

General Note: For compliance and training-related school safety questions, the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) has created a COVID-19 FAQ website at <https://txssc.txstate.edu/featured/covid-faq>. For funding-related and other school safety questions arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, please continue to send questions to disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov

1. Can we use the School Safety Allotment in Senate Bill 11 (SB 11) to defray expenses associated with COVID-19? *Posted April 2, 2020*

SB 11, 86th Texas Legislative Session, 2019, enacted new Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 42.168, which provides for an annual allotment (flowed annually to a district through the Foundational School Program) to improve school safety and security through actions that include securing school facilities, providing security for the district, providing safety and security-related training and planning, and providing programs related to suicide prevention and cyber-bullying. (Please refer to the [bill text](#) to view additional details regarding allowable expenditures.) To the extent that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused new or heightened security and safety risks for districts that fall within the categories of allowable expenditures under TEC, Section 42.168, School Safety Allotment funds may be used to address such risks. Please keep good documentation of the expenditures and use of funds as some of these costs may be reimbursable by state and federal disaster aid or stimulus funds.

2. Are the required spring Safety and Security Committee meetings waived?

The District School Safety and Security Committee meetings are legislatively mandated in TEC Chapter 37 Section 37.109, and TxSSC does not have the authority to waive the meetings. Other required meetings, such as board meetings are continuing as well. It is quite possible that the members of this committee will be available during the COVID-19 crisis to meet (e.g. Zoom meeting). A meeting should still be set and posted as required and a meeting held. If a quorum is not present, then the meeting should be handled as any other official open meeting where a quorum is not present.

3. Will TxSSC postpone the safety and security audit process for the 2017-2020 cycle?

The safety and security audit cycles are legislatively mandated in TEC 37.108, and for K-12 public schools the cycle ends on August 31, 2020. Since some districts have already completed their audits and are ready to submit their audit data, the reporting process will be opened as scheduled on April 15, 2020. TxSSC is also aware that many districts may not be ready or may not have the capacity to submit data at this time due to the impacts of the

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COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the *reporting deadline* of September 15, 2020 is now extended to November 15, 2020. It should be noted the *audit cycle* itself is mandated by law and not subject to change by TxSSC. It is a three-year cycle that began September 1, 2017 and is scheduled to end on August 31, 2020. The TxSSC has requested a waiver from the Governor's Office to extend the cycle to October 15, 2020 and we are awaiting the outcome of that request. TxSSC will continue to monitor the evolving situation and any additional updates will be published on their COVID-19 FAQ website.

4. How should our school district proceed if we cannot conduct a safety and security audit of district facilities because they are closed/locked due to COVID-19?

Each district may be facing different circumstances related to this issue so it is important that a district complies with all recommendations or orders from the local health authority, local governing body, Texas Department of State Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Governor's Office. If a school or facility is closed to conduct a deep cleaning, then no one should enter the campus or facility.

The priorities in most districts right now are likely focused around creating distance learning, food service, and meeting other needs of the district/community. However, if a district has the capacity and resources to conduct an audit and wants to proceed, they can certainly do so if all social distancing and other recommendations or orders from the entities listed above are followed.

In order to truly ascertain the operational safety and security of a campus or facility, it is a best practice to conduct audits while students and staff are present. However, given the current circumstances, this will not be a possibility for many school districts. If this is not possible, an audit can still be conducted. However, it is possible and likely some elements, such as intruder assessment, visitor management procedures, exterior door locking procedures, and climate surveys might be missed.

5. Has the 2019-2021 School Safety and Security Grant been released for application? Have grant recipients been notified?

All Grant communications have been on hold due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, TEA's Grants Administration Division should be updating the school districts soon with information pertaining to this grant. For further information and future updates, please also refer to the grant section updates on TEA's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Support and Guidance](#) webpage.