

**Texas FFA Association
Policy Handbook**

**Section 20: State Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning
Procedures**

Revised: January 2017

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 exam score, 20 percent, interview score, 30 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 50 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 winner of the final election 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.
- (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 officers of the areas, districts and local chapters shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Sentinel, Advisor, and other officers if desired. All of these officers must be active FFA members and be enrolled in high school throughout the duration of their term.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Each Area Association may elect one state officer each year. The state officer shall be elected by a combination of exam score, 20 percent, interview score, 30 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 50 percent and in accordance to policies adopted by the State FFA Board of Directors.
- (f) The state officers shall hold the State FFA Degree at the time of their election at the state convention must be active members for the duration of their term in office and must not be more than one year removed from high school graduation at the time of their nomination by their respective area association.
- (g) 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. The State FFA Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint a qualified member to fill any office which becomes vacant between state conventions.

20.2 Selection of State Officers—Guiding Philosophies

- (a) The Texas FFA State FFA Officer Task Force (2005) 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 are adaptable, approachable, creative, dedicated, dependable, effective communicators, genuine, honest, integral, knowledgeable, motivated, polished speakers, respectful, passionate, positive, self-reliant, selfless, socially skilled and graceful, team players 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 Selection Process Supervisor to chair the officer selection procedures. The said supervisor shall coordinate the efforts of the exam administration, interview (nominating) committee, and officer candidates prior to installation in accordance to all relevant policies.

20.4 Candidate Evaluation

- (a) Candidates shall be evaluated and scored on a 100-point scale which includes a written exam score, interview (nominating) committee score and a popular vote score. Exam and Interview (Nominating) Committee scores shall be applied to all election rounds. The top scoring candidate in the final run-off round shall be the state president; the second-place finisher shall be designated as the first vice president. The top scoring candidate from each area shall be the area's state officer nominee; the second-place finisher shall be designated as the area's alternate to assume the duties of the nominee should he or she become unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities or be disqualified or deemed unfit for office pursuant to relevant Texas FFA Association policies.
- (b) 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. Thus, a written exam consisting of two portions -- multiple choice questions (the twenty-percent portion of the process) and writing exercise (essay to constitute one round of interviewing) -- will be administered to allow candidates to demonstrate evidence of this desired knowledge set. Candidates will complete the exam on the first day of the selection process. Ninety minutes will be allowed for students to complete each portion of the exam. Study materials will not be allowed in the examination room.
 - (1) The exam shall comprise 20% of the candidate's score. 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. The exam score will be scaled to a factor of 0.2.

- (2) All candidates shall have 90 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 (agriculture, FFA or Texas education). The theme and a list of potential topics will be published for all candidates. Candidates are encouraged to understand each topic very well. However, the essay will also require candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how that particular topic relates to the other themes, not reflected in that particular year (i.e., if agriculture is the theme during the current year then the essay question will require students to demonstrate understanding of the topic as well as the relationship that topic shares with FFA and/or the American education system.) Each of the writing samples will be reviewed by three independent adult judges. These judges will review the samples and rate them on each of the three competency builders identified for this portion of the essay. Scoring for each builder will be based upon a scale of one to five with five representing strong evidence the skill is present and one representing strong evidence the skill is not present.
- (c) A student nominating committee, comprised of one member not more than one-year removed from the state convention immediately following their high school graduation from each of the area associations and an at large chairman; shall evaluate each candidate in accordance to procedures established by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors. The nominating committee shall be appointed by the Texas FFA President in collaboration with the Board of Student Officers, and submitted to the Board of Directors for Approval at the Third Quarter Board Meeting. The interview (nominating) committee score shall comprise 30% of the candidate's score and shall be applied in each of the election rounds. The interview (nominating committee) process shall be conducted at a time and place designated by the Executive Director.
 - (1) Each area shall be entitled to representation on the nominating committee in accordance with policy 20.4.(c).. These candidates will have been considered by the State FFA President, and the appointment of the nominating committee shall be made by the State FFA President per Article XIV, Section A of the State Constitution. Area associations must certify committee nominees are free of any conflict of interest concerning the election of officers. All such certifications shall be reviewed and verified by the Executive Director. The state executive board shall reserve the authority to remove a member of the nominating committee for conflicts of interest or conduct it deems to be detrimental to the selection process. All candidates interested in serving on the Officer Nominating Committee shall submit an application for appointment, which will be reviewed by the Texas FFA President prior to appointment and Board of Directors confirmation. One applicant will be selected as the committee's At-large Chairman.
 - (2) The Texas FFA Board of Directors will annually appoint the following adult consultants to the state officer selection process based upon the submitted recommendations of the Executive Director, no later than the Third quarter board of directors' meeting:
 - (i) 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.

- (ii) **Adult Consultants:** The board of directors shall appoint three adults who are current agricultural science teachers or members of college or university faculties 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. Adult consultants who serve the three-year maximum appointment, cannot be reappointed until three (3) years following the end of their last appointment. More information on adult consultants can be found in Appendix I in the State Officer Selection Process Handbook.
 - (iii) **Tabulation Supervisor:** To ensure accuracy in scoring and data entry during the national officer selection process, a tabulation supervisor position has been created. This person will have a role specific and distinct from that of the board superintendent and/or any of the three (3) adult consultants to the nominating committee. Specific duties for service can be found in the State Officer Selection Handbook.
 - (iv) **Selection Process Supervisor:** One (1) additional individual 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 collaborative effort includes verifying the candidates' eligibility, disseminating appropriate information to the candidates and the nominating committee, reserving required facilities, preparing materials needed during the process (primarily exams, scorecards, and data spreadsheets) and securing the additional personnel needed for nominating committee training.
- (3) State officer candidates will be evaluated based on eight competencies, their builders and indicators required for fulfilling the job description of a state FFA officer. A competency is a defined behavior, in combination with skills and knowledge that enables evaluation of the candidates. Example: competency #1 – Communication. A competency builder identifies specific attributes or skills to further define the behaviors of that competency. Example: 1.1 – Demonstrates non-verbal skills. Finally, indicators are a description of how someone might demonstrate the competency builder. Example: Uses appropriate tone; gives full attention (eye contact); refrains from distracting mannerisms; uses effective and purposeful gestures (hand signals, facial expressions, body language).
 - (4) The competencies by which state FFA officer candidates will be evaluated on are as follows: (1) Communication, (2) Team Player, (3) Areas of Knowledge, (4) Organization, (5) Character, (6) Passion for Success, (7) Influence, (8) Critical Thinking. A complete list of competency, builder and indicator descriptions can be found in the State Officer Selection Handbook.
 - (5) The state officer interview process shall consist of eight (7) rounds broken into two phases. All state officer candidates will complete phase 1 of the process, which includes the following rounds: Personal round – Introduction, , Writing Exercise, One-on-One, Advocacy stand and deliver. The top two (2) candidates from each area following phase I will advance to phase II, consisting of the following rounds: Facilitation, Round Robin, Personal round – conclusion. Appendix III of the State Officer Selection Process Handbook details each competency's weight in the interview process, and how/where each will be evaluated during the interview process.

- (6) 100% of each candidate's interview score shall be derived through scores received by the nominating committee during each round of the interview process, in addition to the writing exercise. No points will be awarded for the written application, resume and references; however, these materials will be used by the nominating committee to develop questions for each candidate's personal rounds. The interview section is scored on a 100-point scale and multiplied by a factor of 0.3. The numerical value that is the difference between the top indexed interview score and the number 30 shall be added to all scores.
- (d) Each candidate who progresses to phase II of the interview process shall be given opportunity to present a campaign speech before their Area Association's delegation 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 50% of the candidate's score.
- (1) Each area delegate shall cast one vote in preliminary rounds of voting for one of the two candidates from their area. The total number of votes received by a candidate shall be divided by the total vote cast and multiplied by 100. The numerical difference between the percentage of the top vote-getter and the number 50 shall be added to all vote total percentages.
- (2) The candidate from each area who receives the highest combined exam, interview, and vote score shall be declared the state officer nominee from that area.
- (3) Each delegate shall cast two votes in the final round of voting. The total number of votes received by a candidate shall be divided by the total number of votes cast and multiplied by 50 to derive the vote score factor. The numerical difference between the percentage of the top vote-getter and the number 50 shall be added to all vote total percentages.
- (e) In the event of a tie, the tie shall be broken by the following means. If the tie is unbroken by a tie breaker, the committee shall consider the next tie breaker until all means are exhausted.
- (1) Popular Vote. The candidate with the highest vote factor shall win the tie. Vote factors shall be carried out to the nearest one-thousandth of a point.
- (2) Total Interview Section. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest total interview factor shall win the tie. Interview factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.
- (3) Exam Score. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest exam score factor shall win the tie. Exam factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.
- (4) Writing Exercise. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest writing exercise score shall win the tie.
- (5) Run-Off Speech and Vote. Should the above tie breaks fail to break the tie, 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.

20.5 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 which solicits support for or promotes a candidacy is prohibited by this policy.
- (b) Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their

behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, or 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 may not attend area conventions or degree checks other than their own area, in fairness to all candidates.
- (e) Officer candidates may not attend any area leadership camps or conferences other than those events held their own area.
- (f) In compliance with the state constitution, each candidate shall sign the state officer’s commitment pledge and 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. 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.

20.6 State Officer Campaign Guidelines for State Convention

- (a) No parties will be hosted by the candidates during the convention.
- (b) Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes. During the election process, members will be directed not to post anything campaign-related to the web.
- (c) Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the state officer election. 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.

20.7 Officer Candidate Convention Speeches

- (a) Transcript of campaign speeches shall be submitted to 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 deviate from submitted transcripts and insert inappropriate statements or inferences shall be disqualified.
- (b) Initial speeches will be a maximum of two minutes and thirty seconds in length followed with a type of forum for a length of four (4) questions with a six (6) minute time period for questions and responses. 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) The second speeches will be a maximum of three minutes in length with a uniform thought question to be asked of each candidate while on stage. Time will be called and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- (d) 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.

- (e) Candidates will choose the style of microphone desired for their candidate speech at the designated stage practice and will be given an opportunity to test the microphones.
- (f) Candidates may use a podium or walk the stage area but may not kneel, squat, or be seated on stage, or leave the stage during their candidate speech. The entire presentation must begin and end on stage.

20.8 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 during phase I of the interview 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) All hard-copy testing materials shall be returned to the state FFA office. Exams may not be taken from the test areas or photocopied. Violation of this provision shall result in disciplinary action.
- (g) Candidates shall complete a writing exercise in the state-level selection process to demonstrate written communication skills. The same state-approved writing prompt shall be given all candidates competing in a given process. All exceptions at the state level must be approved by the state officer Selection Process Supervisor.

20.9 Questioning Procedures

- (a) Thought questions are important to allow the delegates see the officer candidate's ability to speak extemporaneously. Four thought questions will be asked during the candidate forum following the initial speeches for the area delegations, and one thought question will be asked on stage after each campaign speech. All questions asked of the state officer candidates will be developed by the nominating committee.
- (b) Questions should be straightforward, unambiguous, challenging, thorough, and test the candidate's knowledge of principles and procedures (especially those that may arise during the course of the year's duties). Questions should allow the candidates to respond in a positive atmosphere.
- (c) The selection process supervisor will oversee the development of the nominating committees thought questions prior to the caucus and general election, and will preserve the integrity of the questions' confidentiality.
- (d) The selected questions will be placed in envelopes and sealed by the nominating committee chairperson until immediately prior to the election. Only members of the nominating committee are allowed to handle the envelopes containing the questions.
- (e) 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.
- (f) The question will be read to the candidates in the same manner, exactly was written, and may be repeated if requested by the candidates.