue. How can we know that students are completing their work without outside assistance? We don't want assignments to become just another worksheet or check off box to say we did something. That will be decided by the LEA in their Academic Continuity Plan.
13. What about the civics test requirement? See Technical Guidance Manual on pg. 4 under Other Alabama-Specific Academic Requirements
14. Will the expectation still be to provide summer camp for non-proficient ELA students in K-3, if so, has money been secured for teacher salaries? Due to the governor issuing a state of emergency with social distancing based on CDC recommendations, we are still waiting on state and federal guidance concerning Alabama's next steps. See Technical Guidance Manual pg. 6 under Additional Guidance and Other Considerations

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15. Would we be expected to provide IT services to our students in their homes if they have issues with their internet and/or device? That will be determined in the LEA Academic Continuity Plan.
16. Will I be required to report the handwriting score this year? (It's called Lexi's Law - 3rd grade has to report proficiency each year) See Technical Guidance Manual on pg. 4 under Other Alabama-Specific Academic Requirements
17. What about the deadlines we have for choosing the new required Reading Assessments? See Technical Guidance Manual pg. 6 under Additional Guidance and Other Considerations
18. As it relates to CT education, what about coop for non-special needs students? We are aware that special need students received a waiver for coop work. See Limited Scope of Delivery for grades 9-11 to determine what the students' "required courses" are for graduation requirements. Based on that determination, contact Jennifer Burt in CTE at jburt@alsde.edu for additional information.

Special Education

1. Will Special Need students be allowed in small groups to participate in programs and receive services on school campuses, if ADPH/CDC are followed? If so, and they special needs students are allowed to come to campus, do we mark their attendance differently in INOW.? No In-person instruction allowed per Dr. Mackey's email on 3-26-2020.
2. How does reopen affect ESS and other vulnerable populations such as, medically fragile children? Systems need clear guidelines from the federal program administrators. (Schools cannot serve a good portion of ESS students virtually; what about additional services such as PT, OT, nurses, counseling) If this is not done legally, systems will be open for a flurry of lawsuits and will be overwhelmed financially. If referring to Alabama's Special Education Services, please see FAQ document that will be posted on ALSDE website by end of day on March 27, 2020.
3. Can ALSDE insert a code into SETS that we can use for late IEPs? See Superintendent Question Set A, as well as SES FAQ document posted on ALSDE website by end of day on March 27, 2020.

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4. According to the Federal Secretary of Education, teachers will be asked to assess the students and determine their need for compensatory services. Will this be based on the standards taught prior to the school closure or will it include standards that were to be taught April-June, that every student did not receive? See Superintendent Question Set A, as well as SES FAQ document posted on ALSDE website by end of day on March 27, 2020

Finance

1. Are there funding sources to continue paying employees who are supported through local funds in light of the fact that we will not receive sales tax dollars?
Yes
2. Can funding be provided to have buildings professionally cleaned and sanitized prior to re-opening?
This is local decision.
3. Can we claim bus route mileage if we are delivering meals and/or delivering/picking up student assignments?
If you are using bus transportation to provide meals, you can determine the cost attributed to that program and allocate accordingly. For student assignments, should be treated as normal transportation.
4. What is the state's thought or possible plan related to loss of funding for public school systems?
We are continuing to monitor the status of our economic situation.
5. Schools are still paying all employees- not collecting substantial amounts of revenue from sales tax and for example School Food Service (not feeding full populations costing a substantial loss in CNP food service revenues). Will losses in CNP be covered by the federal program?
No, however, you can generate revenue through the meal service via alternate programs during school closure.
6. Have there been financial directives or instructions for the planning for school next year? Will we have a shortened year (less days) to allow systems to make up the loss of costs of employees or will we be expected to try to budget by RIF or removing staff members to create a budget that is sustainable.
Currently there are no plans for a shortened school year.
7. Might systems be held harmless in Foundation funding from this year to 2020-2021?

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At this point, it is impossible to predict. The Budget Stabilization Fund serves as a reserve fund source to help supplement the Education Trust Fund during difficult economic times.

8. Will mandates on spending in specific areas be suspended or released for this year and next to allow system to fund the operations without the local revenue?
Send specific request to Mr. Andy Craig.
9. Is there any thought to allowing Title I to use more than 15% in the carryover component? It could help systems with summer school options or help for next school year.
We are hopeful that the CARE Act will offer carryover flexibility.
10. Will there be funding for enhanced summer school?
At present time, no.
11. Can we get additional guidance on procedures and processes for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that is now law? When? How
Once we get guidance from USDOE, we will share it with you.

Human Resources

1. Can teachers be required to participate in professional development while schools are closed?
An LEA superintendent should make decisions based on the needs of the district; however, everyone must adhere to the guidelines issued by ADPH.
2. Will ARI and AMSTI services be available to support?
Yes, ARI and AMSTI can provide virtual assistance.
3. How do we handle contracted services personnel? My paraprofessionals are hired through Kelly services.
Please refer to your contact and contact your local Board attorney for guidance.
4. What about pink slips, especially teachers in year three?
This is a local decision and contact your local Board attorney for guidance.
5. How do LEAs proceed with evaluation processes that are not complete (whether initial referral or re-evaluation)?
6. Will recertification deadlines be extended beyond June 30?
We will be providing guidance in the near future.

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7. Aides will be getting paid during this time, while teachers are doing lesson plans, what is the expectation for aides to work?
This is a local decision.
8. Given the State of Emergency and the Governor's original proclamation that no persons shall suffer loss in pay, what is to keep these persons from not returning to work?
The referenced executive order closed school through April 3rd, school will reopen on April 6th via non-traditional method.
9. If employees decide that they are not returning to work, may be deduct leave?
Follow your policy.
10. If we work all summer will teachers be compensated?
We will not work all summer.
11. May contract periods be altered?
Example: Many non-instructional persons are 187-day employees and through this past Friday have worked 142 days or thereabouts. Can we stop the contract and assign those days to June 1 – July 31 at 45 days? Given the circumstance, this is truly best case scenario for PCS. This gives us plenty of time to prepare.
May require Board approval via Emergency Meeting.
Consult with your local Board attorney; however, it would seem that regularly scheduled workdays that have expired are still considered workdays.
12. If we go back to school. We will have several employees in the high-risk category. How are we going to determine who can and who can't work? Will they be required to take FMLA? Will they be required to have a Doctor's note? This may be a silly question but last week our employees worked on Monday and Tuesday and several were afraid to come because of being high risk.
These are local questions.
13. Are there any different expectations for employees paid with federal dollars?
No
14. Should we expect our units based on ADM to remain the same for next year.
As of today, yes.
15. What can be done for teachers who refuse to return to work due to fear? We can just dock days if it is three days next week, but what if it drags out past next Friday? At what point would it be considered job abandonment? Is that a battle we fight or just not pay them for days missed and expect a Fall/August return.
Consult with your Board attorney and human resources director.

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16. Do we have any indication of how many educators are taking leave based on their own risk and/or being identified as positive?
No
17. Can we require teachers to complete PD during this school closure period? What legal issues could arise if some districts require teachers to work and others don't?
An LEA superintendent should make decisions based on the needs of the district.
18. Will all staff be told to report regardless of age or other factors?
This is a local personnel decision; therefore, refer to your district policies or consult with your Board attorney.
19. How do we handle social distancing in bigger schools?
Not applicable based on prohibition against in-person instruction.
20. What rights do we have if teachers and staff refuse to return out of fear?
This is a local personnel decision; therefore, refer to your district policies or consult with your Board attorney.
21. How will personnel be evaluated this year?
22. This is a local personnel decision; therefore, refer to your district policies or consult with your Board attorney.
23. Are all employees, including hourly, going to be paid based on a regular work week?
It depends, reference to wage and hour guidelines.
24. What about staffing issues if we go virtual? There needs to be some guidance. What will happen with bus drivers, CNP workers, custodial staff, etc. Do we pay those people if their services are not needed - what is legal saying about this? Would they be eligible for the federal stimulus funds related to prolonged unemployment assistance if there was a layoff due to services not needed?
Employees will continue to get paid; however, staffing decisions remain a local decision.
25. How will we (or will we) monitor student attendance? What about employees' attendance?
Student attendance is not required. Employee attendance requirements remain a local decision.
26. What if personnel with underlying health conditions (ex. Lung cancer, heart disease, other lung diseases) scared to return right now but could work from home? Does leave have to be charged or could this be telework? And what about those their job does not lend itself to work from home?
This is a local personnel decision; therefore, refer to your district policies or consult with your Board attorney.

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27. Can we use student workers/interns during this time?
No
28. Also, will we have flexibility in setting hours for staff?
Yes
29. If we can have staff come in and work and respect all the social distancing rules, etc., why couldn't we have a few students come in for instruction if we have them sit 6 ft apart? If they don't have internet how else can we teach them.
Instructional services to students will be provided using the options listed on your LEA Continuity Plan.
30. Find out what teachers and staff will return vs those that will not due to possible health or age conditions.
This can be done at the local level
31. What will the guidelines be for systems where teachers or staff do not return due to fear or underlying considerations, such as; age/ underlying conditions? Systems could end up not having enough staff to handle students. If staff do not come back, what are the system's responses that will hold up legally.
This is a local personnel decision; therefore, refer to your district policies or consult with your Board attorney.

General Questions

1. Will those in teacher Ed programs/students completing internships be given grace due to this circumstance and still be provided certification for the fall?
Yes
2. State Reporting - Cohort and Dropout reporting will that still be expected to be completed by June 5th?
No, there will be an extension.
3. If we are ready, can we start online instruction on April 6 rather than waiting to April 13?
Or, what is "go" date?
Yes
4. INOW - do we change the calendar - if so, what are the guides?
Further guidance will be provided later.
5. Spring break is currently not reflected as attendance days so, I can leave it alone - but what about the closure days?
The closure days qualify for automatic attendance waivers.

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6. State Reporting - Cohort and Dropout reporting will that still be expected
Further guidance will be provided later.
7. Can we provide unfiltered Hot Spots to families? I realize if they go to Spectrum and family picks one up they are not filtered, but if the school system provides an unfiltered hot spot they may blame us if students get to sites. With erase saying we are providing filtered Internet - does this not apply during this time?
This is an LEA discussion and should be addressed in your LEA Academic Continuity Plan.
8. I understand the status of graduation is unclear at this time, but what about venue rentals? Should we try to book later dates to prevent losing funds? This will also apply to prom venue rentals.
Check with your contract and consult with your Board attorneys.
9. Do we have recording devices that will allow us to record teachings and duplicate them in mass for areas without Internet? It is cheaper for me/folks to get DVDs than MI-FIs or a satellite connection.
This is a local decision.
10. When to reopen is critical. If we reopen too soon; schools cannot apply social distancing. If new outbreaks start; then we will all be set backward from fear for employees and parents.
You are correct. Thank you for your feedback.
11. What will the guidelines be should parents choose to keep students out rather than risk infections? I.e. Attendance, moving forward to the next grade.
Schools will not reopen in the traditional manner per Governor Ivey's press conference on March 26, 2020.
12. What does reopen mean? Having all children come to school/ providing some instruction half days to limit the number of students in a setting at one time/ virtual/ packets...
Schools will not reopen in the traditional manner per Governor Ivey's press conference on March 26, 2020. For all of the details, log in to the recording.
This is an LEA discussion and should be addressed in your LEA Academic Continuity Plan.
13. Will ALSDE issue school calendar for 2020-2021 or will we still have local control?
Yes – local control unless the Legislators pass a bill. Stay tuned...
14. Are we going to be consistent across districts with a non-traditional school structure? For example, how often we require educators to work, meet, etc.?
That will be determined by local districts in conjunction with local board attorney guidance.

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15. It seems pretty clear that we will not reopen schools in the traditional method! How soon can we get this information as I hope we can get it before the news outlets.
Posted on ALSDE website as of March 27, 2020
16. What are the expectations for Report Card?
Need clarification – student, school, or LEA?
17. Will there be a set date when school will reopen?
Yes, beginning April 6, 2020, per the Governor's press conference on March 26, 2020.
18. Is the legislature prepared to give an extension on the Literacy Act?
We are not at liberty to speak for the Legislators.
19. What is the appropriate dilution rate for sanitizing surfaces?
See CDC Guidance in Technical Assistance Manual on pg. 7 under Cleaning of School Facilities
20. Is there any way we can get all food service workers tested so we don't end up with the Louisiana situation?
COVID-19 testing is determined by health officials.
21. What about April 6th forward? Excused absences, nothing marked like we do the virtual students, everyone participating marked present vs those not participating as absent (excused vs unexcused).
See Dr. Mackey's email on March 26, 2020 regarding absences beginning April 6, 2020, when schools reopen in the non-traditional manner.