



Approve >>> School Board Process

Understanding the School Board Approval Process: Tips for Getting on the Agenda and Presenting Your Recommendation

Use the checklists below to help you: (1) prepare your agenda item for the school board; (2) get on your school board agenda to present your SHAC recommendation; and (3) prepare your presentation and present your recommendation for a sexual health education curriculum to the school board. As a reminder, the new statutory updates require the SHAC to hold two public hearings prior to school board approval. Please take this into consideration when planning which Board meeting you would like to present at, and include additional meetings as back up if you are not on the agenda due to more pressing issues.

Prepare Your Agenda Item for the Board

The agenda item is what you will submit to the district to get on the Board agenda. This is a distinct step that is part of the district's process of policymaking. The agenda setting step ensures you have all of the necessary materials so the Board can make an informed decision after your formal presentation.

- Give Board members sufficient time to review the recommendation and accompanying documentation, including the selected curriculum.
- Prepare your agenda item so that it outlines the rationale and recommendations according to the local (district/city) situation, using graphs and images to support your argument:
 - Describe current consequences of teen sexual behavior in terms of local public health (pregnancy and STD/HIV rates), educational achievement (dropouts), and district expenditures (cost of daycare and/or homebound education);
 - Describe the curriculum, highlighting its deficiencies (why is a change curriculum needed?);
 - Review state and district policies on 'human sexuality instruction' (e.g., Texas Education Code 28.004);



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Prepare Your Agenda Item for the Board (cont'd)

- Describe how the program meets Health Education TEKS and complies with state statute
- If you are recommending an evidence-based program¹, describe the benefits of using a program that has demonstrated behavioral change (i.e., delaying sexual initiation among teens) and covers information on contraception) (i.e., need to give useful information to those teens who are already sexually active);
- Describe the process through which the district's SHAC selected the program you are recommending (highlight the role of parents in the process) and display the resolution statement for your recommendation;
- Provide an overview of the selected program / curriculum and summarize findings from behavioral studies;
- Describe how the program will be implemented in district's schools, including which grades, which courses, and by whom;
- Describe the cost of the program / curriculum, including applicable teacher training, and the source of funding for implementation;
- Describe how parents will be involved in implementation of program, such as informational meetings to notify parents of policy /curriculum, the procedure for consent, and parent activities in the program (if applicable);
- Describe how (or if) the SHAC will assist in the implementation and monitoring of program; include a timeline for reviewing policy / curriculum to make any changes (e.g., three or four years) after observing the process and outcomes of implementation.

¹ Evidence-based programs have undergone peer review and rigorous evaluation through a randomized controlled trial or strong quasi-experimental design and have shown impact on behaviors.



Submitting an Item for the Board Agenda

- Identify a helpful and knowledgeable district employee who can submit items for the Board agenda at the Board meeting; they are usually department heads (refer to district's procedures for submitting an agenda item).
- Review your district's procedures for submitting an item for the school board agenda. Refer to the district policies on Board meetings – also known as “BE (local)” – for specific procedures and timelines for agenda submissions. Refer to **iCHAMPSS Finding Policies and Program** to locate district policies.
- Review your district's agenda preparation calendar, published on the district's website, to familiarize yourself with important dates in the Board agenda process.
- Look for a calendar of “annually recurring Board agenda items” that outlines when the Board discusses items annually. This will help you identify and select appropriate months for submitting recommendations when the agenda is not already filled with important district business (Tip: avoid May / June when Boards are busy discussing next year's budget).
- Be prepared if your recommendation is not included in the agenda for the meeting(s) you wanted because other pressing issues took precedence. Follow up with the Board liaison (or other district person who sets the agenda) to see when the recommendation might make it onto the agenda(s).
- Allow plenty of time for the agenda process. If you want to implement a policy or program at the beginning of the school year (in September), it is best to submit the recommendation early in the agenda calendar (by January).
- Prepare for additional SHAC or subcommittee meetings during the agenda process. The policy administration (PA) office and/or cabinet may send an item back for revision, especially if it is a complex or sensitive issue. SHAC members should anticipate additional meetings to address suggested revisions.
- Have someone available to discuss the recommendation and curriculum if district administrators and/or Board members want additional information.



Prepare Your Presentation and Present Your Recommendation to the Board

The presentation is what you will formally present at a public Board meeting. This is a distinct step that is part of the district’s process of policymaking. You will have to provide the same materials in as you did in the agenda setting step – the agenda setting step ensures you have all of the necessary materials so the Board can make an informed decision after your formal presentation.

- Plan for more than one presentation to the Board when preparing your agenda item / presentation and materials.
- Examine the specifications of the meeting room from a presentation perspective: Is there good audio-visual equipment? Will the presentation be projected on a screen or a wall? Is the lighting very bright (i.e., windows are a problem for daytime presentations)? Will the presentation be virtual or in-person? You will need to adjust your presentation materials to account for these variations.
- Identify at which Board meeting(s) you will need to present: you might have to present at the agenda review meeting and/or workshop in addition to the regular Board meeting. The person in charge of the agenda / meeting process will inform you which meetings to attend – for complex and potentially controversial items, you will probably have to present at the review meeting / workshop because administrators and Board members might have more questions.
- Ask how much time you will have to present at the meeting (presentations are usually allotted 5 to 15 minutes).
- Meet informally with Board members before the meeting, if possible, to address any questions. Invite Board members to SHAC meetings where you will be discussing the issue of interest or recommendation.
- Ensure that the information in your presentation is also included in the agenda item that the Board members will review – do not add anything new (Board members do not like surprises).
- Notify SHAC members of the dates of presentations so they can attend. Only two or three SHAC members may speak as part of the presentation, but it is always good to have visible support from the other members.
- Prepare your presentation so that it outlines the rationale and recommendations according to the local (district/city) situation, using graphs and images to support your argument. See the bulleted list in the “Prepare Your Agenda Item for the Board” step to pinpoint what is necessary to include in your presentation.