

## ARCHIVE: COVID-19 Superintendent Call

April 6, 2020

The following are questions asked by directors of schools during this call and the point-in-time answers provided by the department. For additional guidance and up-to-the-minute supports, please check the TDOE website for more information:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/update-on-coronavirus.html>.

### Academics

- Announcement: TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement
  - **FURTHER INFORMATION:** The department continues to develop the optional TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. The design team includes expert educators from each of the eight CORE regions and represent urban, suburban, and rural districts. The curriculum will include digital teacher manuals, digital student materials, digital decodables, and material kit recommendations for PK – 2<sup>nd</sup> grades.
  - This optional supplement is on track to be available digitally according to the schedule below.
    - Course outlines for Pre-K, K, grade 1 and grade 2 will be released on April 17.
    - Module One previews will be released on April 24.
    - Final versions of Modules One through Four will be released on May 8.
    - Remaining modules for all grade bands will be released on May 15.
    - Material kit lists and full support videos will be released no later than June 1.

### Finance

- Question: If state tax revenue decreases in the next year due to COVID-19, what impact will that have on the BEP?
  - **RESPONSE:** The General Assembly has already passed the state budget for FY21, which included funding the BEP at the projected growth and with an additional investment of \$58.5 million in the instructional salaries component. While the General Assembly may reconvene this summer and further adjust the budget, the BEP is fully funded from the state appropriation for next fiscal year. Further, a law was passed to ensure that closures due to COVID-19 and the early March tornados would not negatively impact LEA state allocations.
- Question: Please provide more information about the legislature's recently passed budget as it relates to Governor Lee's plan to increase teacher salaries.

- **RESPONSE:** The legislature's recently passed budget included 58.5 million dollars for BEP instructional component increases, intended to be used for increasing teacher salaries. The minimum state salary schedule will be presented to the State Board of Education during their May meeting for approval. As soon as final decisions are made on the schedule proposal, the department will share that information with superintendents.

## Staffing

- Question: What guidelines should districts follow to ensure they are still able to non-renew or dismiss teachers who have not performed well during the school year?
  - **RESPONSE:** Under current law (provided below), teachers who have not acquired tenure are on a one-year contract. The law requires school districts to notify teachers within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year if a teacher's contract will not be renewed for the succeeding school year. In light of school closures due to COVID-19, the TDOE is working to draft a waiver that each director of schools could submit to the Commissioner, for approval by the State Board of Education, that would provide a clear date by which school districts must notify teachers of non-renewal for the 2019-2020 school year. Guidelines will be provided by the TDOE to all directors once the exact process is determined.
    - *49-5-409. Teachers — Continuing contract law — Termination of contracts.*
    - *(a) Teachers in service and under control of the public elementary and high schools of this state shall continue in such service until they have received written notice from their board of education or director of schools, as appropriate, of their dismissal or failure of reelection.*
    - *(b) The notice must be received within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year to be applicable to the next succeeding school year; provided, that the director of schools may transfer any teacher from one (1) position to another at the director's option. Nothing contained in this section shall affect any rights that may have accrued, or may hereafter accrue, on behalf of any teachers or principals in any local school system under any law providing a tenure of office for the teachers and principals.*
    - *(c) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a board from abolishing a position after June 15, for sufficient, just and nondiscriminatory reasons; provided, that the person holding the position is notified immediately in writing stating the reasons for abolishing the position and the person is entitled to the next position that the person is qualified to hold and that opens within the school system during the remainder of the school year. The determination of whether a teacher is qualified for an open position*

*shall be made by the director of schools, and the teacher's most recent evaluations may be a factor in such determination.*

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