

## Attendance and Enrollment FAQ: Section Topics

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### Definitions

**Remote Synchronous Instruction** – Two-way, real-time/live, virtual instruction between teachers and students when students are not on campus. In this method, the required amount of instructional time is scheduled each day, and funding is generated when attendance is recorded daily at a locally selected snapshot time. Synchronous instruction is provided through a computer or other electronic device or over the phone. The instructional method must address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

**Remote Asynchronous Instruction** – Instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engaged at the same time. In this method, students learn from instruction that is not necessarily being delivered in-person or in real time. This type of instruction may include various forms of digital and online learning, such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own, and pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. The instructional method must address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

### Attendance Methods

#### Remote Synchronous Instruction

This method replicates the current on-campus method of taking daily attendance in a remote synchronous instructional setting. In a remote synchronous teaching and learning method, students who are logged in at the teacher's documented official attendance time are marked remote synchronous present for that day, and students who are not logged in at the teacher's documented official attendance time are marked absent. An LEA will post on its website and submit to TEA a signed attestation that outlines what the LEA will provide in order to serve students through the remote synchronous instruction method. The attestation must include a summary of training and support for teachers and LEA staff, instructional framework, the platform and technology the district will utilize, grading and progress monitoring, and student access.

### ***How Is Remote Synchronous Attendance Measured?***

Teachers will take and post attendance as if the student were physically present in the on-campus classroom. In this type of environment, the LEA would need to provide students a minimum number of daily instructional minutes for students to earn full-day funding, as follows:

- *Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade* – ADA for Foundation School Program (FSP) funding purposes is not available in a remote synchronous method.
- *3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade* – 180 instructional minutes (not necessarily consecutive)
- *6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade* – 240 instructional minutes (not necessarily consecutive)

Just as with traditional on-campus attendance, official attendance will be taken at a certain time determined by the LEA's policy. For remote synchronous instruction, time spent for in-class breakfast and recess has been excluded from the calculation of daily instructional minutes listed above and should not be included in the instructional minutes. If the student is not participating remotely, the student would be marked absent under this option and would generate zero funding for the day.

The daily instructional minutes need not be consecutive. A program would meet the remote synchronous method requirements if the daily instructional minute minimums above are met, even if part of the day includes asynchronous activities. For example, a high school program that scheduled synchronous instruction for 120 minutes in the morning, then released students to work independently for several hours before a second scheduled synchronous session totaling 120 minutes in the afternoon would meet the daily instructional minute requirement detailed above.

Time students spend participating in work-based learning opportunities can continue to be included in the daily instructional minute calculation. Work-based learning opportunities could include internships, externships, apprenticeships, and mentorships.

This method also allows students who are taking career and technical education (CTE) courses to continue teacher-led instruction and would generate CTE funding. Special education students who are coded mainstream can receive their regular instruction and special education services through this remote synchronous instruction method, as well, unless their individualized education programs (IEPs) reflect that the services must be provided on campus.

Local education agencies (LEAs) are required to maintain daily schedules that document the amount of instruction a student or group of students is scheduled to receive on a given day. The schedule should detail the amount and type of instruction being provided and should also include the official attendance time the LEA has chosen for the purpose of taking attendance for funding purposes. Additionally, the LEA is required to attest to what an LEA will provide in order to serve students in remote synchronous instruction.

### **Remote Asynchronous Instruction**

This method allows LEAs the flexibility to earn daily attendance through an approved plan for providing high-quality instructional practices with daily engagement measures. LEAs can earn ADA through primarily asynchronous instructional methods OR through a combination of asynchronous and synchronous instruction together. The LEA's approved instructional plan determines the daily

engagement, instructional materials, progress monitoring, and teacher supports the students receive in order to earn daily attendance.

For students who typically attend school on campus but may periodically generate daily attendance via a remote asynchronous instructional method, they should be coded full-day or half-day based on their on-campus schedule. For students who generate daily attendance via remote asynchronous instructional methods throughout the year:

- All students in grades kindergarten through 5th grade will be coded for full-day attendance.
- Prekindergarten students will be coded as half-day students.
- Middle school and high school students can be coded as half-day or full-day students, depending on their daily class schedules.

### ***How Is Remote Asynchronous Attendance Measured?***

Measurement frequency is daily. Under an approved learning plan, students earn daily attendance through daily engagement measure(s). The approved engagement methods are listed below:

- Daily progress in the Learning Management System (LMS), as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Daily progress via teacher-student interactions, as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Completion/Turn-in of assignments from student to teacher (potentially via email, on-line, or mail).

Student engagement with the LMS or other instructional avenues and/or any daily contact by the teacher with a student focused on supporting or monitoring student academic progress, as defined by the approved asynchronous instructional plan, will establish daily attendance. A student will be considered absent if the student does not have documented engagement with the LMS and/or daily contact with the teacher, and/or documentation of completion/turn in of daily assignments. A teacher or campus representative will input the student's daily attendance into the Student Information System (SIS) for the asynchronous method, based on the student's daily engagement with the LMS or other instructional avenue and/or the daily contact with the teacher, by marking the student remote asynchronous present or absent on that day.

If the LEA has an approved remote asynchronous plan with students participating in both synchronous and asynchronous classes, the student's attendance recorded by the teacher in the synchronous class can count for official attendance for funding purposes. A student who misses the synchronous class can still be counted remote asynchronous present for the day by engaging with the teacher or progressing in the LMS during that same day.

### **Remote Course Completion (Existing full-time TXVSN)**

Full-time virtual campuses are currently funded under the remote course completion method. Students must have completed the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) education program and demonstrated academic proficiency with passing grades equivalent to 70% or above on a 100-point scale.

### ***How Is Remote Course Completion Attendance Measured?***

As with the regular, on-campus attendance calculation, the equivalent of 2 hours of course completion is worth half-day attendance, and 4 hours count towards full-day attendance. For single semester courses, completion-based attendance is calculated for each semester, meaning a student can generate between  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an ADA (completion of 2 hours of courses for one semester) to a full ADA for completing 4 hours in each semester.

Students in elementary grades (for example, 4th grade) would either receive full attendance if the grade-level coursework is completed and the student is promoted to the next grade level or zero attendance if the course is not successfully completed.

## **State Funding**

### **1. Will there be an ADA hold harmless for the 2020-2021 school year?**

Yes, TEA is implementing an ADA grace period under the limited circumstances described below. TEA recognizes the challenges associated with implementing remote instruction in the new school year in light of COVID-19. Therefore, TEA will institute the ADA grace period for the first two six-week attendance reporting periods as follows: if an LEA's ADA counts during those first two six-week reporting periods are more than one percent less than the LEA's ADA counts during the first two six-week reporting periods for the 2019–2020 school year, the first two six-week attendance reporting periods for 2020–2021 will be excluded from the calculation of ADA for FSP funding purposes.

Open-enrollment charter schools that are operating for the first time in 2020–2021 will be ineligible for the ADA grace period. In addition, open-enrollment charter schools will continue to submit current year attendance per normal processes. If these processes result in cash flow issues for a charter school, then the charter school should contact the State Funding Division prior to submission of the six-weeks attendance data.

In addition, please note that for state funding purposes, the aggregate attendance rate for eligible students at the LEA for the 2020–2021 school year will be capped at the level of the aggregate attendance rate for eligible students at the LEA from the 2018–2019 school year. LEAs that were not in operation during the 2018–2019 school year will have their aggregate attendance rate capped at the aggregate attendance rate for the LEA for the 2019–2020 school year. LEAs that were not in operation in either the 2018–2019 or 2019–2020 school years will have their aggregate attendance rate capped at the state average attendance rate from the 2018–2019 school year.

This cap could result in a reduction of ADA generated via the two remote instructional methods allowed under the commissioner's waiver. ADA generated via any on-campus instruction that occurs, individually, is not subject to the applicable cap variation.

### **2. Given the unpredictability of ADA because of the COVID-19 virus, will TEA exclude certain indicators from the 2021–2022 FIRST ratings (normally released August 2022) given that those ratings rely on data from the 2020–2021 school year?**

Yes, there are certain indicators that are impacted by the uncertainty of ADA and the adjustments being made to FSP funds that will be excluded from the 2021–2022 FIRST ratings. The indicators being excluded are listed below:

- Indicator #10 - Did the school district average less than a 10 percent variance (90%-110%) when comparing budgeted revenues to actual revenues for the last 3 fiscal years? (All LEAs)
- Indicator #15 - Was the school district's actual ADA within the allotted range of the district's biennial pupil projection(s) submitted to TEA? If the district did not submit pupil projections to TEA, did it certify TEA's projections? (school districts)
- Indicator #16 - Was the charter school's actual average daily attendance (ADA) within 10 percent of the charter school's annual estimated ADA? (open-enrollment charter schools)

## Attendance

- 1. Under the remote synchronous instruction method, can my LEA use a more flexible minute requirement for providing instruction to students? Instead of providing 180 minutes of instruction daily to students in grades 3-5, may we break up the minute requirement across multiple days? For example, can the school engage a group of 3rd grade students for 150 minutes on Monday and then add the remaining 30 minutes to Tuesday thereby lengthening Tuesday's instruction to 210 minutes?**

No. Under the remote synchronous instruction method, the minute requirements associated with the student grade level must be provided each day for an LEA to earn full-day ADA for those students. Minutes can be broken up throughout the day; however, the overall minute requirement must be earned in the same day credited.

- 2. What if our LEA is unable to provide all daily instructional minutes required under the remote synchronous instruction method for all grade levels? Can we generate half-day funding if we provide instruction but do not meet the full-day minute requirements outlined in the guidance?**

Yes, half-day funding is possible under the remote synchronous instruction method. To determine the instructional requirements for half-day funding, divide the minute requirements in half, based on the grade level you are considering for half-day instruction. The LEA could also consider offering remote asynchronous instruction as an alternative in order to receive full-day funding.

- 3. Will at-home parent instruction count towards our instructional minute requirements as part of the remote synchronous instruction method?**

No, at-home, parent-led instructional time will not count towards overall minute requirements under the remote synchronous instruction method. Under the remote synchronous instruction method, two-way, real-time, face-to-face, or virtual remote interaction between teachers and students is required to meet the instructional minute requirements. This may also include student-to-student sessions if supervised by a teacher who is facilitating the session live.

For students in prekindergarten through 2nd grade, instruction must be on campus or must be provided through a remote asynchronous instruction method in order to count toward ADA for FSP funding purposes.

**4. Do in-class breakfast and recess count as part of the overall daily minute requirements in the remote synchronous instruction method?**

No. The grade-based minute requirements exclude in-class breakfast and recess. LEAs are still encouraged to provide time for these activities in the students' daily schedules; however, the time will not count as instructional time toward earning full-day ADA for purposes of attendance and funding.

**5. How does my LEA report attendance under the remote asynchronous instruction method?**

LEAs that choose to serve students through a remote asynchronous instruction method must submit a learning plan to TEA that includes details on how student engagement will be tracked daily. Students who are engaged on a given day will be marked remote asynchronous present and generate funding on that day. Students who are not engaged would be marked absent for the day and the attendance cannot be changed based on the student completing an assignment or participating in some other asynchronous engagement at a later date. Approved engagement methods are listed below:

- Daily progress in the Learning Management System (LMS), as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Daily progress via teacher-student interactions, as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Completion/Turn-in of assignments from student to teacher (potentially via email, on-line, or mail).

**6. Under the remote asynchronous instruction method, can individual campuses within an LEA have different monitoring/engagement tracking systems if the LEA would like to use different systems at the primary and secondary levels?**

Yes. Plans can vary by campus. However, an LEA must submit only one plan for the whole school system (and that plan can incorporate differentiation by grade or campus).

**7. How will students who are receiving virtual instruction be included in the accountability system?**

Many districts are thinking of organizing teachers to deliver remote instruction to full-time remote students via a district-wide "virtual school," regardless of the student's home school. For accountability purposes, students who elect to participate in a district-provided remote learning option will be coded to the physical campus that they would have been assigned to.

**8. Has TEA guidance regarding grading for remote instruction changed for the 2020–2021 school year?**

While LEAs have the authority to determine local grading policies annually, in order for LEAs to receive funding for remote instruction, grading policies that apply to student work done in either remote synchronous or remote asynchronous instructional methods in the 2020–2021 school year must be consistent with the LEA's grading policies for on-campus assignments.

**9. Can my LEA opt to move students from a letter grading system to a pass/fail basis because they are participating in remote asynchronous learning?**

No, in order for an LEA to receive funding for remote instruction, the LEA's grading policies for remote instruction must be consistent with the LEA's grading policies for on-campus assignments.

**10. How will LEAs take attendance for students who are receiving instruction at home?**

The instructional method chosen will dictate how attendance is taken.

If the remote synchronous instructional method is utilized, then the LEA will use an official attendance time documented in the teacher's daily schedule, and the teacher will take attendance virtually to mark students as remote synchronous present or absent.

If the remote asynchronous instructional method is utilized, students would be marked remote asynchronous present or absent based on whether the student was engaged through one of the approved asynchronous engagement methods on that day.

**11. What is the process for submitting and approving remote asynchronous instruction plans?**

TEA will publish a plan template, requirements for plan approval, exemplar plan responses, and training for how to develop and submit plans beginning July 2, 2020.

The application window will open on July 15, 2020, and plans can be submitted on a rolling basis. As soon as the plan is received by TEA, the LEA will have contingent approval to record attendance for students using the remote asynchronous instruction method. The district will be fully funded for attendance recorded via the remote asynchronous instructional method throughout the contingent approval period. Contingent approval will remain in place through a grace period, which ends at the end of the LEA's third six-week attendance reporting period (for the purposes of PEIMS attendance reporting).

TEA will review and either confirm final approval for plans that meet all requirements or share feedback on plans that do not meet all plan requirements within 45 days of submission. If the plan does not receive final approval, the LEA will have 30 days to respond to feedback and resubmit plans, and TEA will have an additional 30 days to review and provide final approval or disapproval. If the LEA's plan does not receive final approval by the end of the grace period, the LEA will no longer be able to record attendance using the remote asynchronous instruction method.

**12. What is the deadline for submitting remote asynchronous instruction plans?**

LEAs must submit plans prior to the first day of remote asynchronous instruction in order to receive contingent approval for providing the remote asynchronous instruction method.

TEA will accept and review asynchronous instruction plans on a rolling basis beginning on July 15, 2020. In order to receive contingent approval prior to the beginning of the school year, plans must be received by TEA prior to the first day of instruction. In order to ensure the timeline necessary for review, revision, and resubmission of plans that do not initially meet

plan requirements prior to the end of the grace period, LEAs should submit plans by October 1, 2020.

**13. What happens if my LEA’s remote asynchronous instruction plan is disapproved by the agency? Will my LEA’s funding be negatively impacted?**

Your LEA’s FSP funding will not be negatively impacted for initially disapproved plans, as long as your plan is ultimately approved and implemented with fidelity beginning with your LEA’s 4<sup>th</sup> six-week attendance reporting period. This means that there is a “grace period” for attendance generated through the remote asynchronous instructional method through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> six-week attendance reporting period. If your plan is not initially approved, the LEA will receive feedback on the plan and have 30 days to resubmit the revised plan to the agency. TEA will review revised plans within 15-30 days of submission and will then communicate a final decision about plan approval.

Any remote asynchronous attendance taken during the contingent approval grade period will be fully funded. Beyond the grace period, funding is only provided for remote asynchronous attendance for LEAs with approved plans.

**14. Under the remote asynchronous instructional method, if a student fails to complete Monday’s measure of engagement on Monday but completes the assignment later in the week, can the student’s attendance coding be changed to remote asynchronous present for Monday?**

No. In the remote asynchronous instructional method, student engagement is measured daily, and attendance is assigned based on the student’s completion of that day’s engagement measure. Students who do not complete the daily measure of engagement are to be counted absent for that day, and that absence cannot be changed to remote asynchronous present if the student completes the engagement measure on a later date. In the example above, the student would be counted absent on Monday.

**15. Under the remote asynchronous instructional method, if a student decides to complete the entire week’s worth of work on Monday, can the student’s attendance be coded to show perfect attendance for the week?**

No. In the remote asynchronous instructional method, student engagement is measured daily, and attendance is assigned based on the student’s completion of that day’s engagement measure. Students who do not complete the daily measure of engagement are to be counted absent for that day, and that absence cannot be changed to remote asynchronous present if the student completes the engagement measure on a later date. In the example above, the student would be counted absent Tuesday-Friday.

**16. Does an LEA need to submit anything to TEA to provide remote synchronous instruction?**

Yes, LEAs are required to submit a signed attestation that outlines the LEA’s plans for providing instruction to students through the remote synchronous instruction method. The attestation must be submitted to TEA before the LEA begins serving students remotely, and the signed attestation must be posted on the LEA’s website.

**17. Do the required minutes under the remote synchronous instruction method need to be fulfilled with continuous, teacher-led instruction?**

No, the required minutes do not need to be provided as one continuous block of teacher-led instruction. Students should have age-appropriate opportunities for breaks during the instructional day, and blocks of instructional time should consist of teacher-guided, but student driven, learning time. The instructional time could include students applying the lesson taught by the teacher through various avenues as if the student was in a classroom setting. An example of this would be the teacher leading a lesson in Zoom for 20 minutes and then the students logging into an online learning application to work on an activity with the teacher actively monitoring progress and providing real-time feedback to the students.

**18. Will the 90/10 minimum student attendance for class credit rule be in effect for the 2020–2021 school year?**

Yes. The minimum attendance for class credit rule of TEC, §25.092, will be in effect for the 2020–2021 school year, and TEA will not be issuing waivers for LEAs to exempt themselves from the rule. Students are required to attend at least 90% of their classes (with some exceptions) to receive credit and be promoted. Remote attendance will count in the same manner as on-campus attendance in satisfying this requirement.

**19. Will truancy laws be in effect during the 2020–2021 school year for students receiving remote instruction due to COVID-19 related closure or health concerns?**

Truancy laws will apply to students who fail to attend school, but remote attendance satisfies attendance requirements.

**20. What are the requirements to earn full-day funding for general ed homebound and PRS CEHI students and how should attendance be reported?**

When in-home instruction cannot be provided due to COVID-19, students who had been receiving instruction at home should be served through the LEA's remote synchronous or asynchronous instructional methods. While students are served through one of these methods, attendance should be reported in accordance with the rules for each method described in this document. Pregnancy related services (PRS) students who receive Compensatory Education Home Instruction (CEHI) services through a remote synchronous or asynchronous method can continue to earn CTE contact hours, as long as CTE instruction continues while remote instruction is provided.

**21. How should we take attendance for our special education students when COVID-19 prevents teachers from providing in-person instruction?**

Attendance taking for special education students should track as closely as possible to the requirements for non-special education students.

## Enrollment

**1. When is a student considered to be enrolled in my LEA for purposes of determining the daily enrollment count?**

Students who are receiving remote synchronous or asynchronous instruction are considered enrolled on the first day the student participates through one of the engagement methods listed in this document.

## PEIMS Attendance Reporting

### 1. How will my LEA report days present and absent for the remote synchronous and remote asynchronous instruction methods?

New PEIMS data elements will be created to report Remote Synchronous (RS) Eligible Days Present and Remote Asynchronous (RA) Eligible Days Present. The LEA will need to track the instructional method in which the student is participating each school day. Days Present will need to be identified as days present in the RS method or days present in the RA method. Absences will not need to be distinguished between instructional methods.

- The teacher will identify the student as remote synchronous present or remote asynchronous present or identify the student as absent. For remote synchronous present, the student must be in attendance at the official attendance time, either in the class or online remotely to be counted present. To be counted as remote asynchronous present, the student does not have to be present at a designated official attendance time but must be engaged in one of the following ways during that day:
- Shown daily progress in the Learning Management System (LMS), as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Daily progress via teacher-student interactions, as defined in the approved learning plan; or
- Completed/Turned-in assignments to the teacher (potentially via email, on-line, or mail).

### 2. Will there be new data elements to report days present for ineligible students receiving remote instruction?

There will not be new data elements to report days present for ineligible students. Days Present for ineligible students will still be reported through the Ineligible Days Present data element.

### 3. Will my LEA be allowed to report perfect attendance for students on any of the remote instruction methods?

LEAs should report the appropriate days present and absent depending on the requirements listed throughout this document.

### 4. Will my LEA be able to report special program instructional settings (i.e. bilingual/ESL, special education, CTE, etc.) via the remote methods?

Yes, as long as those services are provided to students. LEAs will need to make decisions locally to account for the individual needs of special education students. New PEIMS data elements will be created to report remote synchronous and remote asynchronous days present in the special program areas (for example: **RS** Total Elig Bilingual/ESL Days Present, **RA** Total Elig Bilingual/ESL Days Present, **RS** Total Elig Residential Facility Days Present, **RA** Total Elig Residential Facility Days Present, **RS** Total Elig Preg Rel Svs Days Present **RA** Total Elig Preg Rel Svs Days Present).

**5. How should I code OFSDP students who are served through the remote synchronous or asynchronous instructional methods?**

ADA eligibility codes for Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) students must be changed to a regular ADA eligibility code (ADA 1-6) when instruction is no longer provided on campus and their instruction changes to one of the remote methods. Once the coding is changed, these students will generate funding based on daily attendance, as detailed in this document, instead of accumulating daily minutes.

**6. When there are students from the same physical school receiving remote synchronous and asynchronous instruction, should the students in each of the instructional methods be reported on different tracks?**

There is no reporting reason to separate students receiving instruction through different methods onto separate tracks. Students educated via the remote synchronous instruction method can be placed on the same calendar track as students being educated through the remote asynchronous instruction method.

**7. Will the Summer PEIMS due date be changed (pushed back) for LEAs who choose to run an intersessional calendar, even though they may not be designated as a year-round LEA?**

TEA will consider intersessional calendars the same as year-round calendars. LEAs registered with TEA with year-round tracks ending later than June 17, 2021, may delay PEIMS Summer resubmission until two weeks following completion of the latest year-round track or August 12, 2021, whichever comes first. However, the initial data delivery for submission 3 must still be made by June 17, 2021, for all LEAs. This initial submission of data will not necessarily include data through the end of the school year. In no case will any resubmission be processed after August 12, 2021. Data corrections made after August 12, 2021, will be processed by the State Funding Division.