



## MEMORANDUM

Date: January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
To: Parents and Guardians of TriEA Scholars  
Subject: **Notice of Open-Enrollment Charter Closure at End of 2018-19 School Year**

Pursuant to a notice sent from TEA on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Sustainable Education Solutions, as the sponsoring entity of Trinity Environmental Academy (TriEA), will close TriEA at the end of 2018-19.

As a Generation 19 Open-Enrollment Charter opening in 2015-16, TriEA was required to participate in STAAR testing to evaluate student performance. In 2016, 2017, and 2018, TriEA was designated an Improvement Required (IR) district by TEA for student academic performance. Under recent legislative approval of **Senate Bill 2**, charter schools with 3 consecutive years of IR ratings must close. This “three strikes and you’re out” law only applies to charter schools. For this reason alone, TriEA is closing.

We are on track to meet standard in our 4<sup>th</sup> year based on the amazing work of your teachers and leadership team, but unfortunately it will not stop TriEA from closing. We are in this for the scholars, so we are continuously making adjustments to ensure 2018-19 our best school year ever! There are factors working to slow charter school growth and hold them academically accountable sooner than traditional ISD’s, which is keeping communities that have been exposed to decades of under-performing local schools wanting better school choices – and we are working on your behalf to get that message heard. There is no research to support a 3-year charter start-up process and a turnaround school improvement process running simultaneously. As we’ve also discovered, TEA’s legal obligation to provide campus turnaround support is not designed to work in a 3-year time frame either.

A lot of really great work has taken place here at TriEA though, and that’s thanks to our dedicated parents and teachers. Your support and belief in our work has been an inspiration, so thank you! We hope that you will continue the journey and ensure your family has educational choices by continuing to choose **where and how** your child is educated. It remains our sponsoring entity’s mission to close long-standing academic achievement gaps, teach and lead for social justice, use nature as a learning lab, and create opportunity for equitable access to college and career readiness for every student in unique and innovative ways in southern Dallas.

We look forward to an amazing second semester with each of you! Please reach out if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Michael Hooten  
Founder and Superintendent/CEO

## **School Closure - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

- 1. Will the school close before the scheduled last day of school, Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019?**  
No. Under our current budget, TriEA is positioned to end the year as planned, meeting our obligations to you and our community. Since student attendance is an important factor for academic success, we will continue to monitor it and communicate accordingly.
- 2. If the school is closing, should I withdraw my student now or wait until the end of the year?**  
Moving schools in the middle of the year is a difficult choice for parents and children and is not recommended. Before making any decision, we encourage you to meet with your school leaders and get a sense of the great work that is going on in the classrooms right now. Staying until the end of the school year allows for continuity and maintains your child's social and emotional connections to their peers, teachers, and leaders.
- 3. Are the teachers and staff committed to remaining in their positions for the rest of the year?**  
Yes. We have met with each teacher and staff member, all of whom are committed to remaining and supporting your child's academic growth this year.
- 4. Is TriEA still "accredited" in 2018-19 and will my child be able to transfer their grades to another public or private school?**  
Yes, we remain an accredited school through 2018-19. All grades and promotions earned will be honored by other schools.
- 5. Will the students still take STAAR in April and May of this year?**  
Yes. All eligible students will take the STAAR test.
- 6. Will there be summer school should my child fail two or more classes or not pass STAAR?**  
Yes. STAAR remediation classes can be taken at your local ISD if TriEA does not offer it in June.
- 7. What if I need copies of my school records, can I get a copies? What about in the future?**  
TriEA will prepare and provide all families with their final records once school is out. We will continue to be on campus for you to pick these up or we will mail them to you. In the future, you can request records from our Education Service Center, either Region 10 or Region 13. Once those contacts are established, TriEA will send that information on to our families.
- 8. Will STAAR results still be made available after the school year ends?**  
Yes. Just as in other years, results for STAAR will be available until June. Once received, TriEA will make them available for pick up and/or mail them as well.
- 9. What about the spring outdoor State Park camping trips, are those still on?**  
Yes. The dates are being finalized. Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade is going to Cedar Hill State Park for 2 days, 7<sup>th</sup> is going to Caddo Lake State Park for 3 days, and 8<sup>th</sup> to Palo Duro State Park for 4 days.
- 10. Can you recommend or help us transition to another school for next year?**  
Yes. There are several schools of choice along I-35, I-45, and I-20 that we can recommend and help provide information for registration/enrollment. Your local ISD may be a viable option as well.
- 11. Is there anything I can do as an advocate of school choice in the future?**  
Yes. It was reported recently that school choice advocates are facing an uphill battle in this year's legislative session, which just started this month. Reaching out to your local State Representative and Senator to voice your opinion is a great way to start.
- 12. Is there an appeal process where TriEA could get an abatement or stop the closure?**  
Yes and No. TriEA has exhausted all appeals available to us. While a true "due process" system does not exist for charters according to most, we are not taking legal action to stop this. We believe all children deserve an excellent educational experience. While we are well on our way to providing such a program, building an entire school district from scratch and turning it around in 3 years did not work this time. Recall that in 2006, TEA shut down the traditional ISD in this area for academic issues, then it was taken over by a larger ISD. We have worked diligently to overcome those challenges together as a community, but ultimately the area's student mobility rate was too high for a single-campus district to take on in today's high-stakes testing accountability system.