

ARCHIVE: COVID-19 Superintendent Call

May 8, 2020

The following are questions asked by directors of schools during this call and the 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>.

Funding

- Question: How will the state handle MOE with funding bodies?
 - **Response:** Maintenance of effort is set in state law. The department is working with education stakeholders to analyze the impact of this requirement to inform any adjustments as appropriate.

Staffing

- Question: Should districts add “extra” sick days for teachers to care for COVID-19 infected family or quarantine or teacher mental health?
 - **Response:** The department will provide general guidance for reopening and links to resources to assist districts in making local staffing decisions, but the department urges districts to work closely with board attorneys for specific legal advice on interpreting the state and federal laws related to employee leave.

Athletics

- Question: Will districts receive guidance on sports?
 - **Response:** Student athletics do not fall under the purview of the Tennessee Department of Education. While the state board of education does have some limited rules on interscholastic athletics (rule 0520--01-02-.08), the department would encourage all districts to contact their local boards and TSSAA when planning for these local decisions. The TSSAA webpage includes an updated list of all TSSAA events and activities impacted by the pandemic: <https://tssaa.org/tssaa-events-activities-impacted-by-covid-19>

Instructional Days

- Question: Will we consider flexibility on instructional day and overall minutes?
 - **Response:** The number of required instructional days and the length of the instructional day is currently defined in state law. The department understands that the Pandemic has raised questions with regard to the definition of “instructional day”. The department is reviewing these questions and working with education stakeholders, including the general assembly, to determine how best to answer the questions raised with regard to how distance learning fits into the definition of instructional day during a pandemic when the delivery method of instruction looks different.