

The State Board of Education (SBOE) adopts new §61.4, concerning school district boards of trustees. The new section is adopted without changes to the proposed text as published in the February 27, 2026 issue of the *Texas Register* (51 TexReg 1231) and will not be republished. The new section reflects changes made by Senate Bill (SB) 204, 89th Texas Legislature, 2025, to the SBOE's duty to provide training courses for independent school district trustees.

REASONED JUSTIFICATION: Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.159, Member Training and Orientation, requires the SBOE to provide a training course for school board trustees. Chapter 61, School Districts, Subchapter A, Board of Trustees Relationship, most recently amended effective August 25, 2025, addresses this statutory requirement. School board trustee training under current SBOE rule includes a local school district orientation session; a basic orientation to the TEC; an annual team-building session with the local school board and the superintendent; additional hours of continuing education based on identified needs; training on evaluating student academic performance; training on identifying and reporting potential victims of sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children; and training on school safety.

In November 2025, the committee discussed both an outline of the parental rights training curriculum and the new rule regarding the training. The committee also held a public hearing regarding the training curriculum.

The adopted new rule establishes the purpose of the training, specifies the timeline and number of hours required for training based on a board member's length of service, and requires that school districts maintain verification of training completion for each school board member.

The SBOE approved the new section for first reading and filing authorization at its January 30, 2026 meeting and for second reading and final adoption at its April 10, 2026 meeting.

In accordance with TEC, §7.102(f), the SBOE approved the new section for adoption by a vote of two-thirds of its members to specify an effective date earlier than the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year. The earlier effective date will ensure that school districts and charter schools can adopt the revisions as soon as possible. The effective date is 20 days after filing as adopted with the *Texas Register*.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES: The public comment period on the proposal began February 27, 2026, and ended at 5:00 p.m. on March 30, 2026. The SBOE also provided an opportunity for registered oral and written comments at its April 2026 meeting in accordance with the SBOE board operating policies and procedures. Following is a summary of public comments received and corresponding responses.

Comment. A school board trustee commented on Texas Education Agency (TEA)-approved training providers teaching districts how to circumvent state law and expressed concern that this training would be used to teach how to circumvent parental rights, with an outcome of fewer parental rights. The commenter also requested less required training for trustees.

Response. The SBOE disagrees that this training, created by the SBOE with the assistance of TEA, will circumvent parental rights. Rather, this training is designed to support and ensure parental rights are maintained by school board members. Training organizations will not deliver this training; it will be administered through the TEA Learn platform.

Comment. A Texas community member argued that parents are divinely granted primary authority and responsibility for their children's success, while schools should focus on teaching content and allow students to face consequences earned through their own behavior. The commenter criticized public education policies for blurring responsibility, limiting parental accountability in discipline and engagement, and enabling disruptive behaviors that harm learning. The commenter also contended that school boards overstep their role by interfering with parental rights, failing to uphold constitutional principles, and reducing transparency and accountability to citizens and taxpayers.

Response. The SBOE agrees that parents are the primary authority for their children. The SBOE disagrees that the parental rights training for school board trustees blurs the lines of responsibility; rather, the training is designed with the intention to educate school board trustees to support parental rights.

Comment. A citizen stated that requiring five hours of training for new board members is excessive compared to other mandated trainings, which only require three hours. For consistency across requirements, the commenter concluded that three hours of training would be sufficient.

Response. The SBOE disagrees, as the scope of the material determines the amount of time required to adequately cover the training content. While the initial training will require more hours to ensure a comprehensive understanding of parental rights, the number of required hours will be reduced in subsequent years.

Comment. A school board trustee commented that school board trustees already face extensive training requirements, among the highest for elected officials in the state. The commenter argued that an additional three to five hours of training on parental rights is excessive given trustees' oversight role, existing legal compliance mechanisms, and current training on the TEC. The commenter recommended reducing the requirement, integrating it into existing training, or allowing experienced trustees to test out of repeated coursework.

Response. The SBOE disagrees, as the scope of the material determines the amount of time required to adequately cover the training content. While the initial training will require more hours to ensure a comprehensive understanding of parental rights, the number of required hours will be reduced in subsequent years.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY. The new section is adopted under Texas Education Code, §11.159(b-2), as added by Senate Bill 204, 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, which obligates the State Board of Education (SBOE) to require trustees to complete training on parental rights. The statute also requires the SBOE, with assistance from the Texas Education Agency, to develop the curriculum and materials for the training by April 1, 2026.

CROSS REFERENCE TO STATUTE. The new section implements Texas Education Code, §11.159(b-2), as added by Senate Bill 204, 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2025.

<rule>

§61.4. Parental Rights Training for School Board Members.

- (a) The continuing education required under Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.159(b-2), applies to each member of an independent school district board of trustees.
- (b) Each trustee of an independent school district shall complete the training on parental rights developed by the State Board of Education (SBOE).
 - (1) The purpose of the training is to ensure that each trustee:
 - (A) understands the constitutional and statutory foundations of parental rights;
 - (B) recognizes the trustee's duty to parents and children as beneficiaries of the public education trust;
 - (C) governs in a manner that recognizes a parent's right to direct the upbringing, education, health, and moral training of their child; and
 - (D) ensures district policies, procedures, and practices comply with all applicable federal and state parental rights laws.
 - (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 school board member who did not complete this training in the year preceding 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 developed by the SBOE and provided by the Texas Education Agency.

- (4) The continuing education shall be completed annually.
 - (A) In a board member's first year of service, the training shall be at least five hours in length.
 - (B) In subsequent years of service, the training shall be at least three hours in length.
 - (C) In the event of a break in service, a trustee's first year upon reappointment or reelection shall be considered the first year of service for purposes of the training requirements under this section.
- (5) Each school district shall maintain verification of completion for each trustee.