

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Winter Storm Uri Update

March 4, 2021

Local education agencies (LEAs) had the following three options during the period of Friday, February 12 through Friday, February 26.

- Continue with in-person instruction.
- If your LEA continues to experience infrastructure issues because of outages and its related impacts, it may provide 100% remote instruction using your approved asynchronous plan. Your LEA must submit an “Other” waiver through the Waivers application via the TEA Login (TEAL) to claim full day minutes for any remote day along with any supporting documentation.
- If your LEA continues to experience infrastructure issues because of outages and its related impacts that prevents it from providing remote instruction, the LEA may close completely. Please submit these Missed School Day waiver requests through the Waivers Application via TEAL, with supporting documentation, following the closure event.

UPDATED
3/4/21

Updates from TEA and external partners can be found on our Weather and Disaster Information webpage: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/weather-and-disaster/weather-and-disaster-information>

Additional FAQs from TEA can be found below. Please email waivers@tea.texas.gov with questions or call the Superintendent Hotline for urgent support.

Waivers

1. Is the Missed School Day Waiver and the “Other” waiver in TEAL the same waiver?

No, these are two different waivers, but both are submitted through the Waivers Application following the event. The Missed School Day Waiver applies to complete campus/LEA closure when no instruction is provided, and the “Other” waiver applies when a district shifts to 100% remote instruction. Both waivers require board approval, and the waiver can be approved at your next board meeting following the weather event.

2. What should be submitted as supporting documentation for the missed school day waivers for outages and infrastructure issues?

There is not one specific piece of documentation; however, any documentation that supports the request based on electrical outages and related issues that required the closure should be provided for each day you are closed. This could be something from the electrical utility company, emails from the city or service providers, news articles, etc.

3. How do I fill out the “Other” waiver for remote instruction?

Should it be determined that the waiver is needed, please answer all the questions posted on the general “Other” waiver application in the Waivers Application as it applies to your LEA and the specific situation for the days being requested. For question 1, please make certain to include the specific dates to which the waiver request applies and to which campus(es). For question 3, cite to Texas Education Code (TEC), §48.005.

4. If my LEA provided remote instruction during on Friday, 2/12/21 and the week of 2/15/21 and experienced low attendance, can I claim a low attendance waiver along with an ‘Other’ asynchronous waiver for the day?

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You may not claim two waivers on the same day; however, if your LEA did provide remote instruction but had low attendance due to electrical outages or related issues, you may instead request a missed school day waiver for the day or days impacted. Please include supporting documentation related to the electrical outages and related issues that caused the low attendance, along with supporting documentation for the low attendance. Specifically, attendance for the day(s) and prior year average for the applicable campus(es) or district using the TSDS PEIMS Superintendent Report 19-20 Summer Collection (report PDM3-13-001).

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5. If my LEA plans to provide remote instruction during the week of 2/22/21 and experiences low attendance because of infrastructure issues, can I claim a low attendance waiver along with an ‘Other’ asynchronous waiver for the day?

You may not claim two waivers on the same day; however, if your LEA did provide remote instruction but has low attendance due to infrastructure issues, you may instead request a missed school day waiver for the day or days impacted. Please include supporting documentation related to the infrastructure issues that caused the low attendance, along with supporting documentation for the low attendance. Specifically, attendance for the

day(s) and prior year average for the applicable campus(es) or district using the TSDS PEIMS Superintendent Report 19-20 Summer Collection (report PDM3-13-001).

6. Do the missed school day waivers granted for this storm and its related impacts apply to the 4,200-minute waiver cap?

No, missed school day waivers granted for this specific storm do not apply to the 4,200-minute waiver cap.

7. Due to extensive damage, my LEA may require additional closures or remote instruction beyond Friday, February 26, 2021 – what are my options?

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LEAs that anticipate additional closure days or continuing to provide 100% remote instruction due to infrastructure issues beyond February 26, 2021, should individually contact waivers@tea.texas.gov with their request, including details related to their specific situation. These requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

8. If my LEA has an asynchronous staff development or teacher planning and preparation day waiver planned during the week of 2/22/21, can I now claim a missed school day waiver or “Other” remote instruction waiver for that date and move my asynchronous PD day to another week?

No. If you already have a day during this week scheduled for asynchronous PD/teacher planning/prep waiver for this week, continue to utilize it. For related questions, please email waivers@tea.texas.gov.

9. For the period of 2/12/21 - 2/26/21, do missed school days and remote instruction days count towards the Additional Day School Year (ADSY) 180-day requirement?

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Yes, missed school days and remote-only instruction days for the period of 2/12/21 – 2/26/21 count towards the ADSY 180-day requirement under [TEC, Sec. 48.0051\(c\)](#), in response to weather system guidance sent by TEA. For this weather system only, LEAs do *not* need to make up the first two missed days before qualifying for a missed school day waiver that counts towards the 180-day requirement. ADSY districts must still submit requests for a waiver using TEA’s Waivers Application, which is available through TEAL.

10. Will LEAs have to file a resolution to pay staff during the LEA closure during the inclement weather days and the extended electrical outage days?

This is a local determination. LEAs should confer with their local counsel regarding the legal and constitutional issues associated with such a resolution and its effects.

Financial Assistance

11. Will there be some financial assistance for LEAs experiencing major damage?

FEMA Assistance

Information related to FEMA assistance is rapidly changing. The most up-to-date guidance and related resources from the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) can be found on TEA's [Weather and Disaster Information](#) webpage. We strongly encourage LEAs to report their damages to TDEM, in addition to attending the Public Assistance Applicant Briefings.

Disaster Aid Assistance Survey

A school district or charter school located in an area declared a disaster area by the Governor under Texas Government Code, Chapter 48, and that incurs disaster remediation costs as a result of the disaster may apply to the Commissioner for disaster aid assistance during the two-year period following the date of the Governor's initial proclamation or executive order declaring a disaster.

The deadline for LEAs to submit the survey is Thursday, April 8.

Disaster Grant Funds through the U.S. Department of Education

It is possible federal disaster grant funds may be made available in the future for this disaster through the U.S. Department of Education. If so, you will have a quick turnaround to provide TEA with the following data:

- 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.

- List of allowable expenditures and estimated or actual cost of these activities to restart or reopen campuses
- Numbers of students displaced from their home campus who officially enrolled in a different campus within your LEA (do not count students who left your LEA).
- Track these displaced students specifically by 1) LEP status, 2) students receiving Special Education services, and 3) students who are not-LEP and not receiving Special Ed services. Also identify each displaced student as either Homeless or not.

The U.S. Department of Education has created a documentation tool to support LEAs with gathering this information. You can find the tool here: <https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx>

For more information, contact the Department of Grant Compliance and Administration at GrantSupport@tea.texas.gov or (512) 463-8992.

Additional Guidance

12. Given that we are still experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, how does this weather event impact public health guidance?

Districts maintain authority to enforce public health guidelines.

13. Is there any guidance related to child nutrition and related services?

Child nutrition programs operated by schools are intended to serve children. Schools that can safely operate may continue to serve meals and obtain reimbursement for meals served to eligible participants. Schools serving adult meals must establish a cost of the meal in accordance with federal guidance.

Program operators that have experienced food losses due to lack of power should work directly with their insurance providers to address any potential claims. Guidance on how to safely donate food and/or supplies can be found on the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) website.

Disaster feeding programs are meant to support communities responding to disaster events and provide individuals in need with food and shelter. Schools that are operating as an approved shelter can provide food to those seeking shelter. Details for authorized shelters can be found at: <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/FoodAssistanceforDisasterRelief.aspx>. Disaster response efforts also provide food to organizations like Food Banks and the Red Cross to support in-need individuals.

Guidance from TDA can be found here: <http://squaremeals.org/severewinterstorm>

14. How have SNAP Benefits been impacted by the winter storm?

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) received federal approval to automatically provide replacement benefits for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

(SNAP) recipients in 66 impacted counties for food lost or destroyed due to winter storm Uri, which began on Feb. 11.

Current SNAP recipients in the 66 counties receiving approval for automatic replacement benefits do not need to take any action and do not need to call 2-1-1 to receive their replacement benefits. Recipients in the affected counties will automatically receive a percentage of their February benefit allotment on their Lone Star cards by March 4.

Counties eligible to receive automatic partial replacement include: Angelina, Aransas, Bastrop, Blanco, Borden, Brazoria, Brewster, Burnet, Calhoun, Chambers, Coke, Colorado, Comanche, Cooke, Delta, Duval, Eastland, Edwards, Falls, Frio, Galveston, Garza, Gillespie, Glasscock, Goliad, Haskell, Irion, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kerr, Kinney, Knox, La Salle, Leon, Liberty, Live Oak, Llano, Loving, Lynn, Martin, Matagorda, McCulloch, Medina, Menard, Mitchell, Montgomery, Oldham, Parker, Reagan, Refugio, San Patricio, San Saba, Stephens, Sterling, Sutton, Terrell, Throckmorton, Trinity, Upton, Uvalde, Val Verde, Waller, Williamson, Young, Zapata, and Zavala.

Texans who do not live in one of the 66 eligible counties have until March 31 to report SNAP food loss and request replacement benefits. SNAP recipients in these counties must apply for replacement benefits. SNAP recipients in the 66 counties can also report other food loss and request additional benefits until March 31.

To allow people to continue social distancing and stay at home, HHSC is encouraging SNAP clients to request their replacement food benefits by calling 2-1-1 and pressing option 2. Alternately, recipients can download [Form H1855](#) (Affidavit for Nonreceipt or Destroyed Food Stamp Benefits) on the HHSC website. To limit exposure to COVID-19, recipients are encouraged to mail or fax the completed form to HHSC instead of visiting their local offices. Completed forms should be mailed to Texas Health and Human Services Commission, PO Box 149027, Austin, TX, 78714-9027, or faxed to 1-877-447-2839.

For more information, please visit hhs.texas.gov.

15. Are there any mental health resources available?

In addition to [TEA's Project Restore](#), National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has developed resources to help families and communities. Resources include:

- [After a Crisis: Helping Young Children Heal](#)
- [Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)
- [Simple Activities for Children and Adolescents without Power or When Playing Outside is Restricted](#)
- [Helping Youth after Community Trauma: Tips for Educators](#)
- [Helping Teens with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers](#)
- [Helping School-Age Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers](#)
- [Helping Young Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers](#)
- [The Power of Parenting: How to Help Your Child After a Parent or Caregiver Dies](#)

Psychological First Aid and Skills for Psychological Recovery

The NCTSN also has resources for responders on [Psychological First Aid](#) (PFA; [En Español](#)). PFA is an early intervention to support children, adolescents, adults, and families impacted by these types of events. The [PFA Wallet Card](#) ([En Español](#)) provides a quick reminder of the core actions. PFA Handouts include:

- [Parent Tips for Helping Infants and Toddlers \(En Español\)](#)
- [Parent Tips for Helping Preschoolers \(En Español\)](#)
- [Parent Tips for Helping School-Age Children \(En Español\)](#)
- [Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents \(En Español\)](#)
- [Tips for Adults \(En Español\)](#)

Disaster Helpline

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) – call or text **1-800-985-5990** (for Spanish, press “2”) to be connected to a trained counselor 24/7/365.