

Help/support/resources

1. Are the materials from the webinar or webinar recording posted anywhere for us to reference?

The materials (presentation and recording) from the webinar have been sent to all LEA point of contacts that filled out the initial bulk order survey. Please coordinate with your LEA point of contacts to gain access to these materials. If you have any issues, please reach out to the customerservice@teabulkorder.com and we can provide the materials.

2. Who do I contact to have additional questions answered?

Please direct any additional questions to the customerservice@teabulkorder.com inbox.

Interlocal Agreement/payment/LEA deadlines

3. When will I be receiving my final order details?

We will be sending out the Interlocal Agreements by Thursday, July 30th to your LEA's point of contact who filled out your initial bulk order survey. These documents will be coming from the customerservice@teabulkorder.com email address.

4. Who must sign the final Interlocal Agreement?

Superintendents must sign the final Interlocal Agreement packet, having run the details of the order through the LEA's necessary purchasing protocols/approvals.

5. When do I need to have signed and returned my Interlocal Agreement?

Your completed and signed copy of the Interlocal Agreement (as well as your Additional Quantity Request Addendum) must be submitted through DocuSign by COB Tuesday, August 4, 2020. Should your LEA not be able to provide signed approval of this document by this date, your order will unfortunately have to be cancelled.

6. Who do we contact to have Region 4 ESC set up as a vendor with the district for payment?

Region 4 will be including their W-9 information within the invoice that will be going out to LEAs. For any additional questions, please reach out to customerservice@teabulkorder.com.

7. Who will receive the order invoice at the district?

The order invoice will be sent via email to the LEA point of contact who filled out your LEA's initial bulk order survey. This invoice will be coming from the Opconninvoices@esc4.net email address.

8. How can we get you a check within 3 days via mail?

The invoices being sent to LEAs will include instructions for electronic payment (e.g. ACH, etc.). We advise LEAs use electronic payment in order to ensure their payments are received within the 3-day payment timeline. Mailed checks will not allow LEAs to meet the payment deadline.

9. Is it a new Interlocal Agreement or if we already have an interlocal with Region 4 will it suffice?

This is a new Interlocal Agreement specific to this bulk purchase process. Region 4 is issuing direct purchase orders to the vendors, and the products and services will be passed to LEAs.

10. If we made corrections on our survey have those been updated and will that be reflected on the agreement?

Yes, the corrections made to your bulk order survey will be reflected in your LEA's Interlocal Agreement.

11. Can't the Omnia Partners/TCPN existing cooperative interlocal cover these purchases?

No, Omnia Partners/TCPN contracts do not cover these vendors and are also subject to various administrative fees. To secure the negotiated rates through this program, we have set up a separate Interlocal Agreement.

12. Where can I access the guidance put out by TASB?

The TASB specific guidance and board materials have been distributed through TASB's normal communications network. Your ESC may also be able to assist in providing these materials.

13. Typically we are not allowed to pre-pay for items and these orders will be material to our fiscal audit for many districts. What type of documentation will be provided to districts and our auditors to allow pre-payment?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TEA is authorizing LEAs to make the required pre-payment as it pertains to the Operation Connectivity bulk purchase program. Audit findings go through the TEA for sustaining / not sustaining, and the TEA does not sustain findings where LEAs have followed TEA guidance.

14. The amount of funds that the LEA is sending to Region 4 is only for the 50% correct?

Correct, only the portion of the costs that the LEAs are not receiving through state match will need to be paid by the LEAs.

15. How do I coordinate the details of my asset tagging and drop shipping?

The initial details of asset tagging will be collected through the LEA order logistics confirmation document, which will be distributed along with your Interlocal Agreement. Further details or questions on asset tagging will be handled directly by vendors.

16. What is the process and timeline for LEA payment of the bulk orders?

Payment for your LEA's portion of the order costs will be due immediately upon receipt of the order invoice. Please note that payment is required before hotspots / devices will be asset tagged and shipped to your LEA. Specific payment instructions will be provided with your issued invoice. LEA orders will be tagged and shipped in the order in which invoice payment is received. Delay in payment will result in a delay of devices to your LEAs. Any LEA whose invoice has not been paid within three business days from the invoice date will have their order cancelled.

17. Can I add the approval of this Interlocal Agreement and the device and hotspot expenditures as an emergency item for a board meeting?

The TASB guidance sets forth the statutory requirements under the Open Meetings Act to post an emergency meeting notice. This is a case specific determination, and you should consult local counsel regarding this question.

18. Is Board approval required for the Interlocal Agreement?

TASB advises that interlocal agreements must receive board approval. TASB recommends this approval be obtained prior to the administration taking action on the interlocal agreement. If convening a quorum is not possible ahead of the pending deadlines, a quick ratification by an LEA's board may be considered in consultation with legal counsel.

Change requests

19. Can LEAs that haven't placed an order place one now?

Unfortunately, we are no longer accepting any additional LEA orders.

20. For the Chromebooks that are delayed to 10-16 weeks, will we be able to change our order to any of the other devices?

LEAs that ordered the delayed Chromebooks were given the opportunity to switch to the Dell 3190 or the Lenovo 100e through filling out the additional survey that went out to LEAs on July 27th and closed 12pm on July 29th. No additional switches are able to be accommodated at this time .

21. If a district ordered 3,000 hotspots but only ended up deploying 2,500 hotspots, is there any way to only pay for the services on the 2,500?

No, you will be responsible for paying for the services of all 3,000 hotspots.

22. Because Verizon and AT&T hotspots now have additional charges for their hotspots, can we change to a different hotspot provider?

LEAs who initially requested AT&T hotspots were offered the opportunity to switch to Verizon or T-Mobile hotspots through filling out the additional survey that went out to LEAs on 2/27 and closed 12pm on July 29th. No additional switches are able to be accommodated at this time.

23. Can I change the initial amount of devices/hotspots I committed to order?

LEAs will not be able to increase the size of their initial order. LEAs can decrease the size of their initial order after receiving their Interlocal Agreement by emailing customerservice@teabulkorder.com with their revisions. Any proposed revisions to increase quantities for any vendor or model will be rejected.

24. What if I can't afford my original order?

LEAs can decrease the size of their initial order after receiving their Interlocal Agreement by emailing customerservice@teabulkorder.com with their revisions.

Device specific questions

25. Is the fund matching for hotspots available for the device cost and the monthly service fee?

Yes, for all hotspots you will receive fund matching for the full cost of eligible hotspot expenditures, which includes the cost of the device and the monthly service fee.

26. Do you have to use the hotspot filtering provided by the vendor?

For vendors that charge for hotspot filtering, the LEA will be responsible for paying the filtering fee. However, you are not obligated to use the filtering.

27. How long are the hotspot contracts? Is there a contract usage limit or contract limit? Can the hotspots be cancelled at any time?

The hotspot contracts are for 1 year and cannot be cancelled during this time as payments are required upfront. LEAs can choose to renew the contract for AT&T and T-Mobile for a second year at the same price; however, state matching would only be contributed towards costs for the first year. All contracts are for unlimited priority data.

28. What are the final prices for the devices?

The final device prices will be listed in the Interlocal Agreement that will be emailed to your survey point of contact.

29. Will the hotspot need to be returned?

No. After the execution of the bulk order, LEAs will be the sole owner of any device, including hotspots, purchased through the bulk order. After 1 year, services provided as part of the bulk order contracts (e.g., data plan for hotspots, warranties) will expire. Devices, including hotspots, will remain the property of the LEA.

30. Will Region 4 own the hotspots/devices or will the LEA?

LEAs will own hotspots and devices.

31. Will the hotspots included on this bulk purchase list be CIPA compliant?

Yes, these hotspots will be CIPA compliant and vendors will be providing a detailed guide for what is included in these devices to ensure CIPA compliance.

32. Will covers/cases be available for devices through this program?

Due to the high volume of requests for e-learning devices and hotspots through the bulk order, we are not able to accommodate additional requests for peripheral products at this time.

33. Can we select specific Chromebook manufacturers?

LEAs may select between Dell and HP Chromebooks, of the specific models described in the bulk order survey (and follow survey). Region 4 has not negotiated special pricing with any other Chromebook manufacturers.

34. Who do I contact if I have additional, specific questions about the devices?

There are device specifications included in the Interlocal Agreement your LEA will be receiving. Additional terms and conditions for specific devices you have purchased will be shared once you have submitted your Interlocal Agreement. To discuss further details, please contact customerservice@teabulkorder.com.

35. What are the model numbers for devices?

The model numbers are available in the bulk purchase Interlocal Agreement.

36. Will an MDM license cost be included for Apple iPads?

Yes, MDM licenses are included with the listed Apple iPad costs.

37. Do the devices included on this bulk purchase list meet the requirements for STAAR online?

Yes, minimum system requirements for online STAAR were consulted in order to define minimum specifications for devices. LEAs will have to provide students with headphones, as they are not included in bulk purchase.

38. Will Chromebooks come with a Google Chrome Management license?

Yes, Google Management licenses are included in the price of Chromebooks. Similarly, iPadOS and Windows 10 operating system licenses are included on relevant tablets and laptops.

39. How do I know if my Chromebook is a touch screen or a non-touch screen device?

The HP Chromebooks do include a touch screen. The Dell Chromebooks do not include a touch screen.

40. Do the devices include a warranty?

All of the laptops and Chromebooks include a 1 year warranty. The iPads do not include a warranty. Additional details (i.e., on site vs mail in) are included in the Interlocal Agreement, and vendors will share specific terms and conditions relevant to your geographic region once you have submitted your Interlocal Agreement.

41. Can we add accident protection to the devices?

Yes, accident protection can be added directly through the OEMs.

Supply chain

42. Are these devices already produced and ready to ship or do they have to be made then shipped?

Region 4 is working with vendors to ensure devices and hotspots are delivered as quickly as possible. This will entail leverage of a mix of existing inventory and production capacity across vendors. The delivery estimates provided account for this approach. Region 4 will provide updates throughout the order fulfillment process to ensure that LEAs have up-to-date information about supply chain constraints and delivery windows.

43. Is the ship date also 10-16 weeks for the non-touch screen Chromebooks?

While all Chromebooks are delayed 10 – 16 weeks, non-touch screen Chromebooks will be slightly faster – between 10-12 weeks—while touch-screen Chromebooks are likely to arrive later. The earliest expected delivery date for any Chromebook is early October. Laptops have about a 4-week ship date. The delivery date is usually around 1 week past the ship date.

44. Will devices paid with matching funds have priority over additional devices purchased with LEA funds?

At this time, only devices allocated to receive matching funds are eligible for order confirmation. Region 4 will provide more information about additional device purchases above your allocated amount within the next 7-10 days. Please email customersupport@teabulkorder.com with your individual questions in the meantime.

45. Are the vendors providing estimated delivery dates for devices and hotspots?

Vendors have provided shipping window estimates for all devices. Windows laptops and Apple iPads will be shipped about 4 weeks after order placement, placing delivery within the first half of September. Chromebooks will be shipped in 10 – 16 weeks, placing delivery in early October at the soonest. Hotspots are expected to be delivered within 2 – 4 weeks of order placement. Delivery dates are dependent on order placement, which is contingent on how quickly your LEA can complete and sign the interlocal agreement, provide shipment information, and pay the Region 4 invoice. Region 4 will provide updates throughout the order fulfillment process to ensure that LEAs have up-to-date information about supply chain constraints and delivery windows.

46. If we had Chromebooks and change to one of the others, is that going to cause an upsurge in those devices that we won't get those in 4 week time?

Laptop vendors (e.g., Lenovo, Dell) have indicated that they have the necessary capacity to provide laptops within 4 weeks, even with increased demand as people switch their orders from Chromebooks to laptops.

47. Can we get hotspots before Chromebooks?

All orders through the bulk purchase program must be confirmed at the same time, upon receiving the Interlocal Agreement from Region 4. Delivery dates are dependent on how quickly your LEA can complete and sign the Interlocal Agreement, provide shipment information, and pay the Region 4 invoice. Once the order is placed, products will be shipped individually from each vendor. Based on current supply chain constraints, it is likely that hotspots will arrive before other devices; Chromebooks are likely to be delayed.

48. If we decided to switch from Chromebooks to Lenovo, what is the guarantee, if any, that Lenovo devices will be stocked and ready to ship?

Region 4 cannot provide any absolute guarantee for delivery dates. However, laptop vendors (e.g., Lenovo, Dell) have indicated that they have the necessary capacity to provide laptops within 4 weeks, even with increased demand as people switch their orders from Chromebooks to laptops.

Other

49. Can ESSER funds be used to purchase these devices and hotspots?

The state has implemented a local matching requirement to this program in that the LEA must pay for an applicable percentage of the total costs of the program. This requires other fund sources available to the LEA to be used to pay for the remaining percentage of the program. This is not an in-kind match. The LEA may use its CARES Act ESSER Grant allocation, TIMA, and other local sources to be approved later by TEA, in addition to other state and local funding to pay the LEA portion of this program and therefore split the total cost of the connectivity equipment between this program and its ESSER Grant. LEA local documentation must be maintained to document 1) the percentage paid from the ESSER Grant, 2) inventory records and other appropriate safeguards to protect the equipment are in place, and 3) appropriate internal controls are being implemented.

50. Will district matching funds come from 2020-21 budget even though ordered by TEA in 19-20 fiscal year?

LEAs should work with their local budgeting group to gain guidance on what fund year their matching funds will be coming from.

51. Our district has a 2020-2021 Technology Lending Grant. Can we use grant funds to purchase the equipment through Operation Connectivity's bulk purchase program, thereby leveraging the grant funds to serve more students?

No. Operation Connectivity is an emergency procurement program, and LEAs may only use Operation Connectivity for its intended purpose, not for a traditional, non-emergency technology procurement such as Technology Lending.

Allocation methodology

52. What is the methodology for determining the allocation of funds?

LEAs will be eligible for fund matching of 50% of the expenditures incurred through the statewide bulk purchasing event. However, the level of LEA fund matching for purchases made through the statewide bulk purchasing event will be contingent on the number of economically disadvantaged students in the LEA. The amount of TEA's fund matching will not exceed 50% of LEA expenditures to purchase device and/or hotspots for the number of economically disadvantaged students in the LEA. The costs associated with device and hotspot purchase volume that exceeds the number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA will not be eligible for fund matching. Please refer to Funding Allocation for Bulk Order Purchase Event or a full description of the funding allocation methodology

53. Can LEAs order more devices/hotspots than they have economically disadvantaged students?

An LEA can order additional devices and hotspots (capped at the difference between the LEA's initial order request and their allocated quantities) via the bulk order purchase and pay with local funds. However, the costs associated with device and hotspot purchase volume that exceeds the number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA will not be eligible for fund matching.

54. Are the devices / hotspots only available for economically disadvantaged students?

No. The number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA was used as the cap on the number of devices/hotspots that are eligible for fund matching (i.e., 1 device AND 1 hotspot allowed, per economically disadvantaged student) to ensure the equitable distribution of a limited amount of funds. LEAs can decide how they are going to distribute devices across their entire student population to best ensure connectivity for all students participating in remote learning.

55. How did you determine the number of economically disadvantaged students?

The number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA are calculated as the PEIMS ages 3-21 low income students (eligible for free lunch, reduced price lunch, or federal aid programs), from the October 2019 fall collection, released for 2020-2021 ESSA funding formulas.

56. How will staff devices requested be counted in the economically disadvantaged numbers?

Staff were not factored into the economically disadvantaged numbers that determined funding allocations. We still allowed for the purchase of additional devices beyond the volume of economically disadvantaged students, which may be used by staff, but those expenditures will not be eligible for fund matching.