



# REACH OUT AND SPEAK UP! TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

For the first time in two decades, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) is revising the minimum curriculum standards that guide sex education in Texas. **We need your help** to let them know that Texans support "abstinence-plus" sex education, which offers medically accurate information on topics like contraception, STI prevention, and healthy relationships in addition to abstinence. To find your SBOE member, visit [wrm.capitol.texas.gov](http://wrm.capitol.texas.gov), or use your smart phone to open your camera app, scan the QR code on the right, and input your home address.



The 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 is in the process of revising the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS, for Health Education. These represent the minimum standards that districts must teach in elementary and middle school. At the high school level, Health Education is an elective and is not offered by all districts. A series of workgroups wrote draft standards which were amended at the SBOE's September meeting. They are scheduled for final adoption at the November 17 - 20 meeting.

**For more information, visit [www.texasisready.org](http://www.texasisready.org).**

## Texas SBOE Members by District

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





# Outreach Template

In general, personal emails are much more compelling to policymakers than cut-and-paste forms. Additionally, personal stories -- your own experiences, your professional expertise, and your reasons for being passionate about this issue -- can be very powerful in advocacy. While we encourage you to reach out in your own voice, below are steps to get started.

## **Introduction:**

This may include introducing yourself, noting if the member is your elected official, describing any expertise or lived experience you may have on the topic, and making a general statement summarizing your main point.

*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/parent/social worker/educator/high school student], I have seen....*

## **Body of letter:**

Here's where you describe your "ask", or what you'd like the official to do. It can be very helpful to include supporting data points or compelling personal stories. Here are some topics you may want to include:

### **Abstinence-plus sex education:**

*Please support the abstinence-plus standards that are now in the draft Health Education TEKS. The standards include medically accurate information on contraception and prevention of STIs that are supported by major medical organizations.*

- Like the rest of the nation, teen birth rates are declining in Texas, but we still have the ninth highest rate of teen birth in the nation and the highest rate of repeat teen births.
- A baby is born to a teen parent once every 21 minutes in Texas.
- 65% of Texas seniors report being sexually active by their senior year of high school.
- Rates of sexually transmitted infections are increasing among youth.
- Students should learn about contraceptive options, including condoms, short-term methods, and highly effective, reversible long-term methods.

### **Healthy relationships:**

*I strongly support the language on boundaries, healthy relationships and abuse prevention in the Health Education draft TEKS but urge you to reinstate language on consent.*

- Workgroups drafts included standards on consent in the Health Education Standards, but the SBOE majority removed the word consent at the September meeting, saying it could encourage youth to have sex or could even support sex abuse.
- However, leading health organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, Texas Medical Association, and Texas Association Against Sexual Assault support teaching about consent as an important way to prevent sexual abuse.
- Other language in the draft TEKS is positive and age-appropriate, such as teaching young children about personal boundaries.

### **Inclusivity:**

*I urge you to include language in the Health Education TEKS that will meet the needs of LGBTQ youth.*

- LGBTQ youth face discrimination and bullying that may lead to mental health challenges or even suicide.
- Research shows LGBTQ youth experience higher levels of unintended pregnancy than their peers.
- SBOE members voted against acknowledging LGBTQ youth in the Health Education TEKS.

### **Closing:**

You can use the closing to summarize or restate your point. And most importantly, use this space to thank the member for their hard work and unpaid service to Texas students. You can also provide contact information if you'd like a followup call, or offer to provide more resources or information.

*Sincerely,*

*[Your Name]*