



Frequently Asked Questions - Update March 19, 2020

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Instruction - What does instructional continuity mean?

“Instructional Continuity” is a phrase introduced by the Texas Education Agency that refers to the development of a specific plan to address “high absenteeism or school closures for short-term or long-term periods of time.” As we receive more guidance from TEA, the district will roll out more specific steps to meet the guidelines from the agency. At this time, Austin ISD is working to ensure our students, families, and staff remain safe and healthy in a time of significant disruption. The district is attending to our students and our community’s basic needs first (e.g. prioritizing our students’ access to food) while developing and distributing resources for engaging students in learning activities.

Instruction - How will parents receive learning standards, and resources after spring break or once school starts on April 6? And, how will learning continue?

AISD is crafting resources for the home setting that provide connections and whole child support. Resources will be available online. We are also preparing additional resources and providing professional learning for teachers and staff to engage with students in this new mode.

Instruction - What is happening with Extra Curricular and Co-curricular Classes?

We are assessing how to best address these areas.

Instruction - How students in special education receive instruction?

The needs of special education students are a priority and we are working to provide innovative ways to support students' individualized needs while keeping health and safety foremost.

Student Internet Access: Will our students have 1:1 and Internet access?

Currently, 1:1 devices have been provided to students in grades 8-12 and in five middle schools. 7th and 8th grade students at these middle schools also have internet access through the support of Verizon. 2,000 hotspots have also been provided in our high schools through support from Sprint. 2,000 additional hotspots have been provided to middle school libraries for student distribution.

AISD has installed hot spots on our buses and will be situated throughout our city for students and staff to access.

Accountability - Do we have updates on EOC, STAAR, graduation requirements, TELPAS, etc.?

The Governor waived state law and requested a waiver from the United States Department of Education (USDE) for all testing requirements for this year. STAAR will

not be administered by Texas Education Agency (TEA) this year. We will receive guidance from TEA for grade level promotion and other issues related to this assessment decision (e.g. graduating seniors this year, and in future years). TEA will also be extending the TELPAS window for testing and processing and will ask for a waiver from the USDE for local determinations to be used to guide English Language determinations this year. The TEA communicated to expect more flexibility on TELPAS as it continues to review the situation.

Child Nutrition - Will we continue to provide breakfast and lunch for students?

Starting March 23, meals will be available Monday-Friday. Curbside meals will be offered at 16 sites. Austin ISD school buses will deliver meals throughout the community at 54 locations. Sites were chosen based on 50 percent or more students receiving meal benefits. We will have two different types of service:

1. Curbside- Parents/caregivers drive up in the parent drop off line to receive free, chilled lunches for each child and parent/caregiver in the car to take home and re-heat. Curbside meal sites, open Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Families are advised to stay in their cars and not enter buildings during meal pick up.
2. Delivery - in partnership with the Transportation Department, four (4) kitchens will produce chilled lunches to load on to busses and delivery in the community to children and parents/caregivers to take home and re-heat.

As of March 18, the following locations have been identified for curbside service:

East Austin

Blanton, Blackshear and Govalle elementary schools and Eastside Memorial Early College High School

North Austin

Cook Elementary School, Burnet and Dobie middle schools

Northeast Austin

TA Brown Elementary School and LBJ Early College High School

South Central Austin

Dawson and Linder elementary schools and Crockett Early College High School

Southeast Austin

Houston, Perez and Pleasant Hill elementary schools and Akins Early College High School

Food service staff are also arranging with the food bank for the non-serving sites to pack boxes of food for food bank distribution through our transportation teams, so everyone will be involved with creating food access.

Student Health Services - Will students continue to have access to TeleHealth and how do they access it?

Due to the threat of COVID-19 and the growing need for medical care, Virtual Care for Kids is making every effort to expand care to children across the state to help prevent the spread of the virus. In addition to waiving all copays for telemedicine visits, all self-pay visits will now be discounted to \$50. Patients with Medicaid will be offered FREE or low-cost telemedicine visits. The average wait for a virtual provider is currently 2 minutes or less. No need to expose your family to COVID-19. Visits are accessible FROM HOME on any smartphone, tablet, or computer. On-demand telemedicine visits are available from 9 AM - 9 PM every day of the week through [Urgent Care for Kids](#).

Student Health Services - Will students have access to Teletherapy, Mental Health Services?

Austin ISD's school-based mental health partner, Vida Clinic, is offering teletherapy services to the Austin ISD community beginning Wednesday, March 18. These services will allow adults and students to access quality mental health services right from their own homes. To schedule an appointment, visit <https://vidaclinic.org/virtualvida/> or contact our Vida Clinic Care Team at 512-518-2209 or by email at vidacare@vidaclinic.org.

Student Health Services - How will we utilize our Seton nurses during this time?

AISSD is collaborating with Seton to identify how health services staff can best support students during this time.

Facilities - What are we doing to keep facilities clean and safe?

Custodial and child nutrition staff will support cleaning and disinfecting our facilities to ensure readiness when students and staff return. This work was initiated during spring break. The custodians will provide a "green product" to food service managers to use. Our food service-grade sanitizer products will also work to clean and disinfect per the EPA standards.

Facilities - When and how will facilities be cleaned?

We are asking custodial staff to report to work to continue working on cleaning, disinfecting and applying Razor Antimicrobial Coating at campuses throughout the week. Head Custodians will ensure disinfecting all touch points to include door knobs, push bars, front office counter tops, desk tops, classroom student desk, tables, sink areas, counter tops, cafeteria tables, hand washing areas, rest rooms, shower locker areas, gym matting, weight rooms, stairway rails, bleacher rails, drinking fountains, computer keyboards, library counter tops, book return areas, tables and all other touch points. Once all areas have been disinfected, they will utilize the GenEon mist foggers applying the Razor antimicrobial coating that will protect surfaces for up to 90 days. In order to be proactive, custodial staff have been informed to continue disinfecting daily and repeat utilizing the GeEon Mist fogger and Razor antimicrobial coating every 80 days.

We are following the new requirements from Austin Public Health, and minimizing staff to 10 or less. Any school that has a staff larger than 10 people must make sure there are no more than 10 people in each separate/single space.

Facilities - Will construction continue this semester and summer as planned?

Yes. We expect to continue with construction projects as scheduled and will work with contractors to monitor each site and provide timely guidance as we receive it. We are also asking contractors to make changes to advance projects while adhering to the guidance provided by the city, county and state. These changes include: Requiring alternating breaks by trade on site, moving all meetings to video conferencing, prohibiting site tours, adding hand sanitizing and wash stations at each wing of site and at key points of entry, job hazard analysis and the requirement of written plans submitted to AISD by each general contractor detailing their adopted COVID-19 project site protocols.

Districtwide Tools - What are the expectations for using district wide tools?

All staff are required to use common technology tools. Please ensure that you and your staff receive training and are able to use BLEND, Zoom, Teams, Google Suite, and MS Office. Campuses and departments may use other tools, however, these are regarded as core, required tools.

Campus Logistics for staff- When will we go back to school?

At this time, Austin ISD cancelled classes through April 3. We are aware of the statewide action Governor Abbott took Thursday 3/19/2020, which mirrored actions taken at AISD through April 3. Please know that we may need to cancel classes for a longer period of time, and students may not be allowed to return to school. More information is forthcoming as we receive updates from city, county and state officials.

Work Expectations - Can we require our staff to report to work on Monday, March 23?

No. Staff, including supervisors, should not physically report until the latter part of the week and with controlled access, unless specified by the supervisor. Supervisors will communicate expectations for next week to every employee within their department.

Work Expectations - What are the modified reporting and assignment schedules for staff?

The safety of our staff is critical. As such, before engaging in any modified schedule, supervisors must review expectations such as no gatherings of more than 10. All workers regardless of the work they engage in must practice washing soiled hands, avoiding contact with eyes, nose, and mouth with soiled hands, etc. Add'l guidance can be found at austinisd.org/coronavirus.

Central Office:

No central staff member should remain on site on Monday, March 23 unless directed to do so. This day will be dedicated to planning and working towards a telecommuting environment. Supervisors should communicate this and other expectations to their staff no later than Friday, March 20. Additional teleworking set up and guidelines for staff members at our central office, including equipment distribution for staff lacking resources to maintain essential district functions, will be distributed beginning this week and continue throughout the first week.

Campus:

No campus staff member, including principals, should report to campus on Monday, March 23 unless approved by their principal to do so. Principals must adhere to city ordinances at all times. Principals will receive a checklist from their principal supervisor that must be completed by the end of the first week. Principals must communicate expectations regarding the first week following spring break to their staff no later than Friday, March 20. Two weeks have been provided to plan and prepare to move to an online distance learning environment. Keep in mind that custodial staff may be called in to the campus or other sites to support district operations.

Other Essential Staff:

Essential staff in payroll, human resources, transportation, facilities (custodial/maintenance), child nutrition, etc. may be required to physically report to work locations on Monday as determined by their supervisors to ensure the

continuity of business operations. Supervisors must communicate expectations for reporting no later than Friday, March 20.

Work Expectations - What are the expectations for principals and supervisors for the first week following spring break?

Principal/supervisors should plan to participate in an online meeting on a routine basis to gather and receive critical questions and information.

Telework - How do we determine who should telework?

We are finalizing telecommuting guidelines which will include how to assess who is able to telework, employee expectations, and guidance for setting up telecommuting workspaces.

Compensation - Will full-time, part-time, or other staff continue to be paid?

The Board of Trustees has passed a resolution that supports continued compensation. AISD will provide compensation to regular full time and part time employees for the district wide closure on Friday, March 13 and continue to keep our regular employees actively employed and compensated. However, in some situations an employee's assignment may look different as the extenuating circumstances have led us to rethink how to provide services to our students and staff.

Benefits - Will employees continue to be paid when they exhaust their leave?

Yes. We are finalizing an Emergency Pay Plan that will be shared with all employees on our district website and the Benefits page within the first week following spring break. In general, AISD will provide up to 30 days of emergency pay to employees affected by COVID-19.

Benefits for staff - Will other benefits continue?

Employees who are currently enrolled in an AISD Benefits Plan will continue to receive health benefits so long as employee premiums are paid. AISD is committed to our employee's health and will continue its monthly contribution to employees benefits. AISD will also continue providing other benefits such as the Employee Assistance Program, RediMD, Leave Benefits, etc. AISD has also added an Emergency Leave Pay Plan that will provide full compensation to our employees affected by COVID-19.

Benefits for staff- Do all employees have access to RediMD

Employees are highly encouraged to access RediMD and avoid overwhelming the Emergency Rooms unless it is necessary. Through RediMD employees receive quality medical care services with live, face-to-face diagnosis and treatment. Employees can see and speak with a medical professional through their computer, tablet, smartphone

or over the phone. Add'l information regarding copays, set up, etc. can be found at <https://www.austinisd.org/hr/benefits/redi-md>.

Talent Acquisition - Will we continue to hire for vacancies?

Yes. The Talent Acquisition Office intends to continue filling vacancies as well as planning for staffing needs in the coming school year. As such, the Talent Acquisition Office is developing a plan for virtual recruiting, candidate sourcing, and hiring to the extent possible.