



Texas Association of School Boards

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Serving Texas Schools Since 1949

Texas School Board Member Continuing Education¹

Required Continuing Education

What continuing education is required for school board members?

School board members must complete continuing education hours annually. A trustee must complete any training required by the State Board of Education (SBOE). Tex. Educ. Code § 11.159(b). The requirements are set by the SBOE in administrative rules. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1.

Under Texas Education Code section 11.159, the SBOE is required to adopt a framework for governance leadership to be used in structuring continuing education for school board members. The framework must be posted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Website and be distributed annually by the president of each board of trustees to all current board members and the superintendent. See TASB Policy BBD.

The SBOE requires four categories (sometimes called “tiers”) of continuing education for board members, including training about the Texas Education Code, annual team building, continuing education to meet the assessed needs of each board, and training on evaluating student academic performance. Other laws require additional training for newly elected or appointed trustees.

To the extent possible, entire boards are encouraged to participate in continuing education programs together. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b), (i).

¹ An electronic version of this document is available on TASB School Law eSource at tasb.org/Services/Legal-Services/TASB-School-Law-eSource/Governance/documents/tex-sch-bd-mem-continuing-education.pdf.

Training for First-Year Trustees

Type	Who	What	When	Length	Provider
Local Orientation 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(1)(A)	Required for new members, but other members may attend	Local board policies and procedures; district goals and priorities; local practices in instruction, financial operations, district operations, superintendent evaluation, and board member roles and responsibilities.	Up to one year before or within 120 days after appointment or election	3 hours	Local district
Open Government Training Tex. Gov't Code §§ 551.005, 552.012	New members	Responsibilities of board under the Texas Open Meetings Act (OMA). Responsibilities of board and employees under the Texas Public Information Act (PIA); may be delegated to PIA coordinator. See Policy GBAA.	Within first 90 days	1-2 hours	Attorney General (AG) or AG-approved course
Orientation to the Texas Education Code (Tier One) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(1)(A), (B)	Required for new members, but other members may attend	Basic orientation to code with emphasis on governing Texas school districts, including Parental Rights and Health Education.	Within first 120 days	3 hours	Regional Education Service Center (ESC)

Type	Who	What	When	Length	Provider
Team building (Tier Two) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(2)	Every member of the board and the superintendent	To enhance effectiveness of board- superintendent team; must review roles, rights, and responsibilities of board from SBOE framework; must assess continuing education needs for the year.	Annual	3 hours	ESC or registered provider
Continuing Education (Tier Three) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(3), (h)	New members	Additional continuing education to meet assessed needs based on SBOE framework.	First year of service	10 hours, including up to 5 hours of qualifying online training and up to one hour using self- instructional materials.	ESC or registered provider; at least half must be designed and delivered by persons not affiliated with the district.
Evaluating student academic performance 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(4)	New members or candidates up to one year before election or appointment	To provide research-based information designed to support the oversight role of the board; must include specified content on goal setting, monitoring, and accountability.	Within 120 days after election or appointment, if not completed while candidate	3 hours	ESC or TEA- authorized provider
Total Hours				20+ Hours	

Training for Experienced Trustees (after First Year)

Type	Who	What	When	Length	Provider
Update to the Texas Education Code (Tier One) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(1)(C)	All members who did not receive the Orientation to the Texas Education Code with current law	Legislative update to the Texas Education Code	After each regular legislative session and each called session affecting education	Sufficient length to cover major changes	ESC or registered provider
Team building (Tier Two) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(2)	Every member of the board and the superintendent	To enhance effectiveness of board-superintendent team; must review roles, rights, and responsibilities of board from SBOE framework; must assess continuing education needs for the year.	Annual	3 hours	ESC or registered provider
Continuing Education (Tier Three) 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(3), (h)	All members	Additional continuing education to meet assessed needs based on SBOE framework.	Annually, after first year of service	5 hours, including up to 5 hours of qualifying online training and up to one hour using self-instructional materials. For board presidents, part of this training must relate to the leadership duties of the president.	ESC or registered provider; at least half must be designed and delivered by persons not affiliated with the district.

Type	Who	What	When	Length	Provider
Evaluating student academic performance 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1 (b)(4)	All members	To provide research-based information designed to support the oversight role of the board; must include specified content on goal setting, monitoring, and accountability.	By the second anniversary of the completion of the trustee’s previous training	3 hours	ESC or TEA-authorized provider
Total hours				8+ hours	

Is a trustee who returns to the board after a break in service a “new” trustee?

Neither state law nor rule answers this question. If the break in service has been brief, the board member may be able to rely in good faith on previous training to establish that he or she is not a new member. However, if the break in service has been more than a year, TASB generally recommends starting the training process from scratch.

Can one category of training (such as open government training) also count toward a board member’s required annual hours of continuing education (i.e., ten hours for new members, five hours for returning members)?

Unless a statute or rule says otherwise, hours spent in training can be counted toward the annual required hours of continuing education (sometimes called “tier three”) even if the hours also satisfy another training requirement. In other words, if a trustee attends an AG-approved 1.25 hour session on the Texas Open Meetings Act, the trustee has met the Texas Government Code requirement for a newly elected official and may also report 1.25 hours of continuing education.

The SBOE rule expressly states that time required for the local district orientation, the orientation or update to the Texas Education Code (tier one), and the annual team building (tier two) may not count toward the total hours for additional continuing education (tier three). 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(3). However, the SBOE rule does not address how to classify training received by a trustee in excess of the hours required for a local orientation, orientation or update to the Texas Education Code, or team building. Nor does the rule specifically address whether the hours spent in training on evaluating student academic performance count toward required hours of continuing education (tier three). If, for example, an experienced trustee

voluntarily attends a local district orientation, does the time count as additional credit for tier one (which the trustee does not need) or as time toward tier three (which the trustee might need)? Again, unless a rule or statute expressly states otherwise, a trustee or provider might reasonably determine that time spent in training in excess of the hours required in one tier may be counted as credit toward additional hours of continuing education (tier three).

What is required for the three-hour board training on evaluating student academic performance?

The SBOE must require a trustee to complete at least three hours of training every two years on evaluating student academic performance. The training must be research-based and designed to support the oversight role of the board of trustees under Texas Education Code section 11.1515. Tex. Educ. Code § 11.159(c).

In accordance with the Texas Education Code, the SBOE rule requires the training to be completed in the year prior to board service or within 120 days of election or appointment, then every two years thereafter. The training must last for at least three hours, and it must be provided by a TEA-authorized provider. In addition, the SBOE rule states that the training will include, at a minimum, the following:

- Instruction in school board behaviors correlated to improved student outcomes with emphasis on inputs, outcomes, and collaborative student outcome goal setting;
- Instruction in progress monitoring to improve student outcomes with emphasis on progress monitoring practices, formative assessments, interim assessments, and summative assessments; and
- Instruction in state accountability with emphasis on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, state assessment instruments administered under Texas Education Code chapter 39, and the state accountability rating system.

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(4).

TEA has posted [guidance](#) regarding the required training on evaluating student academic performance.

Can the required three-hour board training on evaluating student academic performance count as team building?

The SBOE rule on board member training permits a board that completes the training on evaluating student academic performance together, along with the board's superintendent, to count the same three hours of training as team-building credit under certain circumstances. In order for the training to count for both purposes, the following must be true:

- The training must be attended by an entire school board and its superintendent.
- The training must include a review of local school district data on student achievement.
- The training must meet the all the requirements for the three-hour board training on evaluating student academic performance, as described above.
- The training must meet the requirements for team building, meaning that the purpose must be to enhance the effectiveness of board-superintendent team, the session must include a review of the roles, rights, and responsibilities of board based on the SBOE framework, and the team must assess its continuing education needs for the year.
- Finally, the training must comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act (see below at Application of the Open Meetings Act).

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(4)(F).

Training Logistics

Who facilitates school board training?

Local district: Each local district provides its own trustees' local district orientation. In addition, a local school district may provide up to half of trustees' continuing education based on assessed needs (tier three) credit. If local school district officials provide training for their own board members, they are not required to register as providers with TEA. No more than one hour of the required continuing education that is delivered by the local district may utilize self-instructional materials. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(f), (h).

Education Service Centers: ESCs are the exclusive source for trustees' orientation to the Texas Education Code, and they are designated by law as a potential provider for all school board training purposes. ESCs do not have to register with TEA as providers. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(f).

Other registered providers: A private or professional organization, school district, government agency, college or university, or private consultant can register with TEA to provide board member continuing education for the legislative update to the Texas Education Code (part of tier one), team building (tier two), and additional continuing education based on assessed needs (tier three). The registration process must be completed every three years and must include documentation of the provider's training or expertise in the activities and areas covered in the framework for governance leadership. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(f). TEA maintains an online list of [registered providers](#).

Authorized providers: Being a registered provider does not automatically mean that a provider is authorized to offer credit for the three-hour training on evaluating student academic performance. The training is available from the ESCs. In addition, a registered provider may become an authorized provider by demonstrating proficiency in the content required for the course on evaluating student academic performance (see above). Proficiency may be demonstrated by

completing a TEA-approved train-the-trainer course and evaluation on the topic, by being certified as a Lone Star Governance coach, through a review of the provider's qualifications and course design, or through other means as determined by the commissioner of education. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(4)(C). TEA maintains an online list of [authorized providers](#).

Where does board training usually take place?

For new board members, the local district orientation must be provided in the local school district, and the orientation to the Texas Education Code must be provided at the regional ESC. Additional credit may be provided for a board at a local board meeting by the school district itself, a representative of the regional ESC, or another registered provider. Other continuing education credit is typically awarded at regional events, such as updates provided by ESCs, or by other registered providers at regional seminars and state or national conventions. For reasons described below at Application of the Open Meetings Act, team building typically takes place in local school districts.

Can training be completed online?

A board member may fulfill up to five hours of continuing education 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. The registered provider must determine the clock hours of training credit to be awarded for successful completion of an online course and provide verification of completion. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(3).

Who pays for board member training expenses?

Training expenses typically include the cost of hiring a consultant for in-district training and the cost of registration fees and travel for board members to attend regional, state, or national events.

For courses offered by ESCs, registration must be open to any interested person, including current and prospective board members. Tex. Educ. Code § 11.159. ESCs must determine a registration fee to cover the cost of providing continuing education programs at the ESCs. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(e). Other registered providers typically charge a registration or consulting fee as well.

Local schools boards usually approve an amount in the budget each year to cover the cost of training and reasonable, allowable, documented travel expenses. See TASB Policy BBG. Although board members serve without compensation, available state and local funds may be used to reimburse their travel expenses when the travel is determined to be necessary in the conduct of the public schools and to serve a proper public purpose. Tex. Educ. Code §§ 11.061(d), 45.105(c); Op. Tex. Att'y Gen. No. H-133 (1973).

A district is not responsible for any training costs associated with individuals who are not current board members. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(d). A board may not pay the travel expenses of spouses or other persons with no school district responsibilities or duties to perform at board-related activities. Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. MW-93 (1979).

Application of the Texas Open Meetings Act

What open meeting procedures are required for regional, state, and national conventions?

A quorum or more of a school board may attend a regional training event outside the boundaries of the school district only if the training is not a *meeting* as defined by the OMA. When a school board conducts a *meeting*, the OMA requires procedures such as advance public notice and minutes. A meeting must be open to the public unless a closed meeting exception applies. Moreover, Texas school boards must conduct their meetings within the geographic boundaries of their respective school districts, unless they are conducting a joint meeting with another governmental body. Tex. Educ. Code § 26.007.

The term *meeting* does not include the gathering of a quorum of a school board at a regional, state, or national convention or workshop, if formal action is not taken and any discussion of public business is incidental to the workshop. Tex. Gov’t Code § 551.001(4)(B).

This exception to the term *meeting* allows board members to attend training at regional workshops and conventions in numbers of a quorum or more without violating the OMA. Because such training is not a *meeting*, the board does not need to post advance notice of a regional workshop or convention. Because the training is not a *meeting*, however, members of a school board attending training in numbers of a quorum or more must exercise caution to avoid taking action (i.e., making decisions) or even discussing local school business except as is incidental to the workshop.

Can training offered at a statewide or regional training event count for team-building credit?

Although nothing in statute or rule expressly forbids team building at regional events, the team building requirement inherently requires discussion of local governance and training needs. The OMA exception does not permit a board to take action at a regional training event, but the SBOE rule on team building requires boards to assess the continuing education needs of the board-superintendent team: “The assessment of needs shall be based on the framework for governance leadership and shall be used to plan continuing education activities for the year for the governance leadership team.” 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(b)(2). Because detailed discussion of local needs may not be merely incidental to regional training, team building may not fit within the OMA exception. Further, team building is intrinsically an activity focused on the effectiveness of the local governance team. A regional event attended by multiple boards may not be the ideal setting to accomplish this task.

What open meeting procedures are required for local board training?

When training occurs in a local school district, no exception to the term *meeting* applies. The training must be conducted in accordance with the OMA. Moreover, no continuing education may take place during a board meeting unless that meeting is called for the delivery of board member continuing education. Continuing education may take place before or after a legally called board meeting in accordance with the OMA. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(c).

If board training (including team building) involving a quorum of the school board is conducted for a local school district, several requirements apply:

- The training must be posted as a board meeting under the OMA. Tex. Gov't Code § 551.041.
- The training must be posted as a separate meeting with no other business. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(c).
- The training must be open to the public (if no closed meeting exception applies). Tex. Gov't Code § 551.002.
- The training must take place within the boundaries of the district. Tex. Educ. Code § 26.007.

Reporting Continuing Education Credit

How is credit tracked?

All providers of continuing education are required to provide verification of completion to participating board members and their school districts. The verification must include the provider's registration number. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(g).

The completion of continuing education should be tracked locally to facilitate required public announcements about training credit. District officials with myTASB access can view and print board member training reports at TASB's [Continuing Education Credit Reporting Service](#). The district record keeper may also enter and track credit for non-TASB sponsored training events through the service.

How is continuing education credit reported?

At the last regular meeting of the board of trustees before an election of trustees, the current board president must 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. The announcement must state that completing the required continuing education is a basic obligation and expectation of any sitting board member under SBOE rule. The president must cause the minutes of the local board to reflect the announcement. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(j).

Timing of the announcement: Because announcements must be made at the last regular board meeting before trustee elections, districts with May elections will likely announce in April, and districts with November elections will likely announce in October. The purpose of announcing before elections is two-fold. First, announcing shortly before elections synchronizes the timing of the public report with the time of year when most board members' credits are actually due to be completed, as most board members are elected, and state rules give board members one year to earn the required credit. Second, the announcement may be relevant to the election if a current board member is running for re-election.

Setting the time for announcements as the last regular meeting before an election of trustees raises several questions.

- **Are announcements required to be annual?** State law and rule do not specify that announcements must be annual in districts that do not conduct annual elections—i.e., districts that use the November uniform election date with four-year terms of office. As a matter of best practice to promote transparency, however, TASB recommends establishing a local board policy to make annual announcements. See TASB Policy BBD.
- **What if an election is canceled?** Again, state law and rule do not address this situation, but as a matter of best practice, TASB recommends making an annual announcement at the regular meeting that falls the month before the month in which the district would typically conduct an election.
- **What about special districts (e.g., military districts) in which all board members are appointed?** Again, state law and rule do not address this situation, but as a matter of best practice, TASB recommends making an annual announcement. The board may choose to establish a local policy that calls for an annual announcement. See TASB Policy BBD.

Time period for earning credit: Arguably, making the public announcement the month before an election gives trustees only 11, not 12, full months to complete their credit. This raises additional questions.

- **Is a trustee deficient if the trustee will meet the training credit requirement by the anniversary of his or her election or appointment, but has not completed the hours by the date of the public announcement?** Arguably not, but the board president's announcement should clarify the situation. If a trustee is registered to complete training in a timely manner by the date of the announcement, the board president may include that information in the announcement. TASB offers a model announcement, [*Board President Annual Announcement on Continuing Education of Board Members*](#).

- **Are appointed trustees expected to finish all credits before the announcement even if they have not been on the board for a full year?** An appointed trustee has one year from his or her appointment to complete the first-year training requirements, so the time period for earning credit (and determining compliance) will be unique for each appointed board member. If your board has an appointed member, your board president should explain the unique timeframe in the public announcement.

To summarize:

Local Election Date	Time Period for Earning CE (for elected trustees)	CE Reporting Date
May	From May to the following May	April board meeting
November	From November to the following November	October board meeting

What happens if a trustee does not complete the required training?

The minutes of the last regular meeting of the board of trustees held 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. If the minutes reflect that a trustee is deficient, the district must 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. Tex. Educ. Code § 11.159(b); 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(j).

TASB suggests the following steps if a board member fails to complete required training:

Step One—public announcement at board meeting: As stated, TASB recommends that school boards make annual announcements about the completion of board training credit, even in districts that do not conduct annual elections. The topic should appear on the open meeting notice of the board’s meeting (e.g., “Annual Announcement of Board Training Credit”). If a trustee has failed to complete any component of required training, TASB recommends that the announcement note the deficiency. TASB offers a model announcement, [Board President Annual Announcement on Continuing Education of Board Members](#).

Step Two—include the announcement in the minutes: To meet the requirement that the announcement be recorded in the board meeting minutes, the board president may direct that a report with the same text as the announcement be attached to the minutes.

Step Three—post notice of a deficiency online: If the announcement and minutes indicate that a trustee is deficient, the minutes must be posted online within ten business days and must remain posted until the deficiency is cured.

If a trustee is deficient in meeting a training requirement, but the trustee had a good reason for missing the training, can the announcement, minutes, or online posting explain the deficiency?

State law and rule do not dictate the form of the board president's announcement, the level of detail in the board meeting minutes, or the content of any accompanying post on the district's website. If additional information would assist the public in understanding the cause of a trustee's deficiency, the district may choose to include that information.

Can the minutes be changed or removed from the district's website if a trustee completes the required training?

Remember that the board's approved minutes are the official record of what transpired at the board meeting. Consequently, the minutes may not be altered, even if a trustee cures a deficiency. Once all deficiencies noted in the minutes are cured, the minutes may be removed from the web posting and retained in the same manner as other board meeting minutes. See TASB's FAQ [Open Meetings Records](#). TEA has indicated that if minutes reflect deficiencies on the part of more than one trustee, and one trustee cures the deficiency but another does not, the minutes must remain posted. However, the web posting can be updated to reflect completion by the trustee who has cured his or her deficiency. Tex. Educ. Agency, *SB 1566 (85th Session)*, (Mar. 2018).

Should districts create a web posting about board training credit?

Neither state law nor rule specifies where on the district's website the minutes should be posted. The location of the posting is a matter of local control. The statute requires the minutes to be posted if a deficiency is noted, but a district may wish to create an additional online statement that accompanies the posting. The advantage of adding an online statement would be to allow the statement to be updated with new developments even though the minutes cannot be altered. For example, if two deficiencies are noted, and one is cured, the minutes must remain posted without alteration, but the online statement could clarify that one of the deficiencies was cured.

Must a deficiency be noted in the minutes and posted online for every deficiency, or only deficiencies that occur after a trustee's first year of service?

Because the statute and SBOE rule indicate that a trustee is deficient upon the *first* anniversary of the trustee's election or appointment, an argument can be made that a trustee is deficient for purposes of the minutes and posting requirements only as of the first anniversary of the trustee's election or appointment. For the sake of transparency and in order to treat all trustees equally, TASB does not recommend differentiating between board members based on their years of service. If your board wishes to rely on this distinction, please work with your school attorney to

develop an appropriate explanation as part of your public announcement. Note also that TEA has indicated informally that a trustee may have multiple *first* anniversaries of joining the board. A first anniversary will occur every time a trustee is elected or appointed to the board, even if the trustee is being elected after appointment or reelected with no break in service.

What is a benefit of exceeding the required amount of training?

Annually, the SBOE commends the board-superintendent teams that receive at least eight hours of continuing education in team building and other continuing education on assessed needs as an entire board-superintendent team. Annually, the SBOE will also commend the board-superintendent teams that effectively implement the commissioner’s trustee improvement and evaluation tool developed under Texas Education Code section 11.182 or any other tool approved by the commissioner. 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 61.1(k), (l).

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This document is provided for educational purposes only and contains information to facilitate a general understanding of the law. It is not an exhaustive treatment of the law on this subject nor is it intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney. Consult with your own attorneys to apply these legal principles to specific fact situations.

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