



TEXAS IS READY TOOLKIT

It's been two decades since Texas last revised curriculum standards for sex education - but now we're ready for a change.

In 2020, the State Board of Education (SBOE) will update the basics of sex education in Texas. **We need your help** to make sure students in Texas get access to the information they need.

The Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the North Texas Alliance to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy in Teens (Ntarupt), and Healthy Futures of Texas are collaborating on advocacy to improve sex education curriculum standards for Texas youth.

Keep reading to learn how you can get involved!

WHY

Should you get involved?

Medically accurate, abstinence-plus, inclusive sex education can help young people access the skills they need for healthy relationships and healthy futures.

Current sex education standards, set in the 1990s, don't cover critical topics like consent and inclusivity, and provide minimal information on topics like contraception and STI prevention. With your help, we can create positive change.

What's Inside?

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THANK YOU

To Gary and Sara Ahr for their generous support of this advocacy toolkit and their work on behalf of Texas youth.



THE BASICS: SEX ED ADVOCACY IN TEXAS

WHAT

should sex ed include?



Medically accurate, age-appropriate information on essential topics such as puberty, biology, reproduction, and menstruation.

Abstinence-plus content, which teaches that abstinence is the best and safest choice, but also offers fact-based risk reduction in case youth become sexually active, now or in the future.

Information on contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), presented in an accurate, tone-neutral, and non-shaming way. It should cover both the risks and benefits of methods, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), which is more than 99% effective in real-world use.

Consent and healthy relationships. It's not enough to just teach about refusing sex. Students should learn about setting and communicating their own boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others. Healthy relationship skills like communication and self-regulation are also key for both friendships and romantic relationships.

Content that is inclusive and respectful of the diversity of Texas students and their families. Sex ed should teach respect for LGBTQ youth, who face higher rates of bullying in the classroom.

For the first time in more than 20 years, Texas leaders are revising the minimum curriculum standards that guide sex education in public schools.

The "Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills," or TEKS, for health education are currently being revised by the State Board of Education. Current TEKS focus heavily on abstinence and do not offer all of the information youth need for healthy relationships and futures.

Advocates, students, and community members have a key role to play in this important process.

WHO

is shaping policy?



The State Board of Education (SBOE) is an elected group of 15 members, 10 Republicans and 5 Democrats, who shape education policy in Texas. Each member represents nearly 2 million constituents.

The SBOE appoints workgroup members to draft and provide feedback on the TEKS language, then debates, amends, and adopts the final language at quarterly meetings. Remaining meeting dates for 2020 are:

- June 29-June 2
- September 8 - 11
- November 17 - 20

In Texas, sex ed policy also is shaped by the state legislature and by local school districts.

Advocate

Use this link to learn who represents you



Learn More

Visit www.TexasIsReady.org to stay up to date on sex ed revisions



Support

Support our work with a donation



Texas ADOLESCENT HEALTH

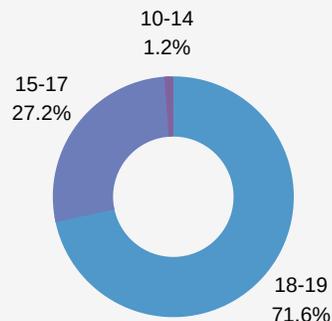
Number of Teen Births, 2018

Number of Births in Texas

Births to 10-14 year olds:	304
Births to 15-17 year olds:	6,904
Births to 18-19 year olds:	18,185

Total Teen Births in Texas, 2018: 25,393

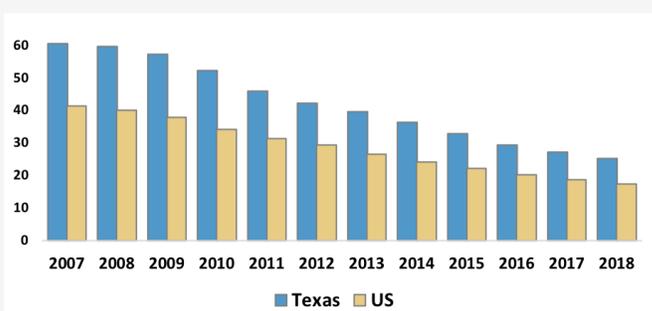
Age of Mother



19%
of teen births in Texas are repeat births

Teen Birth Rate, 2018

Texas births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19



Area	2018 Rate
Texas:	25.0*
US:	17.4

Many young women in Texas struggle to access the resources needed to make informed decisions about their health, futures and families. Teen births in Texas are on the decline, but the Texas teen birth rate still was 45% higher than the U.S. average in 2018.

Between 2009 - 2018 the Texas teen birth rate declined

56%

* Preliminary estimated 2018 rate

A baby is born to a teen mom in Texas every **21 minutes**

IN TEXAS...

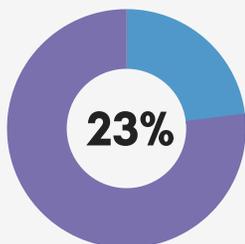
63% of 12th grade students have had sex.

Just 16% of school districts teach abstinence-plus sex education.

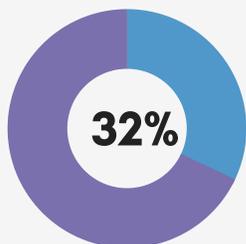
In 2018, Texas had the 9th highest teen birth rate and the highest rate of repeat teen births in the nation..

Community Well-Being

Texas Children Living in Poverty



Texas Young Adults Without Health Insurance



Sexually Transmitted Infections

Though teen pregnancy rates are declining, the count and rate of sexually transmitted infections are increasing among Texas youth.

Count of New Cases, Youth 15-24, Texas

	2009	2018	Change
HIV	987	1,022	+ 4%
Chlamydia	74,731	93,136	+ 25%
Gonorrhea	18,752	23,403	+ 25%

ADVOCACY GUIDE

TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



One important step you can take in this advocacy work is reaching out via email to your State Board of Education (SBOE) member. It may feel like a small act, but sharing your perspective through advocacy can make a significant impression on elected officials. The SBOE meetings in June and September will have a lasting impact on millions of Texas students, their families, and their communities. We appreciate your efforts to help the members of the SBOE make well-informed, data-driven decisions.



Providing Feedback: One of the most important steps in your outreach is letting us know how it goes so we can gauge how members may feel about or vote on specific issues. Please provide an update on your outreach by using your smart phone camera app to scan the QR code to the left. Did you get a response? Were they receptive to your recommendations? Did they disagree with anything? Any insights you can share will be valuable!

The Basics of Advocacy Outreach

The State Board of Education (SBOE) Health TEKS update, especially surrounding the sexual health strand, can be a divisive and ideologically sensitive issue. Remember that not everyone will agree with you. You may find agreement on some points but not others. Stay respectful and look for common ground. After all, we all want what's best for Texas kids. Our goal is to garner as much support as possible on as many priorities as possible and position ourselves as a resource for nonpartisan, data-driven information. Therefore, the Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and its partner organizations advise using language that is tone-sensitive, neutral, and non-combative.

Additionally, remember that SBOE members have full time jobs outside of their unpaid work on the Board. Unlike other government officials, they do not have staff dedicated to constituent correspondence and policy issues, and may be slow to respond or even unresponsive. This is not uncommon. If you don't immediately hear back from them, wait a few days and then follow up on the same email chain.

Your personal expertise and experience is invaluable. Story-telling is a powerful tool for changing minds. As you engage in this advocacy, share personal stories and experiences that bring your positions to life.

Show your appreciation! After speaking with a member, remember to thank them for their time and their public service. A thank you email is a good moment to add any points that you may have forgotten in the initial call or email.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Research supports sexual health education that provides critical information on risk reduction and healthy relationships. When you reach out to your SBOE member, consider reiterating some of the policy priorities below.

A series of appointed workgroups are drafting TEKS language. While we have some suggestions for improving draft language, we generally support the "Workgroup E" TEKS draft, which has strong language around consent, healthy relationships, and risk reduction. Unfortunately, workgroup E does not specifically include language that is inclusive of LGBTQ youth. Our policy recommendations are below.



Scan this code to see draft TEKS language

Abstinence-plus standards: Texas statute requires sexual health education to "present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior" for unmarried persons of school age. But sex education should also teach fact-based risk reduction. This should include information on the most effective methods of birth control, including long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods, which are more than 99% effective in actual use and recommended by doctors for use in adolescents. Language about contraceptive options should remain neutral and fact-based. TEKS should include information on prevention, testing, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, including updated information regarding the gains in HIV prevention and treatment.

ASK: Support abstinence-plus standards around topics like contraception and prevention, screening and treatment of STIs.

Workgroup E recommendations: Streamline contraceptive language, ensure language is tone-neutral, add a reference to LARC, and add language on prevention and treatment of STIs.

Inclusivity: Current TEKS do not acknowledge the needs -- or even the existence -- of LGBTQ students. These youth face bullying and discrimination, which may lead to mental health concerns. All students deserve to learn in inclusive settings that give them the information they need.

ASK: Sex ed should address the needs of LGBTQ youth and should include standards around cultivating respect for all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. This language is not included in current or draft TEKS.

Workgroup E recommendations: Add language to prevent bullying of LGBTQ youth.

Relationships-focused: It is crucial for sexual health education to teach the concept of consent -- "the notion that we should respect one another's boundaries in order to be safe, preserve dignity, and build healthy relationships." [1] Health education should clearly outline the importance of setting, communicating, and respecting boundaries about physical and emotional contact in all types of relationships at all age levels. For example, kindergarten students should understand that they can choose a high five instead of a hug, and they can also choose not to be touched at all. Older students may learn to apply concepts of consent in romantic relationships in age-appropriate ways, such as boundaries around holding hands in middle school. Students should also learn other key features of healthy relationships, such as communication, emotional self-regulation, and respect, both online and in person. This fundamental education from a young age can instill concepts that foster lifelong healthy relationships and protect against workplace harassment, domestic violence, and sexual abuse.

ASK: Support Workgroup E language around consent and healthy relationships.

Strengths-based and respectful: Sex education should not shame or marginalize any students in any way, including victims of sexual violence, young parents, those who chose to become sexually active, and students who identify as LGBTQ. Health education in schools should acknowledge that there are many ways to live a healthy life and have a family, respecting the experiences of all individuals and families. It should not use language which shames students who are pregnant or parenting, or whose families or friends have a history of young parenthood.

ASK: Support Workgroup E language, which respects a diversity of family structures.

Citations:
[1] Tatter, Grace. "Consent at Every Age." Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dec. 19, 2018.





OUTREACH TEMPLATES

Below are several templates and policy talking points for email outreach to your SBOE member. You may fall under more than one of the categories below. Please feel free to cut and paste different aspects of the scripts below and personalize your email with anecdotes of your children, students, patients, etc. as you see fit. Personal stories -- your own experiences, your professional encounters, and your reasons for being passionate about this issue -- can be very powerful in advocacy.



Dear Member **[Last Name]**,

As a **[Republican]** **[Democrat]** constituent of yours, I urge you to support an abstinence-plus approach to the sex education portion of the Health TEKS update.

As a medical professional, I witness first hand the consequences of a lack of sexual and reproductive education in many of our public schools. Texas has the 9th highest teen birth rate in the nation and ranks first in the nation for repeat teen births. 63% of teens report being sexually active by their senior year, and a baby is born to a teen mom in Texas every 21 minutes. More so, counts of chlamydia and gonorrhea have increased by 25% in the past decade. **[Consider including anecdotes of patients.]** Science continues to advance, and our youth deserve to be equipped with the latest information about contraception and disease to help them make responsible and healthy decisions. Specifically, students should know that abstinence is the most effective form of preventing unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. They should also have medically accurate information about their contraceptive options. For example, long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy, which is why state agencies have been dedicating time and attention to exploring how to address barriers to access LARC. Furthermore, barrier methods, including condoms, must be used to prevent sexually transmitted infections once a person decides to become sexually active, whether in adolescence or adulthood.

As a parent, my main concern is that my children grow up to be happy and healthy. This includes receiving a quality education that prepares them for the many obstacles and choices they will face as they grow up. Health education plays a significant role in our children's lives, teaching them to recognize healthy relationships, make safe decisions, and respect themselves and the boundaries of others. **[Consider including personal stories about you or your children. Did they receive sex education? Were you equipped to teach them data-driven sex education?]** While parents are the first and most important educators of their children, I also deeply value the role that teachers play in providing medically accurate health education for Texas youth.

As an educator, it is my job to make sure that my students receive the best education possible. This is why I support the inclusion of data-driven, inclusive sex education in the final Health TEKS. School should be a safe environment for all children. **[FOR TEACHERS WITH YOUNGER STUDENTS]** From a young age, I strive to create an environment that fosters respect and kindness. Even at the youngest age, it's critical that students learn about setting boundaries for themselves and respecting the boundaries of others. For instance, I teach students that they may say no to a hug from their peers and instead give a high-five if they prefer. **[FOR TEACHERS WITH OLDER STUDENTS]** My students represent a number of cultural and ideological backgrounds, come from diverse family structures, and some identify as LGBTQ. There are many ways to live a healthy life and have a family, respecting the experiences of all individuals and families. Texas public schools should include standards around cultivating respect for all people, regardless of their family structure, sexual orientation or identity. **[Whether you teach health education or not, consider including stories of your students.]**

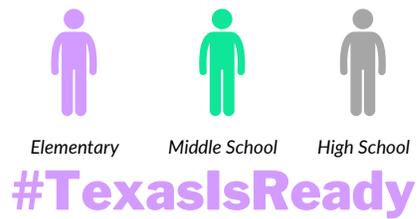
As a student, I did / did not receive sex education in school. (Was the sex education good or bad? What made it good or bad? What did you learn? What do you wish you had learned? If not in the classroom, where did you turn for information on sexuality? Friends? Internet?) Please consider including medically-accurate and age-appropriate abstinence-plus sex education in the Health TEKS update.

I respectfully urge the State Board of Education to include standards in the Health TEKS that are medically-accurate and data-driven and that provide students with the tools they need to be healthy and safe. Thank you for your time and your commitment to making Texas a better place for all students.

Sincerely,
Your Name



Puberty & Reproduction



More than 9 out of 10 Texans support teaching the physical and emotional issues of puberty.

Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 2020 Polling Data conducted by Baseline & Associates

What?

Why?

Puberty is the biological process in humans that results in fully developed sex organs. This process includes physical, social, and emotional changes, including the development of secondary sex characteristics (breasts, bodily hair, growth spurts) and complex emotions. Puberty can begin in individuals as early as 8 years of age and end around late teens. [1] Providing puberty education to young people could help build confidence, contribute to social solidarity, dissolve stigma around a natural process, and encourage healthy habits.

1. Mayo Clinic, Precocious Puberty. 2. Chumlea WC. et al. Age at Menarche and Racial Comparisons in US Girls. Pediatrics. 2003.



We Recommend



Puberty & menstruation information, including emotional changes, hygiene, and menstrual products



Information on the role of hormones as they relate to individuals' anatomical & physiological changes, development, & personal health
Thorough menstrual cycle information related to its relationship to fertilization



Information on puberty's relationship to sexual health & reproduction, including healthy menstruation variations & factors that may impact menstrual cycles.

Call to Action!

You can be an advocate for medically accurate, unbiased information to be taught in Texas schools! Contact your SBOE member, submit your comments to the TEA in support of abstinence-plus curricula, and keep up with the latest developments at TexasIsReady.org.

Please reach out to Jen@TXCampaign.org with any questions or for more information.

Consent & Healthy Relationships



Elementary



Middle School



High School

#TexasIsReady



88% of Texas registered voters believe that sex education should teach about consent, including respecting the boundaries of others.

Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 2020 Polling Data conducted by Baseline & Associates

What?

Why?

While there are many definitions of “consent”, it may be thought of as “the notion that we should respect one another’s boundaries in order to be safe, preserve dignity, and build healthy relationships.” [1] Romantic relationships are just one area in which consent may be given or withheld. For example, kindergarteners may learn that consent means being able to choose to hug a friend or to give them a high-five instead. While refusal is an important skill, youth should also learn to respect the boundaries set by other people about their bodies.

1. Tatter, Grace. “Consent at Every Age.” Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dec. 19, 2018. 2. Texas Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), 2017

23%

of Texas high school students reported experiencing sexual dating violence in the last 12 months.[2]

We Recommend



Instruction on respecting boundaries set by others & on how students have the right to set their own boundaries regarding their bodies.

Skill building for healthy friendships, including communication, healthy expressions of emotion, & self-regulation.



Educating about consent in age-appropriate contexts, such as holding hands or kissing
Emphasizing dating violence is always wrong.



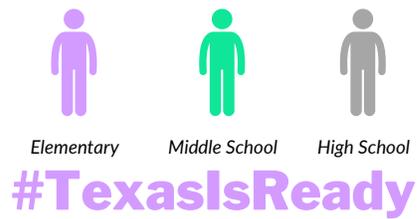
Describing traits of healthy relationships, prevention of dating violence, & key concepts around consent, including the ways in which drugs or alcohol

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Contraception & Pregnancy



Nearly 4 out of 5 Texans agree that sex education in public schools should teach students about condoms and contraception.

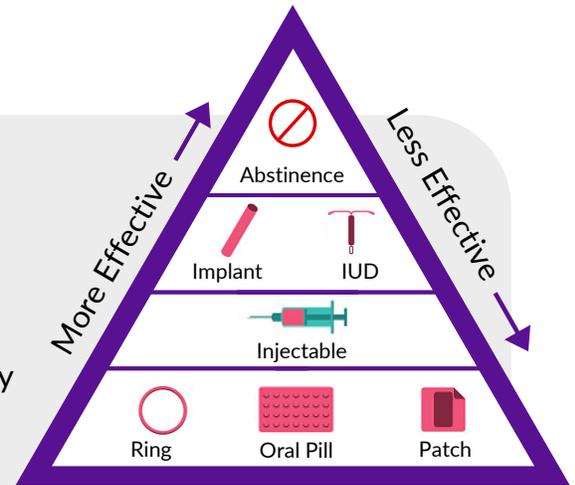
Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 2020 Polling Data conducted by Baseline & Associates

What?

Why?

Texas consistently holds one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy & birth, and has the highest rate of repeat teen birth in the U.S. [1] 63% of Texas students report having been sexually active by their senior year of high school; many more will become sexually active soon after high school, as they enter the workforce, college, or the military. [2] It is critical for youth to have access to medically-accurate information about contraception to ensure they are prepared to stay safe and healthy when they become sexually active.

1. Texas Campaign analysis of CDC Natality data, 2018. 2. Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, 2017.



We Recommend



Teach reproduction so students learn age-appropriate concepts that frame it in the larger context of biology.



Describe maternal health factors, including mental health. Include the benefits & potential side effects of all contraceptive methods, including long-acting reversible contraception, which is more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.



Encourage students to reflect on parental responsibilities & identify life goals they hope to accomplish prior to parenthood. Provide resources for strengthening families, & note the importance of paternal involvement.

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Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)



Elementary



Middle School



High School

#TexasIsReady



Nearly 9 out of 10 Texans support teaching about prevention, screening, and treatment of STIs, including HIV.

Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 2020 Polling Data conducted by Baseline & Associates

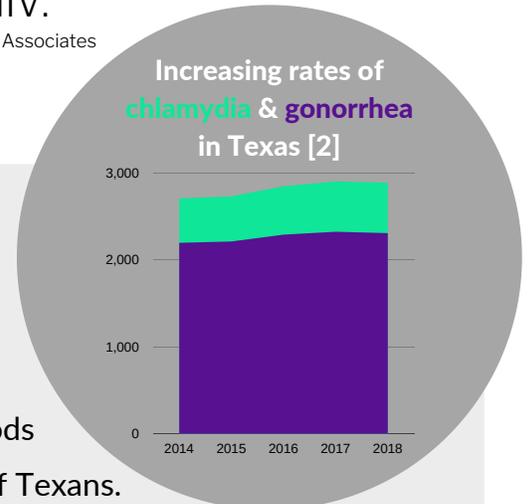
What?

Why?

Over the past decade, chlamydia and gonorrhea cases have increased by 25% for Texas youth aged 15–24. [1] This highlights the need for medically accurate information on how to prevent transmission, including barrier contraceptive methods (condoms), to ensure the health of our upcoming generation of Texans.

Current TEKS language has minimal reference to STIs, and no focus on prevention or treatment options. Withholding information from young people does not necessarily prevent them from engaging in the behavior, but rather exposes them to potential higher rates of infection, and less education to inform healthy decisions.

1. Texas STD Surveillance Program, Texas Department of State Health Services. 2019. 2. Ibid.



We Recommend



Describe sexually transmitted infections and emphasize the importance of testing

Include medically-accurate content on prevention, including abstinence, barrier methods, and HIV prevention medication.

Call to Action!

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Inclusivity



Elementary



Middle School



High School

#TexasIsReady



Three out of four Texans support promoting respect for people of all sexual orientations.

Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 2020 Polling Data conducted by Baseline & Associates

What?

Why?

An estimated 159,000 Texas youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer/questioning (LGBTQ+). [1] While many LGBTQ+ youth are happy & healthy, as a group they are more likely to experience bullying, suicide attempts, homelessness, alcohol use, & risky sex. [2,3] Studies have shown LGBTQ+ youth also experience higher risks for unplanned pregnancy when compared to their peers. [4] Providing inclusive education can help LGBTQ+ youth avoid negative health outcomes and thrive.

92%

of LGBTQ+ people report hearing negative messages about being LGBT - often from school and their peers. [5]

1. Mallory C. et al. The Impact of Stigma and Discrimination Against LGBT People in Texas. The Williams Institute UCLA School of Law. April 2017. 2. Kann L. et al. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9--12 --- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, Selected Sites, United States, 2001--2009. 2011. 3. Coker T. The health and health care of lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents. Annual Review of Public Health. 2009. 4. Hodson K. et al. Lesbian and bisexual women's likelihood of becoming pregnant: a systematic review and meta-analysis. BJOG. 2017. 5. Human Rights Campaign. HRC. 2018 LGBTQ Youth Report.

We Recommend



Teach the importance of respecting every person for who they are.



Demonstrate strategies for showing respect for individual differences such as race, physical appearance, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

Demonstrate ways students can work together to promote dignity and respect for all people.



Develop a plan to promote dignity and respect for all people in the school community.

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WHO REPRESENTS ME? TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The State Board of Education is made up of 15 members representing culturally, ethnically, and ideologically diverse regions of the state. Below are biographies on each member. As a rule of thumb, we assume that most Democrats will be supportive of our goals. In fact, we know that many of them would prefer even more intensive changes. Republicans, on the other hand, may warrant a more nuanced approach. Please review the advocacy guide and outreach template documents to learn more about how to discuss some of the more hot-button issues.



To find your State Board of Education member, use your smart phone to open your camera app and scan the QR code on the right and input your home address. Your SBOE member will be 4th on the list that appears. We encourage you to reach out to them via email to share your perspective.

Texas SBOE Members by District

District	Member	Party	Email
District 1	Georgina Perez	Democrat	georgina.perez@tea.texas.gov
District 2	Ruben Cortez, Jr.	Democrat	rubencortezfortexas@gmail.com
District 3	Marisa Perez-Diaz	Democrat	marisa.perez@tea.texas.gov
District 4	Lawrence Allen, Jr.	Democrat	sboesupport@tea.texas.gov
District 5	Ken Mercer	Republican	sboesupport@tea.texas.gov
District 6	Donna Bahorich	Republican	donna.bahorich@tea.texas.gov
District 7	Matt Robinson	Republican	matt.robinson@tea.texas.gov
District 8	Barbara Cargill	Republican	sboecargill@sbcglobal.net
District 9	Keven Ellis	Republican	ellisSBOE@gmail.com
District 10	Tom Maynard	Republican	tom@maynardfortexas.com
District 11	Patricia Hardy	Republican	pat.hardy.1109@gmail.com
District 12	Pam Little	Republican	pam.little@tea.texas.gov
District 13	Aicha Davis	Democrat	Aicha.Davis@tea.texas.gov
District 14	Sue Melton-Malone	Republican	smelton51@gmail.com
District 15	Marty Rowley	Republican	marty@martyrowley.com



WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 1: GEORGINA PEREZ

DEMOCRAT, EL PASO

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Georgina Cecilia Pérez is the State Board of Education representative for District 1, representing students, parents, and educators in 40 counties in West Texas and over 900 miles along the Texas-Mexico border. Pérez is an El Paso native where she served as an eighth-grade English Language Arts and Reading teacher, department chair, pre-service and new-service teacher mentor and professional development educator in the same district for more than a decade. She was also elected by her SBOE peers as the only Democrat to serve on the state's Long-Range Plan for Public Education Steering Committee, which helped to establish broad goals for the Texas public school system. Pérez is the founder and president of the Rural School Education Program & Scholarship Foundation for students and families in El Paso's rural communities. Her initiatives include college and career mentorship programs for graduating seniors, awarding scholarships to students, and grants to public school teachers. She is the founder of the Texas Student Civic Engagement Project and a YWCA racial justice ambassador.



DISTRICT 2: RUBEN CORTEZ, JR.

DEMOCRAT, BROWNSVILLE

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Brownsville businessman Ruben Cortez, Jr. is the District 2 State Board of Education member. A Democrat, Cortez was first elected to the State Board of Education in November 2012 and re-elected to a four-year term in 2014 and 2018.

Cortez is a former member of the Brownsville Independent School District board of trustees. He has also served on the Council of Urban Boards of Education, the national prekindergarten legislative committee for the National School Board Association, as chair of the Federal Relations Network Stipend Committee for the Texas Association of School Boards' Board of Directors and on the TASB legislative committee. He currently serves as vice chair of the Region One Education Service Center Board of Directors.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 3: MARISA PEREZ-DIAZ

DEMOCRAT, CONVERSE

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Marisa B. Perez-Diaz, the District 3 State Board of Education member, was born and raised in San Antonio. Perez-Diaz, a Democrat, was elected to the State Board of Education in November 2012 and took office on Jan. 1, 2013. She is the youngest Latina, nationally, to have ever been elected to serve on a State Board of Education and is now serving her third term on the board, having been re-elected in 2014 and 2018.

Perez-Diaz holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology, with a minor in psychology, from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's degree in educational leadership and policy studies from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Perez-Diaz's passion for child advocacy and public service manifested itself during her tenure with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Her training and certification in child welfare range from child development and advanced risk assessment to planning diversity initiatives and community engagement. From there, she went on to serve as the government and community relations specialist for the San Antonio Independent School District, giving back to her alma mater. She has also worked for IDEA Public Schools and Judson ISD. She is now the director of strategic partnerships in Edgewood ISD.



DISTRICT 4: LAWRENCE ALLEN, JR.

DEMOCRAT, HOUSTON

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Lawrence Allen, Jr., a third-generation educator, was elected to the State Board of Education in 2004 and re-elected in 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2018. He holds the same seat once occupied by his mother, State Representative Alma Allen.

As the District 4 board member, he represents about 1.7 million people in the Houston area.

Along with his service on the board, Allen is the director of special projects in the Houston Independent School District. He served as principal of the Jesse H. Jones High School, assistant principal of Dowling Middle School, Jones Senior High School and Jack Yates High School. He was a teacher at Lanier and Dowling Middle School. Allen is a member of the Houston Association of School Administrators; Texas Association of Gifted and Talented; National Association of Secondary Principals; and the National Association of Secondary Administrators; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. He holds a Bachelor's and two Master's degrees from Prairie View A&M University.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 5: KEN MERCER

REPUBLICAN, SAN ANTONIO

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Ken Mercer, a Republican, was elected to the State Board of Education District 5 seat in November 2006 and re-elected in 2010, 2012 and 2016. He is not seeking reelection

Mercer is a retired financial services and technology project manager, as well as a former member of the Texas House of Representatives. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from The University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Business Administration from UT-San Antonio. He also has a Master's of Business Administration in finance and management from St. Mary's University. Mercer was a member of the Delta Mu Delta Graduate Business Honor Society. Mercer was named 2005 Alumnus of the Year by UTSA and was given the Distinguished Legislator Award by the Texas Republican House Caucus. In 2003, the San Antonio Police Officers Association named Mercer the Legislator of the Year. The former state representative served as an advisor to the governor as a member of the state Homeland Security Council. He has also served on the State Republican Executive Committee.



DISTRICT 6: DONNA BAHORICH

REPUBLICAN, HOUSTON

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Donna Bahorich, a Houston Republican, was elected to the state board as the District 6 representative in 2012 and 2016. She initially took office on Jan. 1, 2013. She served as chair of the board from June 18, 2015 to Sept. 16, 2019. She is not seeking reelection.

After graduating from Virginia Tech University with a Bachelor of Science degree in financial management, Bahorich went to work in the telecommunications industry. She was first employed by the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company and later transferred to Mountain Bell. Bahorich earned a Master of Arts degree in counseling from Liberty University. In 2005, Bahorich became the campaign manager for Dan Patrick during his first run for a state senate seat. She subsequently worked as the district director, campaign treasurer, and communications director for Sen. Patrick. Bahorich was named the Senate District 7 Volunteer of the Year in 2007. She also served as the 2010 Harris County Republican primary director. Bahorich is a member of the American Leadership Forum-Houston, Education Class 43 and Conservative Leaders for Education. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) has recognized Bahorich multiple times for her work with the community. Bahorich has also received the Friends of Education Award from the Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA).

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 7: MATT ROBINSON

REPUBLICAN, FRIENDSWOOD

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Matt Robinson, a Republican from Friendswood, was elected to the State Board of Education in November 2018. He represents Southeast Texas.

Robinson, a urologist, has practiced medicine in Galveston County for more than two decades. He grew up in nearby Lake Jackson and graduated from Brazoswood High School in the Brazosport Independent School District. Robinson served on the Friendswood ISD Board of Trustees from 2008 to 2018. In 2013, he became the first Friendswood trustee to earn the Master Trustee designation through the Leadership TASB program. Along with his school board duties, Robinson has been active in the Galveston County Republican Party. He is a graduate of the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio.



DISTRICT 8: BARBARA CARGILL

REPUBLICAN, CONROE

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Barbara Cargill was first elected to a four-year term of office on the board in November 2004 and was re-elected in 2008, 2012 and 2016. Gov. Rick Perry appointed her to serve as chair of the board from 2011 - 2015. She is not seeking reelection. Cargill has been an active science educator in the Dallas and Houston areas for more than 30 years.

Cargill is the founder and director of Wonders of the Woodlands Science Camp, which has been in operation since 1995. WOW! Science Camp provides creative, hands-on learning to more than 1,200 children each summer. Cargill has received the Thanks to Teachers National Excellence Award, the National Audubon Society Award, and the A.J. Sales Educational Award. She was a nominee for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) and was a nominee for the Science Teachers Association of Texas' award for outstanding teacher. She is a PTA lifetime member honoree, having served on a PTA board every year that her three sons were in school. She is a sustainer with the Junior League of The Woodlands and is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 2015, Cargill received the Education Award from Interfaith of The Woodlands. She holds a Master's of Science degree in Science Education from Texas Women's University and an undergraduate degree in education from Baylor University.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 9: KEVEN ELLIS

REPUBLICAN, LUFKIN

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Keven Ellis serves as chair of the State Board of Education, having been appointed to this leadership role by Gov. Greg Abbott on Sept. 16, 2019. The appointment as chair runs through Sept. 16, 2021. Ellis previously served as vice chair of the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, which laid the groundwork for this session's school finance reform.

Ellis is a chiropractor and has operated Ellis Chiropractic since 1998. That same year, Ellis began his public service career. He is actively involved in the community, serving with the Lufkin Host Lions Club, where he served as president for 2012-13, member of the Lufkin Independent School District Tri-Ethnic Board, president of Angelina County Benefit Rodeo, chairman of Small Business Council for Angelina County Chamber of Commerce, president of the Z&OO Railroad, chairman of Eastview United Pentecostal Church's building committee and assistant scoutmaster for Troop 136. In 2012, he was elected to the Lufkin ISD Board of Trustees and served as board president in 2015-2016, resigning from that post in November 2016 after winning the seat on the state board. Along with his service on the local school board, Ellis was a charter member of the Lufkin ISD Education Foundation. Ellis attended Western Washington University and obtained his Doctorate of Chiropractic from Texas Chiropractic College.



DISTRICT 10: TOM MAYNARD

REPUBLICAN, FLORENCE

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Tom Maynard has been actively engaged in education as a parent, teacher, school board trustee and non-profit executive for more than 30 years.

Maynard worked in career and technical education for 13 years as an agricultural science teacher and earned national recognition for innovative programs and student achievement. He served for 17 years as executive director of the Texas FFA Association, the nation's largest state career and technical student organization with an overall membership of more than 118,000 students on more than 1,000 Texas campuses. Maynard retired from this post in January 2017. Maynard also comes to the State Board with fine arts experience. He has led church music programs as a choir director and worship leader for 17 years. He and his wife Freda also operate a real estate appraisal firm and a small purebred livestock operation that leverages reproductive technologies such as embryo transfer.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 11: PAT HARDY

REPUBLICAN, FORT WORTH

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Patricia "Pat" Hardy, a lifelong educator, was elected to serve District 11 of the State Board of Education in November 2002 and re-elected in 2004, 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2018. During her tenure on the board, Hardy at various times has served as vice chair and chair.

Hardy retired in 2017 as an instructional specialist in the Weatherford Independent School District. For five years she served the district as the Social Studies coordinator. Previously, she taught high school world history and world geography for 30 years at Castleberry High School in Fort Worth. Hardy has served on many state and national education boards and committees. As a teacher, she served on both state textbook committees and state assessment review teams. She is a teacher consultant with the National Geographic Society Education Division. She has served the Society from 1989 until 2013 as the Texas Coordinator for the National Geographic Bee. Currently, she is serving on a national panel on teacher alliances for the National Geographic Society. She also serves on the Texas Council for the Social Studies, as well as the executive board for the Texas Social Studies Supervisors Association. Hardy began her statewide involvement in education reform after being appointed by the Texas Speaker of the House to both the Texas Education Economic Policy Center in 1989 and to the state's Committee on Student Learning in 1992. Hardy holds a master's degree in Secondary Education and History from the University of North Texas and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Studies from Howard Payne University.



DISTRICT 12: PAM LITTLE

REPUBLICAN, FAIRVIEW

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Pam Little was first elected to the State Board of Education in November 2018. Little is a business owner and active community volunteer. She is the co-owner of Ace Fence of DFW, which was started from her garage 40 years ago and is now one of the largest fence companies in the metroplex.

A native Texan who grew up in the Bryan-College Station area, Little attended Texas A&M University and graduated from the University of Houston. She is an alumna of the Allen-Fairview Leadership class 24, past board member of the Allen Fairview Chamber, the Texas Federation of Republican Women, the executive board of the Plano Rotary, and the Junior League Community Advisory Board. Little served as a community college instructor, teaching courses in small business management. She also worked in educational publishing, retiring as a regional vice president from Houghton Mifflin Publishers in 2008.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 13: AICHA DAVIS

DEMOCRAT, DALLAS

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2019 - JAN. 1, 2023

Aicha Davis was elected to the State Board of Education in November 2018. She represents about 1.7 million Texans who live in parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

A native of Decatur, Mississippi, Davis began her education career as a sixth-grade reading and science teacher in Louisiana. She later moved to high school where she taught advanced sciences and engineering and coached robotics teams. Davis moved to Texas in 2011 where she has since worked in the Irving and DeSoto school districts. Davis enrolled in language development classes, studied Spanish, and obtained her English as a Second Language certification so she could better communicate with her Texas students. She also holds a Texas science certification and a principal certification.

Davis is now a doctoral student in education leadership and policy at the University of North Texas. She holds a master's degree in education administration from that university and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi. Davis was a recognized fellow with Leadership ISD Dallas and is a national ranked robotics and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) coach.



DISTRICT 14: SUE MELTON-MALONE

REPUBLICAN, ROBINSON

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Sue Melton-Malone, the District 14 State Board of Education member, is a retired educator who taught in the Texas public schools for 36 years. Melton-Malone, a Republican, was first elected to the state board in 2012.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Baylor University in her hometown of Waco, Melton-Malone began her formal career, teaching in the Ross and West school districts. She was honored as the recipient of the Golden Apple Award for Teaching Excellence and twice named to Who's Who Among America's Teachers. Melton-Malone served as president of the Association of Texas Professional Educators, the largest non-union teacher organization in the country, in 2007-2008. She is now active with the Waco-McLennan County Retired Teachers Association. Melton-Malone currently is the worship leader and choir director of Primrose Drive Baptist Church and is a volunteer with numerous youth groups.

WHO REPRESENTS ME

TEXAS SBOE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES



DISTRICT 15: MARTY ROWLEY

REPUBLICAN, AMARILLO

BOARD TERM: JAN. 1, 2017 - JAN. 1, 2021

Marty Rowley, the District 15 State Board of Education member, is an attorney and certified mediator from Amarillo. Rowley was elected to a four-year term on the State Board of Education in November 2012 and re-elected to a second term in 2016. Rowley now serves as vice chair of the board. He is not seeking reelection.

Rowley has spent more than 20 years as a Board certified attorney and seven years as a pastor at an 8,000-member church. Active in his community, Rowley is a past president of the Maverick Boys and Girls Club of Amarillo; past president of the CareNet Pregnancy Centers of Amarillo; and past chairman of Governmental Affairs Council of the Amarillo Chambers of Commerce. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Eastern New Mexico University. He holds a law degree from the Texas Tech School of Law, where he was on the 1982 National Championship Trial Advocacy Team. He has been president of the West Texas Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Rowley is a member of the Texas State Bar Association, the Amarillo Bar Association, American Board of Trial Advocates, American Association of Mediators and the Texas Association of Mediators.