

Region 4 Distance Learning Event Schedule—January 2021



Happy New Year! We hope that everyone was able to get some good rest and is rejuvenated for the new year! We are looking forward to the outstanding virtual learning opportunities we are presenting in January through our *Getting Smart Virtually* program.

We would like to welcome two new content providers to our program! We have recently formed a partnership with the *Texas Wildlife Association* and the *Galveston Bay Foundation*, which are outstanding organizations that provide educational programs aligned to the TEKS and related to our local area and state. We hope that you are able to sign your students up for these engaging new programs!

In January, students and teachers can learn how to prevent and report human trafficking, all about watersheds and water ecology by investigating freshwater sources and critters that depend on local aquatic ecosystems, why soil is so important to wildlife and people, coding skills in Scratch or Scratch Jr, and why it is important to test water quality in Galveston Bay. Check out these engaging programs below and sign up today!

In addition to these virtual learning experiences, you will also find the upcoming list of virtual statewide professional development events broadcast by TETN. These events are open to districts and charter schools.

Lastly, we wanted to remind you to keep checking for updates on your videoconferencing platforms. They are all releasing some exciting new features on a daily and weekly basis. Check out the new [Zoom Updates](#), [Microsoft Teams Updates](#), and [Google Meets Updates](#). You will want to continue to update your videoconferencing applications to take advantage of these new features as they are being rolled out, so check for updates often. Region 4 uses Zoom for our videoconferencing events. Be sure to always [Update your Zoom Client](#) before joining in to our events!

At Region 4, we continue to use secure videoconferencing platforms and settings to keep our audience members safe as they join into our live virtual learning events. Whether you and your students are learning in face-to-face environments or from home, both teachers and parents of students can sign the students up for these virtual events.

As always, be sure to visit [our website](#), like our page on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#), to learn more about our distance learning programs and offerings. Share our newsletter with anyone who may benefit from our programs and invite them to click on the [Subscribe to Our Newsletter](#) button below to receive this great information!

We would love to hear from you with any ideas or requests for additional distance learning events. Please feel free to drop us a line at vcsupport@esc4.net. Stay safe and well!

[Subscribe to Our Newsletter](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Human Trafficking

[January 7, 2021 - Human Trafficking for Middle and High School Students](#)

Defines Human Trafficking and provides statistics and information on traffickers. Illuminates where trafficking happens, who engages in it, strategies used by predators and traffickers to lure students, who is most affected by trafficking, and most importantly prevention and how to properly report and end Human Trafficking. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

[January 21, 2021 - Human Trafficking for Educators](#)

The average age of a human trafficking victim is between 13-15. This presentation clarifies human trafficking, exposes traffickers, discusses victimization, reviews warning signs and addresses prevention. A video is used depicting a student being lured by a trafficker to reinforce red flags and the grooming process. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

Dive Into Watersheds

[January 13 and 27, 2021](#)

Live from Lake Houston Wilderness Park, learn about watersheds and water ecology with Naturalist Lauren! In this program, students will learn about freshwater sources and critters that depend on this local aquatic ecosystem. Participants will explore Peach Creek and Lake Dabney located around the park and investigate collected water samples. Wet and wild featured guests will be highlighted and will vary based on what naturalists catch that morning. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

Stewarding Soil

[January 20, 2021](#)

Stewarding Soil is a series of hands-on activities that allows students to dig in and investigate! Students will learn how soil is formed; the characteristics of sand, silt, and clay; how soil health affects living and nonliving things; and what products come from soil. Throughout the program, students will gain a better understanding of why soil is so important to wildlife and people and how they can be stewards of this natural resource. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

Scratch Jr: Kindergarten - Grade 2

[January 21, 2021](#)

ScratchJr is a free app that teaches K-2 grade block-based coding. By creating algorithms, students can make characters move, jump, dance, and sing. Students will learn how to problem solve, design projects, and express themselves creatively. They will also use math and language in a meaningful and engaging way which supports the development of early childhood numeracy and literacy. Have your students come code to learn instead of learning to code. Please have all students and participants download the [Scratch Jr app](#) to their device. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

Scratch: Grades 3 and Up

[January 21, 2021](#)

Scratch is a free web-based block-based coding platform for grades 3 and up. Students will use Scratch to code their own interactive stories, animations, and games while they learn to think creatively, think logically, develop persistence/grit and work collaboratively. Educators are integrating Scratch across many different subject areas and age groups. Please have all students and participants create an account on the [Scratch website](#) prior to attending. Teachers can also create teacher accounts and add students under their teacher account. For more information on teacher accounts, please visit the [Scratch for Educators](#) page and scroll down to find directions on how to create teacher accounts in Scratch. [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

Galveston Bay STEM Careers: Water Quality Monitoring

[January 22, 2021](#)

What types of careers get you outside, let you play with cool equipment, and help people and the environment at the same time? Join Galveston Bay Foundation's Water Quality Programs Coordinator, Nick Ellis, to go behind the scenes in his laboratory, learn why it is important to test water quality in Galveston Bay, hear more about the foundation's Volunteer Water Monitoring Program, and more! Nick will present for 15 minutes and we will have Q&A for 15 minutes. Come prepared to ask him questions about his job and how he came to join GBF! [Learn more and register for this FREE session here.](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Region 4 partners with the [Texas Education Communications Network \(TETN\)](#) to provide districts and charter schools with professional development opportunities offered throughout the state of Texas. View the list of upcoming [TETN events](#) that are open to districts and charter schools.

ELL Special Populations Bilingual ESL Title III (Online) [January 15, 2021](#)

Attend this TETN session to receive information regarding changes and updates in Bilingual/ESL and Title III programs. Registration is open to members appointed by Region 4 area district superintendents. [Learn more and register here.](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Presidential Primary Sources Project (PPSP) kicks off in January. Enrich curriculums by exposing students to the expertise of Presidential Historians and National Park Service Rangers as they analyze our nation's presidents and legacies through this free, live, interactive web series, which runs from January-March of 2021. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Children's Museum Houston is offering free [3D Virtual Field Trips](#). Two exhibits are ready for class visits, with more to come in the New Year. [Learn more on how to access this virtual field trips here.](#)

Muses3 is offering a variety of resources for students and teachers this month. Take a look at their [free January book recommendations](#) tied to daily events in history and download free activity packs for [The Brothers Grimm](#) and [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)