

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>August 25, 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Preparing for Hurricane Laura</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Share with appropriate administrators and emergency response staff</b>

The purpose of this communication is to provide information for local education agencies (LEAs) related to the predicted landfall of Hurricane Laura. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will work with your LEA and local Education Service Center (ESC) to ensure students and staff are safe, policies and processes from the agency are clear, and the recovery – if needed – is efficient and effective.

The following table outlines important information for LEAs related to critical next steps, how to communicate with TEA, and key preparedness resources:

### Critical Next Steps for LEAs to Take Now

1. Actively and frequently communicate with your staff and families.
2. Identify and update your LEA’s protocols related to decision-making, communication, and staff roles and responsibilities.
3. Make sure you are receiving information from – and are able to communicate with – the Texas Division of Emergency Management, your local emergency management authority, and your ESC.
4. Review and update your LEA’s procurement policies to ensure flexibility and compliance with state and federal guidelines.
5. Review and update your LEA’s insurance policies to ensure comprehensive coverage and alignment with relevant LEA policies and procedures.
6. Should your LEA be impacted by the storm, document all disaster response-related expenses immediately.

In addition, the Texas School Safety Center has produced a [Hurricane Quick Reference Guide for Administrators](#) . We recommend you review this document in your preparations.

### What You Can Expect from TEA Related to Communication

How to Communicate with TEA	Next steps for the LEA
Commissioner Morath’s Superintendent Hotline is available to superintendents – a TEA staff member will answer.  <i>(The Superintendent Hotline was temporarily paused in March but has been re-instated.)</i>	Only current superintendents may use the Superintendent Hotline. If you do not know the number, please email <a href="mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov">disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov</a> .

Via email to <a href="mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov">disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov</a>	For less urgent questions or requests, please email <a href="mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov">disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov</a> and make sure this email address is approved by your spam filters.
An important responsibility of TEA is to report any LEA impact to the <a href="#">Texas Division of Emergency Management</a> (TDEM). Your local ESCs are responsible for communicating to TEA any school closings or related disaster information.	Please ensure you are communicating with your ESC and that you maintain up-to-date contact information with your ESC's leadership.

**Students and Staff Support**

Information from TEA	Next steps for the LEA
Mental health resources and additional supports are also available through your Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA).	You can contact your LMHA for assistance. See the <a href="#">linked crosswalk</a> to identify the LMHA for your community. Your ESC may also be able to provide resources and support.
<a href="#">National Child Traumatic Stress Network</a> has resources to support impacted communities and families following a disaster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hurricane related resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">COVID-19 related resources</a></li> </ul>

**District and Superintendent Support**

Information from TEA	Next steps for the LEA
Damage Assessments	<b>Document any and all</b> infrastructure damages sustained. We also recommend you document all expenses incurred related to storm preparations. If you need additional assistance, please reach out to <a href="mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov">disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov</a> .
Waivers	<b>If your LEA decides to close and not provide any remote or in-person instruction</b> , then, the first two days missed <b>must be made up</b> , using either designated makeup days or additional minutes. See <a href="#">Student Attendance Accounting Handbook Section 3.8.1</a> . The agency will grant up to a maximum of five waiver days for closures due to the storms after the first two days are made up

	<p><b>If your LEA decides to provide remote instruction only during closure</b>, LEAs may request to receive funding for up to 5 days as a result of any potential impact of the hurricane. LEAs should email <a href="mailto:waivers@tea.texas.gov">waivers@tea.texas.gov</a> to apply for the waiver, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please see question #12 in the Closure Section of the <a href="#">SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ</a>.</p> <p>If an LEA experiences low attendance due to the storms, please note that a low attendance waiver may not be necessary due to the ADA hold harmless for the 20-21 school year for the first two six-week attendance reporting periods (see question #1 in the State Funding Section of the SY 20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ).</p> <p>If you have questions regarding waivers or other operational/instructional minutes-related issues, please contact Leah Martin in the Waivers division at 512-463-8597 or <a href="mailto:leah.martin@tea.texas.gov">leah.martin@tea.texas.gov</a>.</p>
<p>Potential Eligibility for Federal Disaster Grant Funds, if a Presidential Disaster Declaration is issued and federal disaster grant funds are appropriated</p>	<p>A Presidential Disaster Declaration has <u>not</u> been issued at this time.</p> <p>If your LEA becomes eligible for federal disaster grant funds in the future for this disaster, you will have one week to provide TEA with the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of campuses that were closed (i.e. not open for operations for professional development or workshops, instruction, teacher work days) and the number of days closed</li> <li>• List of allowable expenditures (see attached list) and estimated or actual costs of these activities to restart or reopen campuses</li> <li>• Numbers of students displaced from their home campus who officially</li> </ul>

	<p>enrolled in a different campus within your LEA (Do not count students who left your LEA.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Track these displaced students specifically by 1) LEP status; 2) students receiving special education services; and 3) students who are not limited English proficient and not receiving special education services.</li> <li>○ Also identify each displaced student as either homeless or not.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, contact the Department of Grant Compliance and Administration at <a href="mailto:GrantSupport@tea.texas.gov">GrantSupport@tea.texas.gov</a> or (512) 463-8992.</p>
Displaced students	<p>Learn more about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act and a district's responsibilities to support displaced students <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

**Key Resources to Assist with Hurricane Season Preparation**

Resource	How To Access
National Hurricane Center website	<a href="https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/">https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/</a>
Coronavirus Emergency Management Best Practices	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/best-practices">https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/best-practices</a>
FEMA's COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/media-collection/covid-19-pandemic-operational-guidance-2020-hurricane-season">https://www.fema.gov/media-collection/covid-19-pandemic-operational-guidance-2020-hurricane-season</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2020 Hurricane Season During COVID-19	<a href="https://emergency.cdc.gov/epic/learn/2020/webinar_20200527.asp">https://emergency.cdc.gov/epic/learn/2020/webinar_20200527.asp</a>
Texas Division of Emergency Management	<a href="https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/">https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/</a>

