

Texas FFA Association

Policy Handbook

Section 20: State Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning Procedures

Revised: 9/9/2024

20.1 Constitutional Authority – Article X: State Officers and Procedures for Election

- (a) *The elected officers of the Texas FFA Association/Texas Association of Future Farmers of America shall be selected and nominated by each of the Area Associations. Each of these officers has an opportunity to demonstrate FFA, agricultural education, parliamentary procedure and agricultural industry knowledge via a written exam, present their qualifications to an evaluation committee and appear before the state convention body delegates and deliver a campaign speech. A president shall be elected from the state officers by a combination of interview score, 60 percent, and a score derived from the vote of delegates present, 40 percent. The state elections committee shall consist of the outgoing state officers, with the State Executive Board acting as an advisory committee. The chairman of the elections committee shall be a current state officer designated by the board of directors. Chairman of the Board of Directors shall act as chairman of the advisory committee. These two committees will work in conjunction with each other on all decisions concerning the election. Results of all elections will be announced as seen fit by the two committees. No results will be posted concerning the election, and any questions concerning the election shall be taken up with the chairman of the advisory committee. The candidate receiving the highest total score shall be declared President of the State Association, and the candidate receiving the second highest score total in the final runoff election shall be declared the first vice-president. The remaining officers shall be called vice-presidents and shall assume the stations of the various other FFA offices for ceremonial purpose at the annual convention and other meetings throughout the year. A runoff election will be held if no clear winner for President or First Vice President is determined after the initial vote.*
- (b) *If for any reason a student officer becomes vacant, the area from which the vacancy occurs shall elect another student officer. If for any reason the office of President should become vacant, the student officer who received the next highest score in the election for President shall become President.*
- (c) *The elected officers shall constitute the Board of Texas FFA Officers. It shall be the duty of this Board to advise and make recommendations to the Texas FFA Board of Directors with respect to the activities and business of the Texas FFA Association/Texas Association of Future Farmers of America.*
- (d) *Each Area Association may elect one state officer each year. The state officer shall be elected by a combination of interview score, 60 percent, and a score derived from the vote of delegates present, 40 percent and in accordance to policies adopted by the State FFA Board of Directors.*
- (e) *The state officers shall hold the State FFA Degree at the time of their election at the state convention and must be active members for the duration of their term in office. A candidate may be eligible to run for state office during the first and/or second convention after their graduation from high school.*
- (f) *State FFA Officers shall serve from one state convention through the next succeeding state convention and shall not be reelected, nor eligible for election to another state office. In the event a state convention is not held in any given year, the State Board of Directors shall make provisions for the appointment of state officers for the next succeeding year.*
- (g) *Officers may be suspended by the Executive Director for violations of the officer code of conduct, student officer disciplinary policy, association ethics policies or other relevant policies pursuant to policies and procedures enacted by the Board of Directors. Officers may be discharged by the State Executive Board for serious violations of applicable policies in accordance to policies and procedures enacted by the Board of Directors. Policies governing suspension and removal shall include provisions for appropriate disciplinary steps, due process and appeals.*

20.2 Selection of State Officers—Guiding Philosophies

- (a) The Texas FFA State Officer Task Force (2023) identified traits and values essential for state FFA officers to maximize their effectiveness while fulfilling the tasks mandated by the Texas FFA Association constitution and board-adopted policies. Board policies related to officer selection are intended to identify and select members who possess desirable qualities that are--- make a fluid statement not competencies and who represent a complete, well-balanced agricultural education/FFA experience.

20.3 Administration

- (a) The chairman of the Board of Directors shall appoint a committee to review policy and procedure related to the state officer selection process and make policy recommendations to the board and management recommendations to the Executive Director.
- (b) With the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director shall appoint a qualified stakeholder or staff member to chair the officer selection procedures. The said supervisor shall coordinate the efforts of the exam administration, interview (state election) committee, and officer candidates prior to installation in accordance to all relevant policies.

20.4 Candidate Evaluation

- (a) State officers must consistently demonstrate a command of key issues related to agriculture, FFA and the Texas education system. While some of this knowledge may be demonstrated by asking quality questions and carrying on informed conversations rather than “knowing facts,” it is still important that officers come in with a base understanding of core issues and facts related to these three areas of knowledge. The state officer election process will occur in three phases.
 - (b) State officer candidates have the right to defer their participation in travel team. Candidates who choose to defer must communicate their decision to the Selection Process Supervisor before the state of state convention.
 - (c) In the event that an area association does not have a candidate for state FFA office after the application deadline, the area FFA coordinator will be notified and the state officer application will be reopened for that area association until June 1st. If no applications are received from that area association by June 1st, the area association will forfeit having a state officer representative for that election year. This means that if there are no qualified applicants from an area by June 1st, the state officer team will be comprised of less than one representative from each area association.
 - (d) In the event that an area association only has one candidate, that candidate will provide a speech and question responses to the area’s voting delegates. Should the sole candidate from an area remove themselves from consideration, the area coordinator will be notified and the state officer application will be reopened for a period of ten (10) business days (if the candidate removes themselves from consideration within ten days of the selection process, the area will have up until 4:59pm on July 1st to solicit candidates). Should no qualified applications be received during that timeframe, the area association will forfeit having a state officer representative for that election year. This means the state officer team will be comprised of less than one representative from each area association.
- (e) Election Committee:**
- i. Area Level State Election Committee: The state election committee for the area level process is comprised of no less than 7 individuals (a total of 9 individuals is recommended), with at least 1 student officer representing each District within the Area. The Area Elections Committee will have no less than 1 and not more than 3 industry representatives. Aside from industry representatives, no other adults may serve on the Area Elections Committee.

- ii. State Level Election Committee: The state election committee for the state level process is comprised of the current state officers representing each of the area associations and three business and industry representatives. They shall evaluate each candidate in accordance with procedures established by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors. The interview state election committee score shall comprise 60% of the candidate's score and shall be applied in each of the state level election phases. The interview state election process shall be conducted at a time and place designated by the Executive Director.
 - a) Board Superintendent: An adult member of the FFA Board of Directors is selected by the board to monitor the state FFA selection process on behalf of the state FFA association. In addition, the board representative will be called upon in situations where board policy and/or procedures require interpretation and application.
 - b) Adult Consultants: The Board of Directors shall appoint three adults who are current agricultural science teachers to assist in the management and delivery of the state officer selection process. These individuals serve a one-year term and may serve up to three consecutive terms to include other positions listed within the process.
 - c) Selection Process Supervisor: A Texas FFA staff member will be appointed to provide leadership to the administration of the state officer selection process. This assigned individual will work closely with the board superintendent and Executive Director to implement the procedures for the selection process. This includes verifying the candidates' eligibility, disseminating appropriate information to the candidates and the state election committee, reserving required facilities, and preparing materials needed during the process.
 - iii. State officer candidates will be evaluated based on various attributes, their builders and indicators required for fulfilling the job description of a state FFA officer. An attribute is defined as a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something.
 - iv. The attributes will be determined by the state election committee prior to interviews. They will not be shared or published.
 - v. 100% of each candidate's interview score shall be derived through scores received by the state election committee during each round of the interview process. No points will be awarded for the electronic application, resume and references; however, these materials will be used by the state election committee to develop questions for each candidate's personal round interview.
 - vi. The state officer selection process has been designed to provide a fair and equitable experience to each candidate. Adult consultants appointed by the Texas FFA Association Board of Directors are in place to verify candidate scores and certify that announced selection process results are accurate. Results of the state officer selection process cannot be contested. Announced results will stand as final, being verified by the Board Superintendent, State Officer Selection Process Supervisor, and the Texas FFA Association Executive Director.
- (f) Area Interview Process: The Area Interview Process will be administered by each Area Association to determine their final nominee for state office. The Area Selection Process includes the following: Test, Round Robin, Interview, Member Engagement, Writing Prompt, and Application/Resume. Scores from this process do not carry over to the state level round for the final area state officer candidate. Area Associations must use the Texas FFA supplied rubrics, approved testing provider, and score calculators for the state officer interview process.
- i. Test: A test will be administered to allow candidates to demonstrate evidence of this desired knowledge set. Study materials will not be allowed in the examination room. All candidates will have 90 minutes to complete a written exam with 60 multiple choice questions. The composition of the exam will be as follows: 20 questions on current issues in agriculture; 20 questions on current issues and organizational knowledge in FFA, to include parliamentary procedure; and 20 questions on current issues in education and agricultural education. The Texas FFA Executive Director will ensure the authoring of the exam by an unbiased party and will submit the exam to the Selection Process Supervisor for administration prior to the commencement of the officer selection process. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.

- ii. **Writing Prompt:** All candidates shall have a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 60 minutes to complete a written essay on a topic relevant to agriculture, FFA or the Texas education system. The purpose of the essay is focused on student's ability to convey knowledge and understanding in a different way than allowed through multiple-choice questions. Each year a theme will be identified (follow-up pertaining to: member engagement, round robin, personal interview). This will be graded by the state elections committee. This process is worth 5% of the total interview process score.
 - iii. **Round Robin:** All candidates will participate in a Round Robin interview with 3 adult interviewers. The interviewers can be business & industry, educational administration, FFA support group, past state officer, or agricultural university rep. Each candidate will be asked a series of questions about agriculture, FFA and the Texas education system. Various resources may be studied in advance such as: Farm Facts, Ag Issue Briefs, and Leadership Guide. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
 - iv. **Interview-** All candidates will participate in an interview process comprised of the state election committee members. Questions will be formulated prior to interviews starting and all candidates will be asked the same questions. Candidate applications and resumes can be reviewed prior to interviews to help formulate questions. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
 - v. **Member Engagement-** All candidates will participate in a Member Engagement Round. The prompt will be determined in December and shared with areas. This process is worth 10% of the total interview process score.
 - vi. **Application/Resume:** All candidates must complete an application and resume to run for state office. These will not be scored. The state election committee will review and use to formulate questions.
 - vii. **Speech and Vote:** Each candidate for state office shall be given opportunity to present a campaign speech before the delegation at their perspective area convention in accordance to the provisions of this policy and give an impromptu response to thought questions developed and asked in accordance to the provisions of this policy. The popular vote of the delegate body shall comprise 40% of the candidate's score.
 - (i) In the event of a tie after voting, the tie shall be broken by a Run-Off Speech and Vote. Each of the tied candidates shall present a one-minute run-off speech and the delegates shall cast ballots. The winner of said run-off election shall win the tie.
 - viii. The candidate from each area who receives the highest combined test, interview, round robin, member engagement, writing prompt and vote score shall be declared the state officer nominee from that area.
- (g) **State Interview Process:** The State Interview Process will be administered by the State Association, board approved Adult Consultants and Board Supervisor to determine the ranking of the final 12 area nominees for state office. The State Selection Process includes the following: Test, Interview, Engagement, Stand & Deliver, and Application/Resume. Scores from this process carry over to the speech and vote at state convention.
- i. **Interview:** All candidates will participate in an interview process comprised of the state election committee members. Questions will be formulated prior to interviews starting and all candidates will be asked the same questions. Candidate applications and resumes can be reviewed prior to interviews to help formulate questions. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
 - ii. **Stand & Deliver:** All candidates will participate in a Stand & Deliver round. This round will be 30 minutes in length. 20 minutes for candidates to plan, organize, and prepare. 5 minutes to deliver a spoken presentation, and 5 minutes to respond to questions. Topics will be released in December each year. The process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
 - iii. **Engagement:** All candidates will participate in an Engagement Round. The prompt will be determined in December and shared with areas. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
 - iv. **Test:** a test will be administered to allow candidates to demonstrate evidence of this desired knowledge set. Study materials will not be allowed in the examination room. All candidates will have 90 minutes to complete a written exam with 60 multiple choice questions. The composition of the exam will be as follows: 20 questions on current issues in agriculture; 20

- questions on current issues and organizational knowledge in FFA, to include parliamentary procedure; and 20 questions on current issues in education and agricultural education. The Texas FFA Executive Director will ensure the authoring of the exam by an unbiased party and will submit the exam to the Selection Process Supervisor for administration prior to the commencement of the officer selection process. This process is worth 15% of the total interview process score.
- v. Application/ Resume: All candidates must complete an application and resume to run for state office. These will not be scored. The state election committee will review and use to formulate questions.
 - vi. Speech and Vote: The State Voting Process will occur at State Convention each year. Scores from the state interview process carry over to the speech and vote at state convention. Each area's final candidate shall be given opportunity to present a campaign speech before the delegation at state convention in accordance with the provisions of this policy and give an impromptu response to thought questions developed and asked in accordance to the provisions of this policy. The popular vote of the delegate body shall comprise 40% of the candidate's score.
 - (i) In the event of a tie after voting, the tie shall be broken by a Run-Off Speech and Vote. Each of the tied candidates shall present a one-minute run-off speech and the delegates shall cast ballots. The winner of said run-off election shall win the tie.
 - vii. A president shall be elected from the state officers by a combination of interview processes, 60 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 40 percent. The winner of the final election shall be declared President of the State Association and the candidate receiving the second highest score total shall be declared the first vice-president. The remaining officers shall be called vice-presidents and shall assume the stations of the various other FFA offices for ceremonial purpose at the annual convention and other meetings throughout the year.
 - viii. Many district and area associations defer to state policy regarding conducting officer selection processes. The following process is outlined in state policy for contesting election results at the district and/or area in place that such specific district and/or area policy does not exist.
 - (i) Written notice must be provided by an agricultural science teacher to the teacher president of the district or area by 5:00pm the day following the announcement of election results.
 - (ii) The teacher president will notify all schools with candidates that a protest has been filed to contest the election results.
 - (iii) The teacher president will consult with the election coordinator and the executive committee within 48-hours to review the protest and verify candidate scores for the election process. Subjective qualitative judgement inherent in evaluating interviews may not be contested.
 - (iv) The teacher president will notify the agricultural science teacher that filed the complaint, as well as all schools with candidates, at the conclusion of the 48-hour review period the results of the review process.

20.5 Candidate Testing Procedures

- (a) References for agricultural issues and current events will be updated and posted prior to the commencement of the State Officer Application Process. The exam shall be proctored at a time set by the adult consultants appointed to the state officer selection process
- (b) Questions may be multiple choice and/or true/false and may be administered on hard-copy or electronically.
- (c) The exam shall be formulated by the Executive Director's designee and shall be a party with no vested interest in the outcome of the election. No party with an interest in the outcome of the election shall have access to the exam.
- (d) Candidates will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.
- (e) Scores will be reported on a percentage basis and entered into the officer selection scoring formula.
- (f) Exams may not be taken from the test areas or photocopied/photographed. Violation of this

provision shall result in disciplinary action.

20.6 Questioning Procedures

- (a) The selection process supervisor will develop the state election thought question prior to the caucus and general election and will preserve the integrity of the questions' confidentiality.
- (b) The selected question will be placed in an envelope and sealed by the selection process supervisor until immediately prior to the election. Only the selection process supervisor is allowed to handle the envelope containing the question.
- (c) The state or national officers conducting the election will open the envelope on stage and read the question to the delegate body immediately prior to the election.
- (d) The question will be read to the candidates in the same manner, exactly as written, and may be repeated if requested by the candidates.

20.7 Officer Candidate Convention Speeches

- (a) Transcript of campaign speeches shall be submitted to the Executive Director, or designee, at a date determined by the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall reserve the authority to disallow any speech with material deemed inappropriate. Candidates who alter or deviate from submitted transcripts and insert inappropriate statements or inferences shall be disqualified.
- (b) Speeches will be a maximum of two minutes and thirty seconds in length followed with a thought question. Time will be called at the end of two minutes and thirty seconds and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- (c) Candidates will not use any props or other materials. Audience participation by the general corporate audience without reference to any individual is not considered use of a prop. Having a specific member or group of members identified by proper name participate is considered to be use of a prop.
- (d) Candidates may use a podium or walk the stage area but may not kneel, squat, be seated on stage, or leave the stage during their candidate speech. The entire presentation must begin and end on stage.

20.8 State Officer Campaign Rules Prior to State Convention

- (a) Statewide mail outs or publicity by any person or entity mentioning candidacy outside of a candidate's home area prior to the convention is not permitted. Candidates should be aware that many districts and areas have the same rule. Any media, electronic or hard copy, or paraphernalia which solicits support for or promotes a candidate and/or their platform is prohibited by this policy.
- (b) Candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks (including personal) or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to all social media platforms, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes.
- (c) Business cards may only bear the candidates name, address, phone number and e-mail address and only indicate that the candidate is an "officer candidate" from his or her respective area.
- (d) Officer candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not attend area conventions or degree checks other than their own area, in fairness to all candidates.
- (e) Officer candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not attend any area leadership camps or conferences other than those events held in their own area.
- (f) In compliance with the state constitution, each candidate shall sign the state officer's commitment pledge and policy acknowledgement form as well as complete the state officer's application. These documents must be submitted to the Executive Director by the deadline stated in the application with the designated filing fee.

- (g) Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the state officer election. Campaign violations will be addressed by the Board Superintendent to the state officer selection process in consultation with the Executive Director. Serious violations which constitute issues of integrity or ethics may be addressed by the State Executive Board under the provisions of the officer discipline policy.
- (h) After the close of the state FFA officer application, candidates and at least one (1) agricultural science teacher from the candidate's school must participate in an online web meeting related to the state officer selection process. Failure to participate in one of these meetings by the candidate will result in disqualification.
- (i) State Officer candidates must complete and sign a statement of originality before running. Failure to follow the statement of originality with suspicion of plagiarism or lack of student originality should be reported to the elections committee and may result in disqualification from the state officer selection process.

20.9 State Officer Campaign Guidelines for State Convention

- (a) No parties will be hosted by the candidates or agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school during the convention.
- (b) Candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks (including personal) or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to all social media platforms, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf.
- (c) Candidates and agricultural science teachers from the candidate's school may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on any social media platforms or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes. Any media, electronic or hard copy, or paraphernalia which solicits support for or promotes a candidate and/or their platform is prohibited by this policy.
- (d) Both candidates and their supporters must refrain from using any campaign materials, including posters, giveaways, pins, or promotional memorabilia.
- (e) Violation of any campaign rule by a candidate may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the state officer election. Campaign violations will be addressed by the Board Superintendent to the state officer selection process in consultation with the Executive Director. Serious violations which constitute issues of integrity or ethics may be addressed by the State Executive Board under the provisions of the officer discipline policy.