

ARCHIVE: COVID-19 Superintendent Call

May 1, 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>.

CARES Act

- Question: By when will the CARES funds need to be expended?
 - **RESPONSE:** Districts need to spend CARES funds by June 30, 2022.
- Question: Will we be allowed to pay cafeteria staff salaries for the month of June from CARES ACT funds? If we want to continue feeding students in the summer and hoped to use CARES Act money, do you have guidance on how we proceed since funds will not be available until after June 30?
 - **RESPONSE:** We have received notification from the USDA related to their child nutrition appropriation under the CARES Act signaling that those funds will be used solely for reimbursements under existing programming (e.g. following the same processes and reimbursement rates already in place). However, The CARES Act has language indicating that any other expenses that would be responding to pandemic-related needs are allowable, thus indicating that that pay for school nutrition staff would likely be allowable.
 - The state is continuing to work through the plans for the education portions of the CARES Act to be reviewed by an oversight committee for input and feedback. As that process unfolds in the coming weeks, we will also be sure to provide updates as we have them.
- Question: Will the CARES Act funds be able to be used to reimburse purchases we make now?
 - **RESPONSE:** Yes, if districts identify the technology as a need and it is utilized for distance learning these pre-award costs are allowable from March 13, 2020. *Note* the intent of the funding is to 1) provide relief for existing needs and 2) plan for future needs. A summary of allowable uses of these one-time funds are listed below, and additional details will be provided in the coming weeks:
 - purchasing education technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity);
 - providing summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs (including on-line learning);
 - planning for long-term closures;
 - addressing the unique needs of special populations;

- providing mental health services; and
- conducting other activities necessary to maintain operation of services and employing existing staff and coordination activities, including childcare and the needs of principals and school leaders.

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