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Training

Continuing Education Credit

FAQ: Board Member Continuing Education Requirements

What are the continuing education requirements for board members?

Board members are required to get three different kinds of continuing education. These three types are sometimes referred to as Tiers One, Two and Three, or as Levels One, Two and Three. The requirements in each tier are as follows:

Tier One (Orientations)

Board members must receive the following orientation sessions:

- All newly elected or appointed board members must receive a local orientation to their districts. This orientation is provided by local officials, preferably the superintendent and board president. The new member must receive the local orientation within 60 days of joining the board.
- Newly elected or appointed board members must also receive an orientation to the Texas Education Code. This session is provided by the Education Service Centers.
- Experienced board members must receive an update to the Texas Education Code after each legislative session. This session is provided by the Education Service Centers.

Tier Two (Teamwork)

Each year, all members of the board and the superintendent must participate, as a group, in a teambuilding session intended to enhance the team's effectiveness. This session can be provided by any registered provider of board member continuing education or can be facilitated by a local district official.

At the end of the session, the board must review the Framework for School Board Development, a list of major board activities, and identify in which of those activities board members would benefit from having additional training.

Tier Three (Discretionary Continuing Education)

First-year board members must receive at least 10 hours of additional continuing education related to the activities they identified in the Framework as being areas of need. Experienced board members must receive at least five hours of additional

continuing education each year related to the areas of need. Up to five hours of this tier three training may be completed in online training courses.

What happens to board members if they don't get the required continuing education?

Each year at the meeting at which the board would normally issue the call for the board election, the president of the board must announce publicly which members of the board have met their annual obligation and which have not. This information must also be made available to the media.

In addition, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) may request evidence at any time of board member compliance with the continuing education rule.

Failure of one or more board members to comply with the rule can affect a district's accreditation status.

Who is the official keeper of the records of attendance at board member continuing education sessions?

The local district is the official record keeper. In most districts, this task is performed by the superintendent or the superintendent's secretary. Board members should be sure to give the superintendent copies of any documentation they receive for attending sessions. Certain of the requirements must be met "each year."

When does the year start and end?

Technically, the year for meeting continuing education requirements starts on March 1, the date the rule went into effect, and ends on February 28. These dates roughly correspond to the time the board would normally make its call for election. However, many boards find it makes sense to consider the continuing education "year" as starting with the election and ending with the next year's election, since otherwise new board members do not have a full twelve months to meet their obligations. If the latter is the practice in the local district, board members would be advised to meet their obligations as early in the year as possible to avoid misunderstandings when the president is required to make the announcement of compliance at the call for elections.

How long does the local orientation for new board members have to be and what must be covered?

Both the content and the length of time for the local orientation are at the discretion of the local board, but the rule states that its purpose is to familiarize the new member with the districts local policies, procedures, and goals.

I attended the TASB Post-Legislative Seminar in Austin in July. Can I count that for the required Education Code update offered by the ESC's?

Yes. Beginning in 2003, the update to the Texas Education Code, required of all experienced board members after a legislative session, could be provided by any registered provider. TASB's Post-Legislative Seminar was offered in fulfillment of this requirement. However, no other TASB events satisfied the requirement. Other providers, in addition to the ESCs, may have provided programs that met the requirement. You

must check with those providers if you have questions.

What if we have the team building session scheduled and at the last minute one of the board members can't attend? Can we still count the session as meeting the requirement?

The rule says that all board members plus the superintendent must participate in the team building session. The board must make a good faith effort to comply with this provision. If unforeseen circumstances prohibit a member from attending and if rescheduling would be difficult or costly, the board should proceed with the session and later work with the absent board member to ensure he or she is fully briefed on what transpired in the session. The board should be sure to document this briefing.

Can the superintendent or board president conduct the team building session?

Yes. It's generally a good idea to have an outsider facilitating the team building session so all team members can participate equally; however, the rule allows that the board president, superintendent, or any member of the board or local staff may conduct the session.

We haven't yet conducted our team building session for the year and there are sessions occurring that I think I could benefit from attending. Can I attend these and still count them toward meeting my tier three requirement?

Yes. It would be advisable, though, that you document the fact that you have reviewed the Framework and identified certain areas of need. You should provide that documentation to the board president when the team building session is held. At the team building session, you should be open to the possibility that the team may identify additional areas for continuing education for the group as a whole.

We sometimes conduct "work sessions" of our board, at which we are briefed on items about which we are going to have to make a decision. For example, we recently had a briefing from an architect about our building needs in preparation for accepting the plans for a new building. Can we count that session as tier three continuing education?

No. TEA considers such sessions to be part of the normal work of the board.

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