

The Austin Independent School District Board has [scheduled a vote Thursday](#) night to delay the start of the school year from Aug. 18 to Sept. 8, because of COVID-19. The district says the delay would give employees time to adjust to new health and safety requirements for in-person instruction.

The district is also applying to the [Texas Education Agency](#) to extend remote learning for four more weeks after the first four weeks of the school year. TEA officials have said districts can request to postpone in-person learning if they believe local public health conditions make it unsafe for students and staff.

The TEA has said schools must have a plan for on-campus learning to receive funding. The requirement comes after Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton [issued an opinion](#) late last month that local health authorities cannot “issue blanket quarantine orders that are inconsistent with the law.” Paxton argued that authorities can close schools if there is an outbreak within it – but not simply to prevent the spread.

On Monday, Education Austin, the union representing Austin ISD’s employees, [called for the school year to be delayed](#) until Sept. 8. Union President Ken Zarifis said teachers need more time to adapt to virtual learning since not all are familiar with new technologies.

The Austin ISD Board of Trustees is scheduled to vote on the delay at its meeting Thursday at 9 p.m.