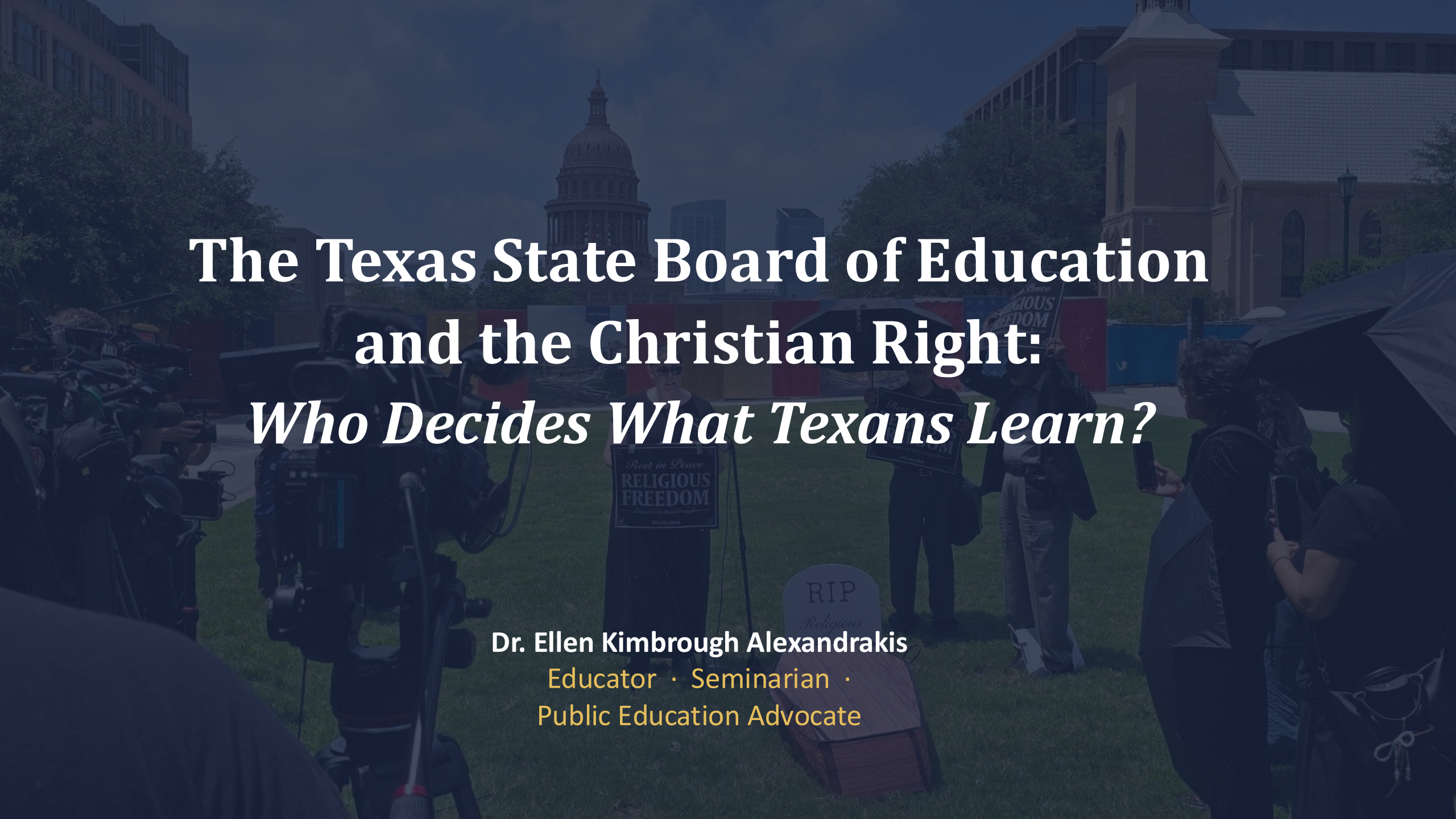


The background image is a dark, semi-transparent photograph of a protest. In the center, a person holds a sign that reads "Rest in Peace RELIGIOUS FREEDOM". To the right, another person holds a sign that says "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM". In the foreground, a wooden prop of a tombstone is visible with the inscription "RIP Religious". The Texas State Capitol building is prominent in the background. The title text is overlaid on this image.

The Texas State Board of Education and the Christian Right: *Who Decides What Texans Learn?*

Dr. Ellen Kimbrough Alexandrakis
Educator · Seminarian ·
Public Education Advocate

WHO I AM

Twenty-five years on school campuses — then seminary

I spent twenty-five years in Texas public and private education, and then I did something that surprised a few people who know me. I went to seminary. It was not a departure from education. It was a deepening of it.

Teacher, administrator, academic facilitator

Twenty-five years inside Texas public and private schools, from the classroom to district leadership.

M.Div. candidate, Perkins School of Theology

Focused on social justice and the blurring line between church and state in public schools.

“Love your neighbor as yourself”

— and He did not attach conditions to it.



25

years in Texas public education

Now finishing an M.Div. and working full-time for equity in our community schools.



THE BASICS

What is the SBOE?

An elected, 15-member board that sets the ground rules for what Texas public schools teach — and stewards a fund that helps pay for it.



Sets curriculum standards

Adopts the TEKS — the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills — that define what students learn in every subject.



Reviews instructional materials

Runs the IMRA process to approve or reject textbooks and materials districts can buy with state funds.



Stewards the Permanent School Fund

Helps manage a multi-billion-dollar endowment that supports Texas public schools.



Meets in public, quarterly

Convenes at least four times a year in Austin; meetings are open and take public testimony.

BY THE NUMBERS

15

members, each elected from a single-member district

~1.8M

Texans represented per district

4x

public meetings a year, at minimum

THE QUESTION WORTH ASKING FIRST

If local school boards are non-partisan, why is this one partisan?

Texas is one of only five states that elect a state education board on a partisan ballot. In most of the country, these seats are appointed — and in the highest-performing states, they are appointed too.

37 states

appoint their state board — by governor, legislature, or executive council.

5 states

elect the board on a partisan ballot. Texas is one of them.

2 states

elect the board on a non-partisan ballot.

2

THE 2026 BOARD

Who's currently there?

Dist.	Member	City	Party
1	Gustavo Reveles	El Paso	D
2	LJ Francis	Corpus Christi	R
3	Marisa B. Perez-Diaz	San Antonio	D
4	Staci Childs	Houston	D
5	Rebecca Bell-Metereau	San Marcos	D
6	Will Hickman · Sec.	Houston	R
7	Julie Pickren	Pearland	R
8	Audrey Young	Trinity	R

Dist.	Member	City	Party
9	Keven Ellis	Lufkin	R
10	Tom Maynard	Florence	R
11	Brandon Hall	Aledo	R
12	Pam Little · Vice Chair	Fairview	R
13	Tiffany Clark	DeSoto	D
14	Evelyn Brooks	Frisco	R
15	Aaron Kinsey · Chair	Midland	R

BALANCE

10_R5_D

of 15 seats

LEADERSHIP

Chair

Kinsey D15

Vice Chair

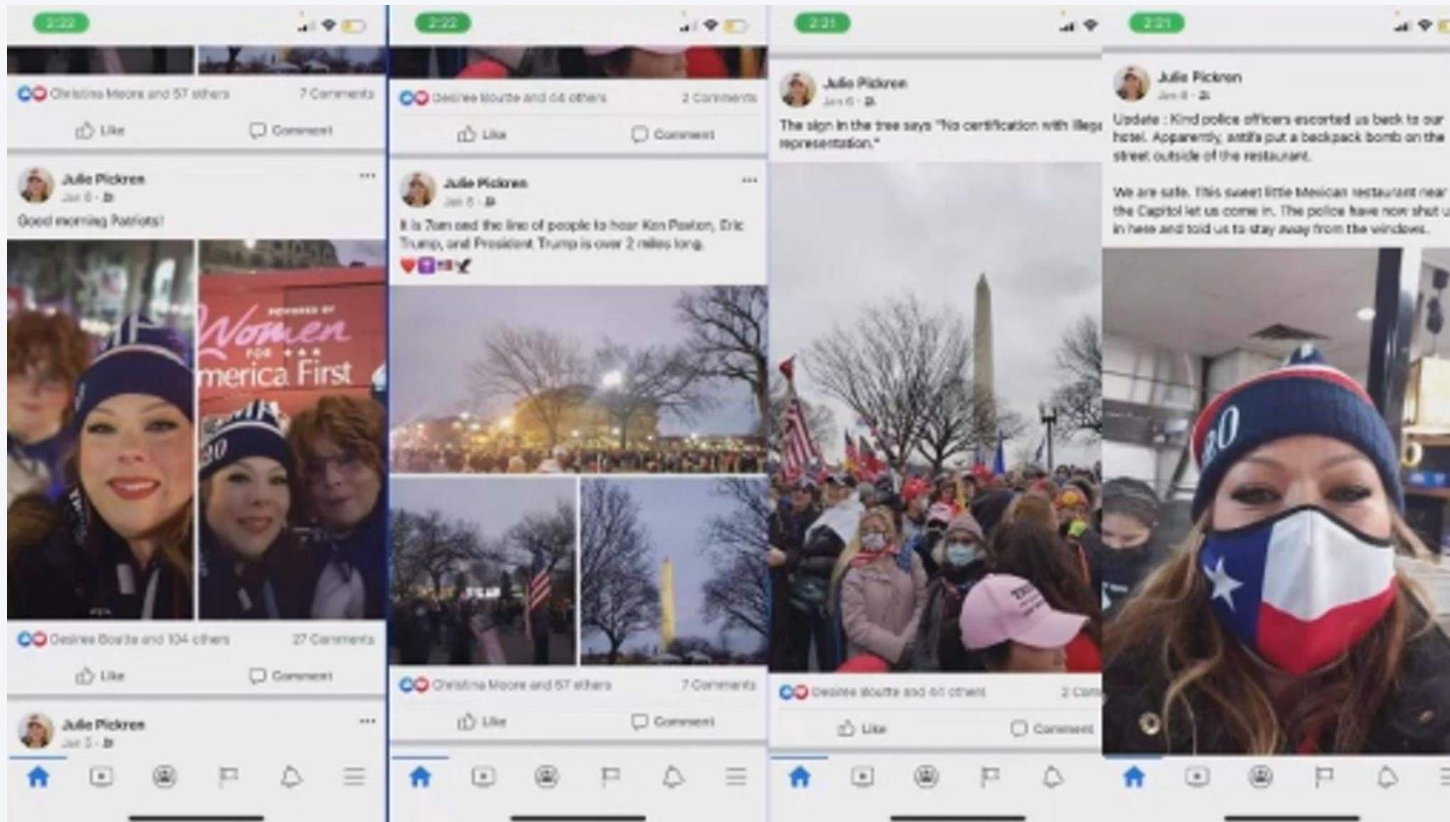
Little D12

Secretary

Hickman D6

DISTRICT 7 • PEARLAND / GULF COAST

Julie Pickren, in her own posts



WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT

Public Facebook posts from a sitting member of the State Board of Education, made from Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021.

These are not my words about her. They are her words about herself.

She is the incumbent on the ballot in District 7 this November.

Julie Pickren, SBOE Member District 7, participating in January 6 Capitol Riot

Source: Julie Pickren, SBOE Member District 7 — archived public posts. Full file linked in the presenter's materials.

Pastor Brandon Hall, in his own words

“

ON WHOSE COUNTRY THIS IS

America and Texas have been a Christian nation and a Christian state forever. Of course, there are other faiths that are represented, but they've had a minimal impact.

“

AT AN SBOE EVENT

Our nation was founded as a Christian nation, and Texas is a Christian state.

We are bringing the Bible back into schools this week for the first time in 60 years.

3

GETTING ON THE BOARD

How do the elections work?



15 single-member districts

Each member is elected by voters in one geographic district of roughly 1.8 million people.



Four-year, staggered terms

Terms are staggered so about half the board is on the ballot every two years. After each decennial redistricting, some seats run for a 2-year term to re-stagger the cycle.



Partisan elections

Candidates run in party primaries, then a general election. A primary runoff follows if no one clears 50%.

THE 2026 CYCLE

8 of 15 seats were on the ballot this year



MAR 3

Primary — Parties choose nominees.



MAY 26

Runoff — Held where no candidate hit 50%.

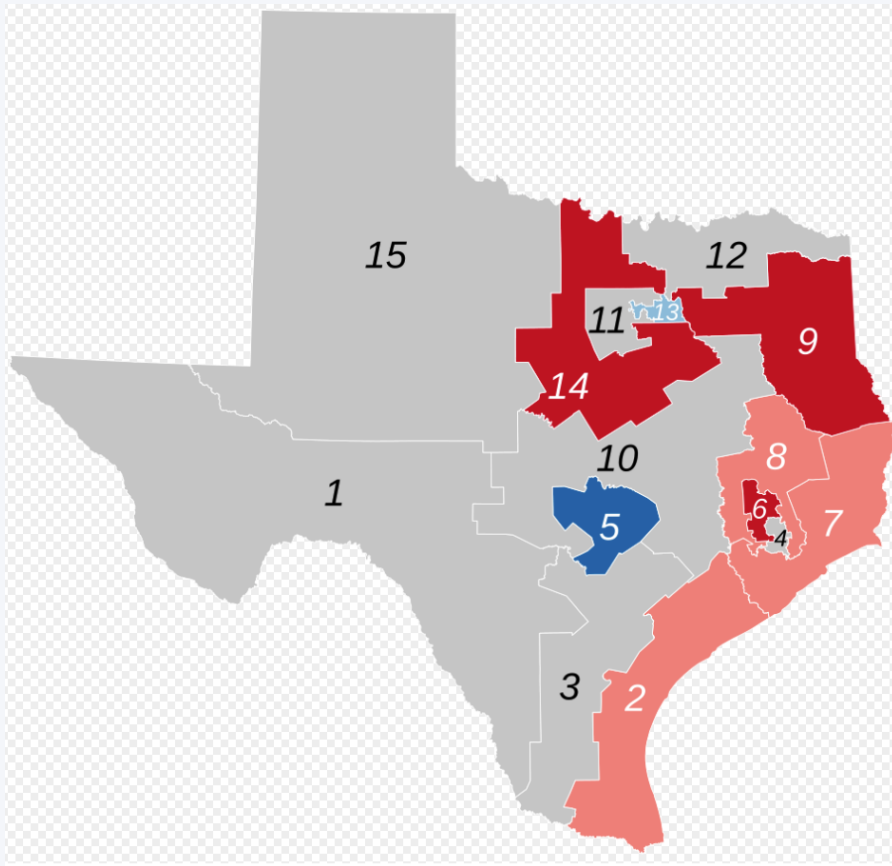


NOV 3

General — Voters elect the members.

File to run through the Texas Secretary of State.

Eight of fifteen seats are on the ballot



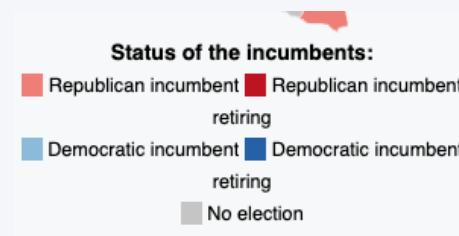
WATCH THESE

District 2 — LJ Francis lost his primary. That seat is already changing hands.

District 14 — take a hard look at this one. It reaches farther north than most people expect.

Four members chose not to seek reelection — significant turnover is coming either way.

STATUS OF THE INCUMBENTS



Election Cycles

Current Texas State Board of Education members and the seats up this November

8

seats on the
November ballot

5

of those are
open seats

ON THE BALLOT — TERM ENDS JAN 2027

November 2026 general election matchups

- 2

Thomas Garcia vs. Victoria Hinojosa
LJ Francis — lost primary
- 5

Allison Bush vs. Mica Arellano
Rebecca Bell-Metereau — not seeking re-election
- 6

Michelle Palmer vs. Tiffany Nelson
Will Hickman — not seeking re-election
- 7

Tiffany Perkinz vs. Julie Pickren
Julie Pickren — seeking re-election
- 8

Dana Van De Walker vs. Audrey Young
Audrey Young — seeking re-election
- 9

Ericka Ledford vs. Kason Huddleston
Keven Ellis — not seeking re-election
- 13

Tiffany Clark vs. April Williams Moore
Tiffany Clark — seeking re-election
- 14

Amy Taylor vs. Mindy Bumgarner
Evelyn Brooks — not seeking; running for Governor

OPEN SEAT

OPEN SEAT

OPEN SEAT

INCUMBENT

INCUMBENT

OPEN SEAT

INCUMBENT

OPEN SEAT

NOT UP UNTIL 2029

Seated through January 2029

- 1

Gustavo Reveles
- 3

Marisa B. Perez-Diaz
- 4

Staci Childs
May resign to pursue other office
- 10

Tom Maynard
- 11

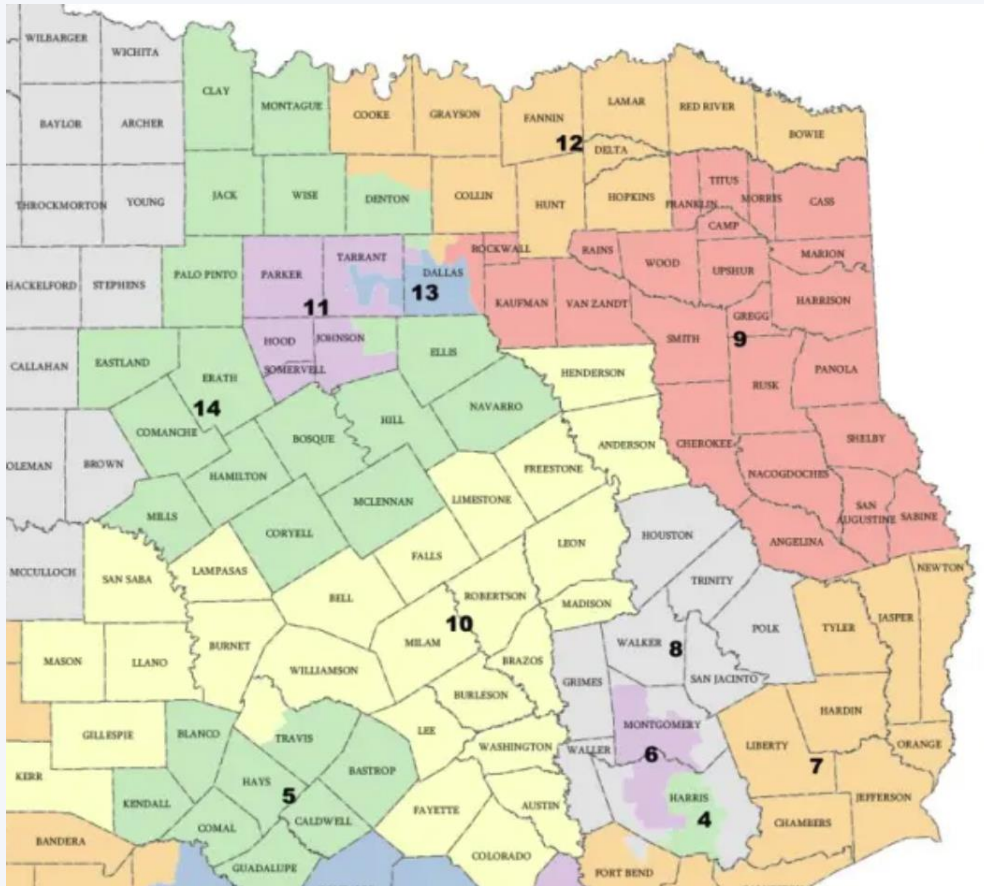
Brandon Hall
- 12

Pam Little
- 15

Aaron Kinsey
Chair of the State Board of Education

BEFORE YOU COUNT ON YOUR BALLOT

Denton County: check whether you actually vote this year



THE TRAP

Because terms are staggered — and because redistricting re-staggered some of them — not every Texan gets an SBOE vote in every cycle.

Denton County sits at the seam.

Folks in Aubrey are definitely impacted. Do not assume. Look up your district, confirm whether that seat is on your ballot, and tell your neighbors what you find.

[votetexas.gov](https://www.votetexas.gov)

4

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

2026 SBOE activity



Bluebonnet correction fight

In February the board voted 9–6 to require roughly 4,200 corrections to the state-developed Bluebonnet curriculum — the Bible-referencing materials that drew national scrutiny. Members criticized what one called "sloppy publishing."



A packed January agenda

The board advanced social-studies TEKS topics, weighed new financial-literacy course rules, and moved toward mandatory parental-rights training for trustees — while postponing votes on a required literary-works list and further Bluebonnet updates.



A board in transition

Eight of 15 seats were up in 2026. Incumbent LJ Francis (D2) lost his primary and four members chose not to seek reelection — setting up significant turnover on the board next term.

RACE TO WATCH

District 7

Houston / Gulf Coast

Tiffany Perkinz (D) won the May 26
Democratic runoff

50.7% to **49.3%**

over Debra Drake Ambrose

She faces incumbent Julie Pickren (R) in the
November 3 general election.

Big changes coming to Texas public education

Civil Rights Act of 1964 — removed

Removed completely. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks are alluded to, but never named.

Islam and Muhammad

The revised standards include derogatory TEKS on Islam and its prophet.

Treaty of Versailles — removed

The settlement that shaped the twentieth century, cut from the standards.

High school World History (TX Leg.)

Now optional. A Texas student can graduate without it.

Harriet Tubman — reframed

Identified for students on the basis of her similarities to Moses.

What do these bullets have in common?

Required Bible Reading

A narrow Western canon

The required list draws tightly from a single literary tradition.

Scripture at every grade level

Each grade level has at least one Bible story on the required list.

Few minority authors

A limited number of minority writers across the entire K–12 span.

WHAT THAT ADDS UP TO

14

different books of the Bible read in whole or in part by every student across K–12.

The entire book of Job

is read in English II.

And the literature is disproportionately British.

FROM THE RECORD

What people in the room saw — and what it will cost

IN THE HEARING ROOM

“

I thought about framing the day as expertise versus emotion, because it was common to see an English teacher arguing from her experience that the texts in a given grade failed to cover state-mandated standards, a historian pointing out that the proposed social studies standards leave out key elements of American or world history, a Rabbi observing that passages from Hebrew scriptures on the list were poorly translated and could foster anti-Semitism—all followed by a pastor praying for the defeat of the demonic forces threatening American patriotism and the innocence of our children.

Frank Strong



THE PRICE TAG

“

TEA staff claim the revision will improve student outcomes. Yet no evidence has been provided demonstrating that the proposed standards will actually improve academic achievement. According to critics reviewing the proposal, implementation costs could range between \$800 million and \$1.6 billion statewide because of the disruptive restructuring of K-8 social studies.

Alice Linahan



Between \$800 million and \$1.6 billion statewide — with no evidence offered that the new standards raise achievement.

WHY THIS IS WRONG

While the grown-ups are busy playing politics, it is children who lose.

The teaching gets crowded out. The learning gets crowded out. And the ones who pay for it are the ones with the least say in any of it.

ERASURE

A child can complete thirteen years of Texas schooling without being required to learn the name Rosa Parks.

COERCION

Required scripture in a public classroom is not instruction. It is establishment — and it cheapens the faith it claims to honor.

EXCLUSION

Standards that speak derogatorily of Islam tell Muslim children exactly where the state ranks them.



GET INVOLVED

What can I do?

The board meets in public and its decisions are shaped by who shows up. Here are six ways to make your voice count.



Testify at meetings

Register in advance to give public testimony at SBOE committee and board meetings in Austin.



Comment on proposed rules

Submit written input through the SBOE's public comment process while rules are open for review.



Watch the meetings

Follow live and archived broadcasts so you know what's on the agenda before it's decided.



Contact your member

Find and write the member for your district — each one answers to about 1.8 million Texans.



Vote in SBOE races

These are down-ballot but consequential. The next general election is November 3, 2026.

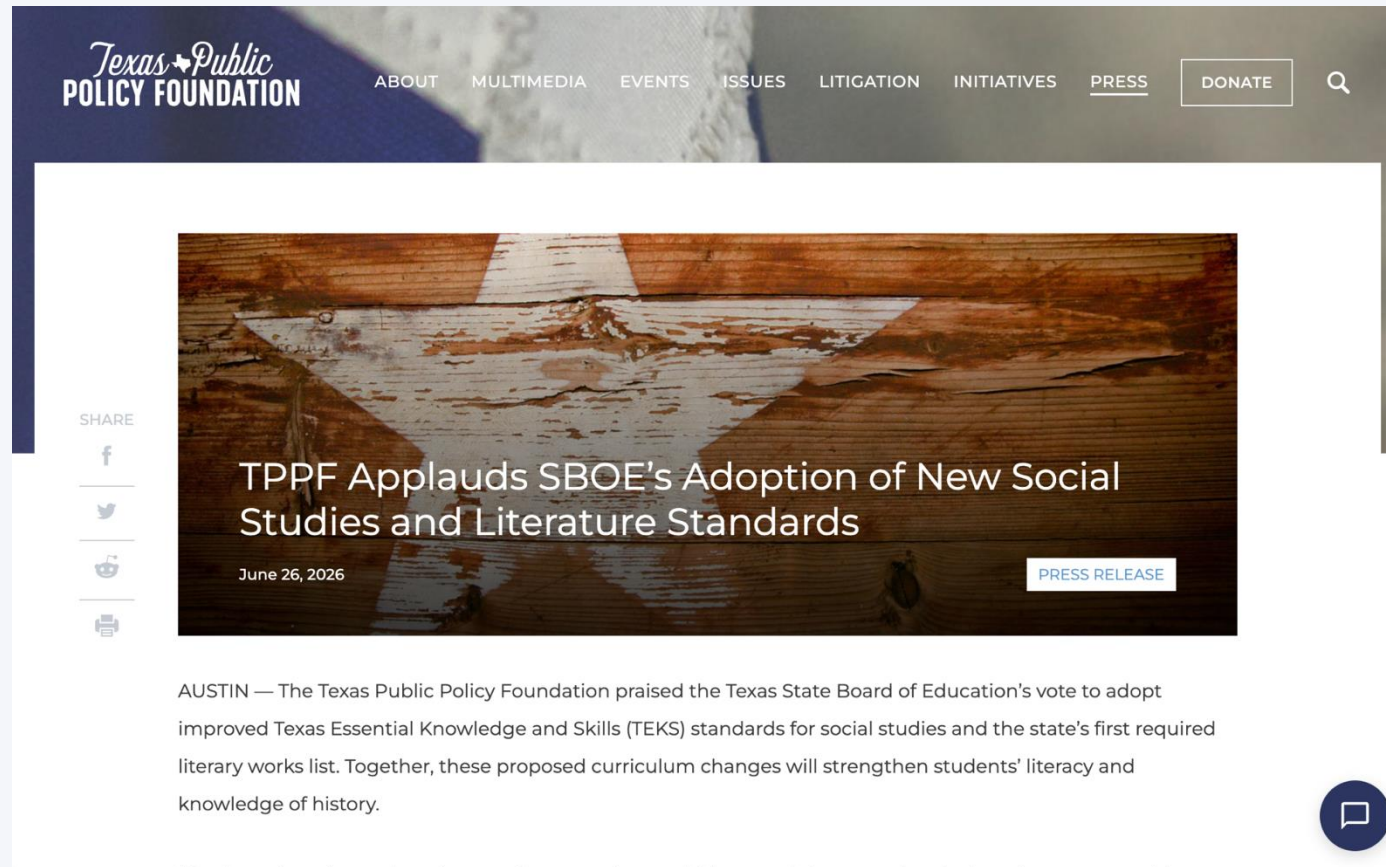


Engage locally

Materials like Bluebonnet are optional — local school boards decide adoption. Show up there too.

AND NONE OF THIS IS A SECRET

The architects are celebrating

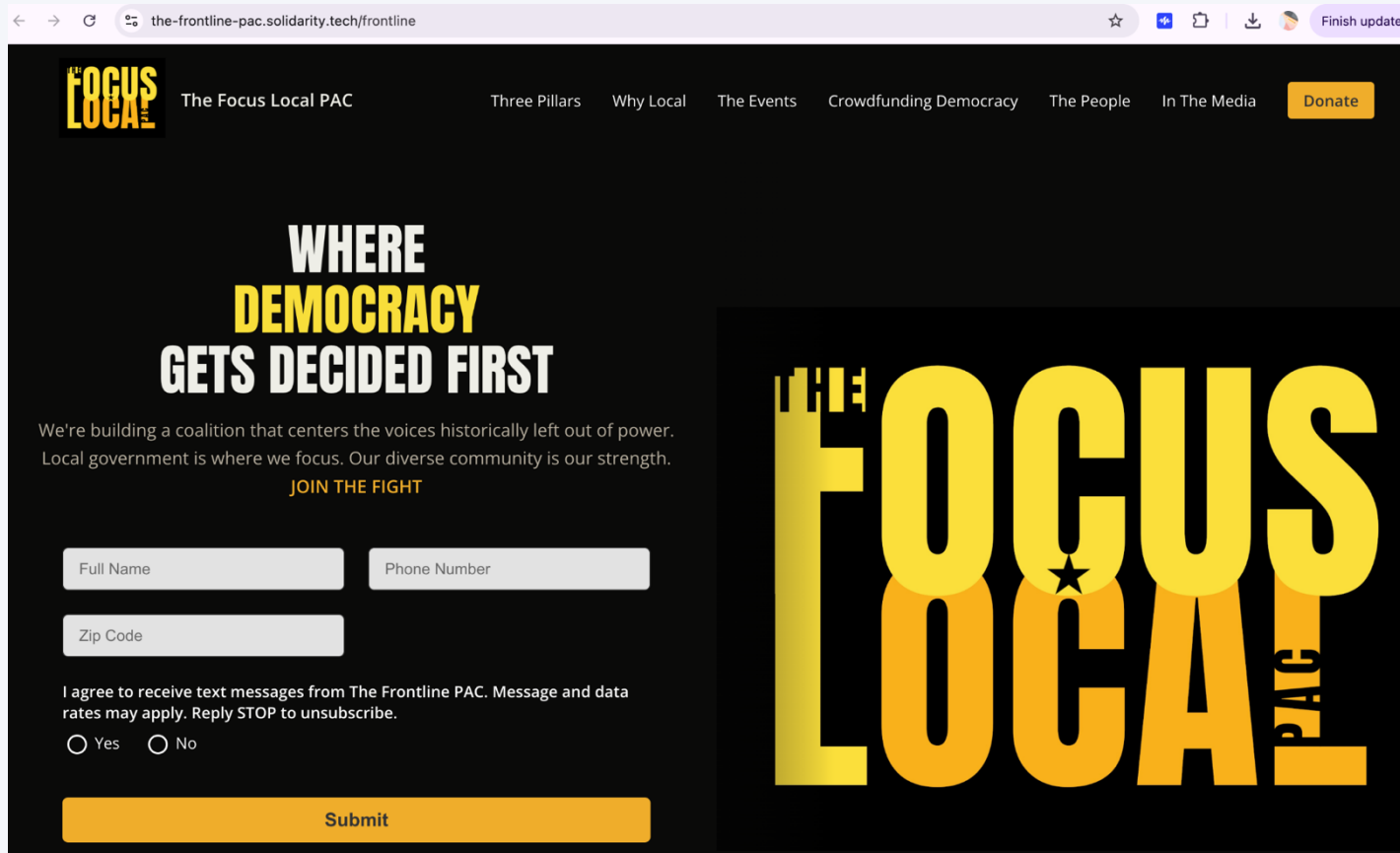


TPPF Press Release JUNE 26, 2026

The Texas Public Policy Foundation praised the board's adoption of the new social studies standards and the state's first required literary works list.

PACS TO MONITOR — THE GOOD ONES

A Promising Public Education PAC

A screenshot of the website for The Focus Local PAC. The browser address bar shows 'the-frontline-pac.solidarity.tech/frontline'. The website has a dark background with yellow and white text. The main heading reads 'WHERE DEMOCRACY GETS DECIDED FIRST'. Below this, a paragraph states: 'We're building a coalition that centers the voices historically left out of power. Local government is where we focus. Our diverse community is our strength.' followed by a 'JOIN THE FIGHT' link. There are three input fields: 'Full Name', 'Phone Number', and 'Zip Code'. Below these is a checkbox for receiving text messages and a 'Submit' button. On the right side of the page, there is a large graphic of the words 'THE FOCUS LOCAL PAC' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, with a small star above the 'O' in 'LOCAL'. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Three Pillars', 'Why Local', 'The Events', 'Crowdfunding Democracy', 'The People', 'In The Media', and a 'Donate' button.

the-frontline-pac.solidarity.tech/frontline

Finish update

THE FOCUS LOCAL PAC

The Focus Local PAC

Three Pillars Why Local The Events Crowdfunding Democracy The People In The Media Donate

WHERE DEMOCRACY GETS DECIDED FIRST

We're building a coalition that centers the voices historically left out of power. Local government is where we focus. Our diverse community is our strength.

[JOIN THE FIGHT](#)

Full Name Phone Number

Zip Code

I agree to receive text messages from The Frontline PAC. Message and data rates may apply. Reply STOP to unsubscribe.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Submit

THE FOCUS LOCAL PAC

WHY THIS ONE

The Focus Local PAC organizes around exactly the races most people ignore — the down-ballot, local ones.

“Where democracy gets decided first.”

Monitor the money on both sides. Campaign finance reports are public — read them before you give, and before you believe anyone's mailer.

Following the Money

PACs and advocacy organizations shaping Texas State Board of Education and school board races

CONSERVATIVE / SUPPORTS TEACHING HOW TO BE RELIGIOUS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

- **Texas Patriots PAC**
Supports conservative education candidates.
- **Texans for Educational Freedom PAC**
Supports school vouchers and school choice.
- **Texas Public Policy Foundation**
Conservative policy organization active in education issues.
- **Defend Texas Liberty PAC**
Conservative donor network active in education races.
- **Family Empowerment Coalition PAC**
Focuses on parental rights and school choice.
- **Patriot Mobile Action PAC**
Major funder in school board elections.
- **1776 Project PAC**
Supports conservative school board candidates nationally and in Texas.

PROGRESSIVE/ SUPPORTS TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION FOR HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PURPOSES

- **Texas Parent PAC**
Supports public schools and pro-education candidates.
- **Democrats for Education Reform Texas**
Focuses on educational equity and student outcomes.
- **TSTA-PAC**
Political arm of the Texas State Teachers Association.
- **Texas AFT**
Supports public schools and educators.
- **Texas Majority PAC**
Statewide Democratic political organization.
- **Battleground Texas**
Democratic voter engagement organization.
- **Raise Your Hand Texas**
Influential public education advocacy organization.



YOUR MOVE

Fifteen people help decide what 5.5 million students learn.

They're elected, they meet in public, and they listen to testimony. That's where you come in.

LEARN MORE

sboe.texas.gov

REGISTER TO VOTE

votetexas.gov

NEXT ELECTION

November 3, 2026

WHERE I STARTED, AND WHERE I'LL FINISH

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

No student should have to tolerate being treated as ‘less than’ in our public schools.

Ready, set, go.

Questions — and arguments — welcome.

Dr. Ellen Kimbrough Alexandrakis

Educator · Seminarian · Public Education Advocate

Dr.Ellen.Alexandrakis@gmail.com

Follow me on Substack 😊