

Chapter 61. School Districts

Subchapter A. Board of Trustees Relationship

§61.1. Continuing Education for School Board Members.

- (a) Under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.159, the State Board of Education (SBOE) shall adopt a framework for school board development to be used in structuring continuing education for school board members. The framework shall be posted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website and shall be distributed annually by the president of each board of trustees to all current board members and the superintendent.
- (b) The continuing education required under the TEC, §11.159, applies to each member of an independent school district board of trustees. All school board trainings and continuing education under this section shall comply with state law.
 - (1) Each school board member of an independent school district shall complete a local district orientation.
 - (A) The purpose of the local orientation is to familiarize new board members with local board policies and procedures and district goals and priorities.
 - (B) A candidate for school board may complete the training up to one year before he or she is elected or appointed. A newly elected or appointed school board member who did not complete this training in the year preceding his or her election or appointment must complete the training within 120 calendar days after election or appointment.
 - (C) The orientation shall be at least three hours in length.
 - (D) The orientation shall address local district practices in the following, in addition to topics chosen by the local district:
 - (i) curriculum and instruction;
 - (ii) business and finance operations;
 - (iii) district operations;
 - (iv) superintendent evaluation; and
 - (v) board member roles and responsibilities.
 - (E) Each board member should be made aware of the continuing education requirements of this section and those of the following:
 - (i) open meetings act in Texas Government Code, §551.005;
 - (ii) public information act in Texas Government Code, §552.012; and
 - (iii) cybersecurity in Texas Government Code, §2054.5191.
 - (F) The orientation shall be open to any board member who chooses to attend.
 - (2) Each school board member of an independent school district shall complete a basic orientation to the TEC and relevant legal obligations.
 - (A) The orientation shall have special, but not exclusive, emphasis on statutory provisions related to governing Texas school districts.
 - (B) A candidate for school board may complete the training up to one year before he or she is elected or appointed. A newly elected or appointed school board member who did not complete this training in the year preceding his or her election or appointment must complete the training within 120 calendar days after election or appointment.

- (C) The orientation shall be at least three hours in length.
 - (D) Topics shall include, but not be limited to, the TEC, Chapter 26 (Parental Rights and Responsibilities), and the TEC, §28.004 (Local School Health Advisory Council and Health Education Instruction).
 - (E) The orientation shall be provided by a regional education service center (ESC).
 - (F) The orientation shall be open to any board member who chooses to attend.
 - (G) The continuing education may be fulfilled through online instruction, provided that the training incorporates interactive activities that assess learning and provide feedback to the learner and offers an opportunity for interaction with the instructor.
 - (H) The ESC shall determine the clock hours of training credit to be awarded for successful completion of an online course and shall provide verification of completion as required in subsection (i) of this section.
- (3) After each session of the Texas Legislature, including each regular session and called session related to education, each school board member shall complete an update to the basic orientation to the TEC.
- (A) The update session shall be of sufficient length to familiarize board members with major changes in statute and other relevant legal developments related to school governance.
 - (B) The update shall be provided by an ESC or a registered provider, as defined by subsection (c) of this section.
 - (C) A board member who has attended an ESC basic orientation session described in paragraph (2) of this subsection that incorporated the most recent legislative changes is not required to attend an update.
 - (D) The continuing education may be fulfilled through online instruction, provided that the training is designed and offered by a registered provider, incorporates interactive activities that assess learning and provide feedback to the learner, and offers an opportunity for interaction with the instructor.
 - (E) The ESC or registered provider shall determine the clock hours of training credit to be awarded for successful completion of an online course and shall provide verification of completion as required in subsection (i) of this section.
- (4) The entire board shall participate with their superintendent in a team-building session.
- (A) The purpose of the team-building session is to enhance the effectiveness of the board-superintendent team and to assess the continuing education needs of the board-superintendent team.
 - (B) The session shall be held annually.
 - (C) The session shall be at least three hours in length.
 - (D) The session shall include a review of the roles, rights, and responsibilities of a local board, including its oversight relationship to administrators, as outlined in the framework for school board development described in subsection (a) of this section.
 - (E) The assessment of needs shall be based on the framework for school board development described in subsection (a) of this section and shall be used to plan continuing education activities for the year for the governance leadership team.
 - (F) The team-building session shall be provided by an ESC or a registered provider as described in subsection (c) of this section.
 - (G) The superintendent's participation in team-building sessions as part of the continuing education for board members shall represent one component of the superintendent's ongoing professional development.

- (5) In addition to the continuing education requirements in paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subsection, each board member shall complete additional continuing education based on the framework for school board development described in subsection (a) of this section.
 - (A) The purpose of continuing education is to address the continuing education needs referenced in paragraph (4) of this subsection.
 - (B) The continuing education shall be completed annually.
 - (C) In a board member's first year of service, he or she shall complete at least ten hours of continuing education in fulfillment of assessed needs.
 - (D) Following a board member's first year of service, he or she shall complete at least five hours of continuing education annually in fulfillment of assessed needs.
 - (E) A board president shall complete continuing education related to leadership duties of a board president as some portion of the annual requirement.
 - (F) At least 50% of the continuing education shall be designed and delivered by persons not employed or affiliated with the board member's local school district. No more than one hour of the required continuing education that is delivered by the local district may utilize self-instructional materials.
 - (G) The continuing education shall be provided by an ESC or a registered provider, as defined by subsection (c) of this section.
 - (H) The continuing education may be fulfilled through online instruction, provided that the training is designed and offered by a registered provider, incorporates interactive activities that assess learning and provide feedback to the learner, and offers an opportunity for interaction with the instructor.
 - (I) The ESC or registered provider shall determine the clock hours of training credit to be awarded for successful completion of an online course and shall provide verification of completion as required in subsection (i) of this section.
- (6) Each school board member shall complete continuing education on evaluating student academic performance and setting individual campus goals for early childhood literacy and mathematics and college, career, and military readiness.
 - (A) The purpose of the training on evaluating student academic performance is to provide research-based information to board members that is designed to support the oversight role of the board of trustees outlined in the TEC, §11.1515.
 - (B) The purpose of the continuing education on setting individual campus goals for early childhood literacy and mathematics and college, career, and military readiness is to facilitate boards meeting the requirements of TEC, §11.185 and §11.186.
 - (C) A candidate for school board may complete the training up to one year before he or she is elected or appointed. A newly elected or appointed school board member who did not complete this training in the year preceding his or her election or appointment must complete the training within 120 calendar days after election or appointment.
 - (D) The continuing education shall be completed every two years.
 - (E) The training shall be at least three hours in length.
 - (F) The continuing education required by this subsection shall include, at a minimum:
 - (i) instruction in school board behaviors correlated with improved student outcomes with emphasis on:
 - (I) setting specific, quantifiable student outcome goals; and
 - (II) adopting plans to improve early literacy and numeracy and college, career, and military readiness for applicable student groups evaluated in

the Closing the Gaps domain of the state accountability system established under TEC, Chapter 39;

- (ii) instruction in progress monitoring practices to improve student outcomes; and
 - (iii) instruction in state accountability with emphasis on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, state assessment instruments administered under the TEC, Chapter 39, and the state accountability system established under the TEC, Chapter 39.
 - (G) The continuing education shall be provided by an authorized provider as defined by subsection (e) of this section.
 - (H) If the training is attended by an entire school board and its superintendent, includes a review of local school district data on student achievement, and otherwise meets the requirements of subsection (b)(4) of this section, the training may serve to meet a school board member's obligation to complete training under subsection (b)(4) and (6) of this section, as long as the training complies with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- (7) Each board member shall complete continuing education on identifying and reporting potential victims of sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children in accordance with TEC, §11.159(c)(2).
- (A) A candidate for school board may complete the training up to one year before he or she is elected or appointed. A newly elected or appointed school board member who did not complete this training in the year preceding his or her election or appointment must complete the training within 120 calendar days after election or appointment.
 - (B) The training shall be completed every two years.
 - (C) The training shall be at least one hour in length.
 - (D) The training must familiarize board members with the requirements of TEC, §38.004 and §38.0041, and §103.1401 of this title (relating to Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect, Including Trafficking of a Child).
 - (E) The training required by this subsection shall include, at a minimum:
 - (i) instruction in best practices of identifying potential victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children;
 - (ii) instruction in legal requirements to report potential victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children; and
 - (iii) instruction in resources and organizations that help support victims and prevent child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children.
 - (F) The training sessions shall be provided by a registered provider as defined by subsection (c) of this section.
 - (G) This training may be completed online, provided that the training is designed and offered by a registered provider, incorporates interactive activities that assess learning and provide feedback to the learner, and offers an opportunity for interaction with the instructor.
 - (H) The registered provider shall determine the clock hours of training credit to be awarded for successful completion of an online course and shall provide verification of completion as required in subsection (i) of this section.
- (c) For the purposes of this section, a registered provider has demonstrated proficiency in the content required for a specific training. An individual applicant shall register with the TEA to provide the board member continuing education required in subsection (b)(3), (5), and (7) of this section. Groups and organizations are not eligible for registration.

- (1) The applicant's registration application shall include documentation of the applicant's training, experience, educational background, which must include a bachelor's or higher degree, and expertise in the activities and areas covered in the framework for school board development. A registration application that does not demonstrate the training, experience, educational background, and expertise shall be rejected.
 - (2) TEA will provide each applicant with a list of at least five TEA-approved background check providers and a list of TEA-approved background checks associated with obtaining a professional certification or license in this state, including background checks of school district employees conducted using the criminal history clearinghouse established by the Texas Department of Public Safety pursuant to the Texas Government Code, §411.0845. The applicant's registration application shall include a background check report from one of the approved providers or a background check report performed in association with obtaining an approved professional certification or license. A registration application that does not include a background check report completed in the last 12 months shall be rejected, and a registration application that includes a background check report documenting an applicant's felony or crime of moral turpitude conviction shall be rejected.
 - (3) Any registered provider will report to TEA within 10 days if they are convicted of a felony or crime of moral turpitude. TEA shall revoke a registered provider's status upon notification and confirmation that a registered provider has been convicted of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude. A registered provider will be given an opportunity to promptly contest in writing, within 30 days, a claim that the registered provider was convicted. TEA will respond within 30 days of its decision. An informal hearing will be conducted by TEA upon request from the registered provider. Registration shall be withheld until confirmation of registration is received from TEA.
 - (4) An updated registration shall be required of a provider of continuing education every three years.
 - (5) A registered provider may present with other panel members, speakers, or presenters for credit. Those panel members, speakers, or presenters must comply with subsections (d)-(m) of this section but are not required to comply with paragraphs (1)-(4) of this subsection. Any violation of this section by the other panel members, speakers, or presenters is the responsibility of the registered provider.
 - (6) A school district that provides continuing education exclusively for its own board members is not required to register.
 - (7) An ESC is not required to register under this subsection.
- (d) A provider of training under this section may not engage in political advocacy during the training sessions under this section.
- (1) For the purposes of this section, political advocacy means:
 - (A) supporting or opposing political candidate(s), a particular party, or a group of candidates who hold a particular political viewpoint or position, specifically or by unmistakable implication, with the intent to influence the outcome of an election or appointment; and/or
 - (B) supporting or opposing any measure with the intent to influence the outcome of a legislative, rulemaking, or other policy process or measure.
 - (2) Political advocacy shall not include discussions on fostering legislative relationships, legislative or rulemaking processes, or legislative or policy updates.
 - (3) If a provider is required to register under subsection (c) of this section, the provider shall provide a written acknowledgement, provided by the agency, indicating that the provider shall not engage in political advocacy while providing training. A registration application that does not include an acknowledgement shall be rejected.
 - (4) If the agency determines a provider engaged in political advocacy while providing training, the agency shall:

- (A) issue a warning to the provider;
 - (B) request that the provider submit a written explanation from the provider explaining the events and what action, if any, has or will be taken to prevent a future violation; and
 - (C) notify members of the State Board of Education of the warning issued to the provider and include any written explanation from the provider.
- (5) The board may remove the registration or the authorization to provide training under this section for an individual, school district, or regional service center if the board determines that the provider engaged in political advocacy while providing training under this section.
- (6) Removal of registration or authorization under paragraph (5) of this subsection shall be for a term of one year unless modified by the board.
- (7) A provider is presumed to have provided political advocacy while providing training under this section if the political advocacy occurs during that training session.
- (e) An authorized provider meets all the requirements of a registered provider and has demonstrated proficiency in the content required in subsection (b)(4) and (6) of this section. Proficiency may be demonstrated by completing a TEA-approved train-the-trainer course that includes evaluation on the topics and following a review of the provider's qualifications and course design, or through other means as determined by the commissioner.
 - (1) A school district or individual may be authorized by TEA to provide the board member training required in subsection (b)(4) and (6) of this section.
 - (2) An ESC shall be authorized by TEA to provide the board member training required in subsection (b)(4) and (6) of this section.
 - (3) The authorization process shall include documentation of the provider's training and/or expertise in the activities and areas covered in the framework for school board development.
 - (4) An updated authorization shall be required of a provider of training every three years.
- (f) No continuing education shall take place during a school board meeting unless that meeting is called expressly for the delivery of board member continuing education. However, continuing education may take place prior to or after a legally called board meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Texas Government Code, §551.001(4).
- (g) An ESC board member continuing education program shall be open to any interested person, including a current or prospective board member. A district is not responsible for any costs associated with individuals who are not current board members.
- (h) A registration fee shall be determined by ESCs to cover the costs of providing continuing education programs offered by ESCs.
- (i) For each training described in this section, the provider of continuing education shall provide verification of completion of board member continuing education to the individual participant and to the participant's school district. The verification must include the provider's authorization or registration number.
- (j) To the extent possible, the entire board shall participate in continuing education programs together.
- (k) At the last regular meeting of the board of trustees before an election of trustees, the current president of each local board of trustees shall announce the name of each board member who has completed the required continuing education, who has exceeded the required hours of continuing education, and who is deficient in meeting the required continuing education as of the anniversary of the date of each board member's election or appointment to the board or two-year anniversary of his or her previous training, as applicable. The announcement shall state that completing the required continuing education is a basic obligation and expectation of any sitting board member under SBOE rule. The minutes of the last regular board meeting before an election of trustees must reflect whether each trustee has met or is deficient in meeting the training required for the trustee as of the first anniversary of the date of the trustee's election or appointment or two-year anniversary of his or her previous training, as applicable. The president shall cause the minutes of the local board to reflect the announcement and, if the minutes reflect that a trustee is

deficient in training as of the anniversary of his or her joining the board, the district shall post the minutes on the district's Internet website within 10 business days of the meeting and maintain the posting until the trustee meets the requirements.

- (l) Annually, the SBOE shall commend those local board-superintendent teams that complete at least eight hours of the continuing education specified in subsection (b)(4) and (5) of this section as an entire board-superintendent team.
- (m) Annually, the SBOE shall commend local board-superintendent teams that effectively implement the commissioner's trustee improvement and evaluation tool developed under the TEC, §11.182, or any other tool approved by the commissioner.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §61.1 issued under the Texas Education Code, §§11.159, 11.185, and 11.186.

Source: The provisions of this §61.1 adopted to be effective March 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 875; amended to be effective May 7, 2003, 28 TexReg 3718; amended to be effective December 20, 2010, 35 TexReg 11223; amended to be effective August 25, 2014, 39 TexReg 6224; amended to be effective June 13, 2018, 43 TexReg 3783; amended to be effective March 24, 2020, 45 TexReg 1984; amended to be effective August 25, 2025, 50 TexReg 2066.

§61.2. Nomination of Trustees for Military Reservation School Districts and Boys Ranch Independent School District.

- (a) For purposes of this section, commanding officer is defined as the officer who is assigned to serve physically on the installation or military reservation on which the military reservation school district is located and who provides leadership for the functional support of and contingency or emergency coordination for the military reservation school district.
- (b) In nominating trustee candidates for military reservation school districts, the commanding officer of the military reservation shall do the following:
 - (1) submit a list to the commissioner of education with at least one nominee for each vacancy. A majority of the trustees appointed to the school board must be civilian, and all may be civilian. When two or more vacancies occur simultaneously, a list of at least one nominee for each vacancy shall be submitted. In cases when the commanding officer wishes to reappoint existing board members, a list of at least one nominee for each vacancy must still be submitted. Nominees not selected for existing vacancies may be resubmitted as candidates for subsequent vacancies. The commanding officer may rank in the order of preference the nominees submitted for each vacancy;
 - (2) submit a statement that verifies that each of the nominees is qualified under the general school laws of Texas and lives or is employed on the military reservation;
 - (3) submit a copy of a current biographical vita (resume) for each nominee, with a signature by the nominee attesting truth to the contents of the biographical vita;
 - (4) submit a statement from each nominee that expresses the nominee's willingness to accept appointment and to serve in such a capacity with full adherence to the state-established standards on the duties and responsibilities of school board members;
 - (5) submit a signed statement that expresses recognition of the powers of the board of trustees to govern and manage the operations of the military reservation school districts;
 - (6) submit a signed statement regarding the governance and management operations of the district that expresses recognition that the role of the commanding officer of the military reservation is limited only to the duty defined by statute in the process for appointing members of the board of trustees; and
 - (7) submit a statement that the membership composition of the entire board of trustees is in full compliance with the provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.352.
- (c) In nominating trustee candidates for the Boys Ranch Independent School District (ISD), the president and chief executive officer of the Cal Farley's Boys Ranch shall do the following:

- (1) submit a name to the commissioner for each vacancy. When two or more vacancies occur simultaneously, a name for each vacancy shall be submitted. In cases when the president and chief executive officer wishes to reappoint existing board members, the name of the existing board member for each vacancy must still be submitted;
 - (2) submit a statement that verifies that each of the nominees is qualified under the general school laws of Texas;
 - (3) submit a copy of a current biographical vita (resume) for each of the nominees, with a signature by the nominee attesting truth to the contents of the biographical vita;
 - (4) submit a statement from each of the nominees that expresses the nominee's willingness to accept appointment and to serve in such a capacity with full adherence to the state-established standards on the duties and responsibilities of school board members;
 - (5) submit a signed statement that expresses recognition of the powers of the board of trustees to govern and manage the operations of the Boys Ranch ISD;
 - (6) submit a signed statement regarding the governance and management operations of the district that expresses recognition that the role of the superintendent is in full compliance with the provisions of the TEC, §11.201; and
 - (7) submit a statement that the membership composition of the entire board of trustees is in full compliance with the provisions of the TEC, §11.352.
- (d) A member of a board of trustees appointed under the TEC, §11.352, and this section will serve a term of two years. A member of the board of trustees, who during the period of the term of office resigns from office or experiences a change of status that disqualifies such member for appointment under the provisions of the TEC, shall become ineligible to serve at the time of the change of status. A board vacancy resulting from such resignation or disqualification shall be filled in accordance with the procedures established under the TEC, §11.352, and this section.
- (e) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, a trustee of a military reservation school district appointed under this section who retires from active duty or civilian service while serving as a member of the board of trustees may continue to serve for the remainder of his or her term.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §61.2 issued under Texas Education Code, §11.352, as amended by House Bill 4210, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2023.

Source: The provisions of this §61.2 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 3705; amended to be effective December 20, 2010, 35 TexReg 11223; amended to be effective March 7, 2012, 37 TexReg 1510; amended to be effective March 24, 2020, 45 TexReg 1984; amended to be effective August 15, 2024, 49 TexReg 5992.

§61.3. School Safety Training for School Board Members.

- (a) The continuing education required under Texas Education Code, §11.159(b-1), applies to each member of an independent school district board of trustees.
- (b) Each member of an independent school district board of trustees shall complete the training on school safety adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE).
 - (1) The purpose of the training is to provide research-based information to trustees on ensuring a safe learning environment conducive to improving student outcomes.
 - (2) A candidate for school board may complete the training up to one year before he or she is elected or appointed. A newly elected or appointed trustee who did not complete the training under this section in the year preceding his or her election or appointment must complete the training within 120 calendar days after election or appointment.
 - (3) The training requirement shall be fulfilled by completing the online course adopted by the SBOE and made available by the commissioner of education.
 - (4) The training shall be completed every two years.

- (5) Each school district shall maintain verification of completion for each trustee.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §61.3 issued under Texas Education Code, §11.159(b-1).

Source: The provisions of this §61.3 adopted to be effective May 31, 2022, 47 TexReg 3130.