

# **Area IX FFA Association Policy Handbook**

## **Section 1: Active Membership Eligibility**

### **1. Operational Principles**

The FFA Organization is an integral part of agricultural education, a leadership development program for students of agricultural science and technology programs. FFA programs are intended to be applied activities related to the classroom and laboratory instructional programs. Thus, membership guidelines should reflect this philosophy and support enrollment in agriculture food & natural resources (AFNR) courses.

#### **1. Constitutional Authority**

National FFA Constitution, Section B. To be eligible for active membership in a chartered FFA chapter, a student must be enrolled in a secondary Agricultural Science and Technology program. To retain membership, a student must:

1. Be enrolled in at least one Agricultural Science and Technology course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program, the objective of which is to gain experience in agriculture related careers.
2. Show an interest in the affairs of the Association by attending meetings, striving for degrees of membership, and participating in other organized activities of the chapter.
3. Pay all current District, Area, State, and National dues by the date determined by the chapter.
4. Display conduct consistent with the ideals and purposes of the Area IX FFA Association

#### **1. Membership Eligibility**

A. A student may establish initial membership by enrolling in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources course. An approved agriculture, food and natural resources course shall be any course in the agriculture food and natural resources program of study approved by the State Board of Education to be taught by an agriculture, food and natural resources instructor.

B. After completing two consecutive semesters for high school credit, a student may maintain continuous membership for a maximum of one membership year while not enrolled in a course provided they maintain an approved supervised experience program which is documented in an approved agriculture, food and natural resources record book. Pursuant to State and National constitutions, the membership year shall begin September 1 and conclude the following August 31. For the purposes of this policy, two one-semester classes taken concurrently count as two consecutive classes semesters. After re-enrolling and completing one agriculture, food and natural resources course, a student will be eligible to maintain one more year of membership without re-enrollment provided an approved, documented SAE is in place.

C. Local chapters may establish more stringent membership requirements.

D. More rigorous enrollment standards which apply to competitive events supersede this policy and are enumerated in the respective handbooks.

## **Section 2: Roster Submission**

### **2.1 Operational Philosophy**

A. The Area IX FFA Association requires each chapter to submit a membership roster annually, a provision which is in harmony with the National FFA Constitution and provides an orderly, consistent record of membership.

B. Compilation of membership data in a timely and orderly fashion requires a systematic approach to receiving and processing such documentation.

### **2.2 Deadlines**

A. Fall Rosters must be posted online no later than November 1 and District and Area dues postmarked no later than November 1 or the next business day if November 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

B. Spring Rosters must be posted online no later than March 1, and applicable District and Area dues postmarked no later than March 1 or the next business day if March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

### **2.3 Allocation of Voting Delegates**

Voting delegates are determined by the number of delegates on a chapter's roster on December 1 of that year.

### **2.4 Standing of Members, Chapters, Appeals**

Members who are not in good standing with the Area FFA due to missing dues, rosters, or other requirement documentation may be brought into good standing through the correction of all deficiencies. Such remedy shall bring the member in good standing retroactive to applicable deadlines.

A. Chapters with delinquent dues accounts shall be declared to be “not in good standing” and not eligible for participation in FFA events and may not use the FFA identity and trademarks. All reasonable attempts shall be made to collect the debt. Withdrawal of good standing shall be declared after all means have been exhausted. The Executive Officers shall be briefed of all such pending cases.

B. Appeals regarding membership, issues of good standing or allocation of delegates may be made in writing to the Area Coordinator. The elected Area Committee will review all such appeals. A written response to such appeals shall be issued in a timely manner and in a period not to exceed 10 working days from the date of the executive committee ruling.

## **Section 3: Area Officers**

A. The primary responsibility of an area officer is to serve the Area IX FFA Association in local, district, and area activities in a way that will inform, motivate and inspire FFA members, advisors, state staffs, teachers and others to achieve the mission, strategies and core goals of the organization and to represent the area association in meetings according to the direction of the Area Coordinator and Area Officer Advisors.

B. Area officers serve under the supervision of the Area Coordinator and Area Officer Advisors in accordance with official policy and budget limits. More specific responsibilities include:

- a. Participate in training, orientation, continual self-improvement and evaluation of activities as directed.
  - b. Represent the Area IX FFA Association at chapter, district, and area activities as requested by local advisors and area coordinators within the scope of Area IX FFA Policies.
  - c. Participate in the planning and conducting of the Area Leadership Camp, Greenhand Camp, and Area Officer Training at SLC.
  - d. Participate in the planning and conducting of Area IX FFA Convention as assigned by the Area Leadership Coordinator and Area Officer Advisors.
  - e. Serve as a National FFA Convention Delegate on behalf of the Texas FFA Association and fulfill all responsibilities therewith in accordance with the directive of the National FFA Organization and its staff and/or volunteers. The number of delegates attending convention will be determined by the Texas FFA office.
  - f. Keep up to date with all correspondence that comes from the Area Coordinator and the Area Leadership Coordinator.
  - g. Develop positive relationships with FFA members, advisors, staff, sponsors, and the general public.
  - h. Maintain a positive attitude and enjoy your year of service with members, advisors, staff, sponsors and others.
  - i. Follow the guideline in your Area Officer Contract.
  - j. Perform other duties as instructed by the Area Leadership Coordinator.
  - k. Attend State FFA Convention and serve as leaders to the Area IX delegation during each and every session.
- C. Area officers must attend the State FFA Leadership Conference. Officers cannot come late or leave early to the conference.

#### **Section 4: Area Officer Discipline Guidelines**

- A. The Area IX FFA Association generally recognizes four steps or levels of discipline: verbal warning, written warnings, suspensions, and discharge. Disciplinary action may begin at any step or level of severity and does not have to include each level.
  - a. **Verbal Warning** – should be used for minor violations. A written record should be kept to document the verbal warning, its content, and time frame for improvement, as well as the date of warning.
  - b. **Written Warning** – should be used for repeated violations or for a more substantial violation. A time frame for improvement should be set by the Area Coordinator and Area Leadership Coordinator. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file. The written warning notice will be discussed with the officer by the Area Coordinator, Area Leadership Coordinator and the officers Chapter Advisor(s) and the area officer will be asked to sign the warning to acknowledge receipt.
  - c. **Suspension** – will be utilized for serious violations when immediate action is required while an investigation is being conducted to determine if the officer should be discharged. The length of the suspension depends upon the time necessary to investigate the violation. The Area IX Executive Committee must approve all suspensions. A written notice of suspension and documenting the reasons for the suspension will be provided to the officer, in person or by telephone with written notice to follow in the

mail. Suspended officers may not wear the Area IX FFA Officer jacket or represent the area association as an officer in any manner during the suspension.

d. **Removal** – will be utilized for the most serious violations such as but not limited to, alcohol related issues, sexual harassment, inappropriate social media posts, etc. The Area IX Executive Committee must approve all discharges of student officers. If an alleged violation or continued failure to respond to disciplinary action for other violations is reported to or discovered by the Area Coordinator or Advisors, upon completion of the investigation and adequate due process, the Committee may discharge the officer with written documentation to explain the reasons for the discharge. This written notice will become part of the permanent operational record of the Area IX FFA Association. The officer will be notified, in person if appropriate, or by telephone and/or registered mail. Removed officers will not be allowed to wear the Area IX jacket after they have been removed from their office.

- B. The Area Coordinator, Area Leadership Coordinator and Area Advisor must approve any disciplinary action for a violation, as well as any suspension or discharge of an officer, prior to any action.
- C. Disciplinary circumstances involving Area officers should be dealt with by a progressive discipline system, if appropriate, to assure impartial treatment and acceptable conduct.

## **Section 5: Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning**

### **5.1 Guidelines**

A. The policies related to officer selection are intended to identify individuals who represent a complete, well-balanced agricultural education/ FFA experience.

### **5.2 Candidate Evaluation/Election Process**

A. The Area IX Executive Committee will be in the balloting room during the scoring of the candidates.

B. The Area Officer Selection process will be based on 5 areas and certain percentages per area. 40% for popular vote, 30% for the test, 15% for the interview, 10% for the application, 5% for the writing prompt.

C. Each district will elect 2 Area Officers at their district convention. The officer candidates must be from different schools.

D. The application will be the application developed by the Texas FFA and available from the Texas FFA Website.

E. The test will be developed through QBank by Judging Card.

F. The Area Coordinator is responsible for the writing prompt. In the event that the Area Coordinator has a candidate, the Area Leadership Coordinator will write the prompt, followed by the Area President, Vice President and Secretary until a fair prompt can be written.

G. The Area officer speech will last no more than 5 minutes. The candidate may not leave the stage during the speech. No props may be used during the speech as well.

H. Runoff speeches for the top 40% will be no more than 1 minute.

I. Area officers are required to answer a thought question on stage upon completion of their speech. The question will be asked by the Area President. The thought question will be

developed by the Area Coordinator. In the event that the Area Coordinator has a candidate, the Area Leadership Coordinator will write the question, followed by the Area President, Vice President and Secretary until a fair question can be written.

J. There will be a minimum of 4 judges, one from each district. There will be 2 other judges that the Area Coordinator is responsible for finding.

K. The officers of the Area IX Association shall be as follows: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Sentinel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President.

## **Section 7: Degree and Awards Checks**

### **7.1 Advisor Responsibilities**

A. All award candidates will be submitted online to [www.judgingcard.com](http://www.judgingcard.com) prior to District Degree Check on the Area IX Degree date.

B. All applications will be checked at each district degree check. If applications do not arrive at, and qualify from, the district check then they will forfeit advancement to the Area Degree Check.

C. Every chapter advisor that has an application at degree check must be there to actively participate on a degree check committee. This includes Lone Star FFA degrees and Americans.

D. The location of the Area IX Degree Check will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference.

### **7.2 Submission Requirements**

A. All applications approved and winners declared at the District Degree Check will be advanced on [judgingcard.com](http://judgingcard.com) to the Area Degree Check by each District President.

B. All applications submitted to Area Degree Check must be complete (no draft across Lonestar Degree applications).

C. Area Star Award candidates must submit 8 copies at the Area Check.

E. Proficiency Awards submitted to Area Degree Check must make 8 copies.

### **7.3 Advancement to State Degree Check.**

A. The Area Coordinator will advance to State Degree Check the approved applications and the winners declared at Area Degree Check. He/she will notify the advancing schools the day of Area Degree Check.

## **Section 8: Speaking Development Events**

A. Each Chapter in Area IX will enter their advancing speaking event on Judging Card prior to the entry deadline or they must pay the late fee, double the entry, to compete.

B. If a team is not entered by the date of the contest, that team will be disqualified.

C. Rules outlined in the State FFA Speaking Handbook will be followed at Area Degree check.

D. Each advancing team will provide 4 copies of the manuscripts for the judges.

E. The Area will advance one team to the State Speaking Contest in each Senior Level speaking event.

F. The Area will advance two teams to the State Speaking Contest in Soil Stewardship, Junior Prepared, and Extemporaneous Speaking events.

G. The location of the Area Speaking will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference.

H. The entry fee for speaking events will be \$20.00 per team. Double entry fee will be charged for any late teams.

I. Talent teams will follow rules set forth by the State office.

J. Rotation will follow the rotation schedule as outlined below.

<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>
A. McGee Bend	A. Piney Woods	A. Sam Houston	A. Ricebelt
B. Ricebelt	B. McGee Bend	B. Piney Woods	B. Sam Houston
C. Sam Houston	C. Ricebelt	C. McGee Bend	C. Piney Woods
D. Piney Woods	D. Sam Houston	D. Ricebelt	D. McGee Bend

### **Section 9: Leadership Development Events**

A. Each Chapter in Area IX will enter their advancing Leadership Teams on Judging Card prior to the entry deadline or they must pay the late fee, double the entry, to compete.

B. If a team is not entered by the date of the contest, that team will be disqualified.

C. Rules outlined in the State Leadership Handbook will be followed at the Area contest.

D. The Area will advance two teams to the State Leadership Contest in each event.

E. Rotation will follow the rotation schedule as outlined below.

F. The location of the Area Leadership Development Event will be determined at the annual Agricultural Teachers Conference.

G. The entry fee for Leadership Development Events will be \$20.00 per team. Double entry fee for every late entry.

H. Judges will be selected by the District Presidents based on their District results. One judge from each District will be a judge for the Area Event. They must be an Agriculture teacher with experience in the event they are judging. Job Interview will try to have 6 judges. There will be one judge from each District and two other judges to be selected by the Area Coordinator.

H. Rotation will follow the rotation schedule as outlined below.

<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2026-2027</b>
A. McGee Bend	A. Piney Woods	A. Sam Houston	A. Ricebelt
B. Ricebelt	B. McGee Bend	B. Piney Woods	B. Sam Houston
C. Sam Houston	C. Ricebelt	C. McGee Bend	C. Piney Woods
D. Piney Woods	D. Sam Houston	D. Ricebelt	D. McGee Bend

### **Section 10: Career Development Events**

A. The location for the Area Career Development Events are as below:

**Sam Houston State** – Ag Sales, ATMS, Farm Business Management, Floriculture, Forages, Homesite, Horse, Land, Livestock, Milk Quality, Nursery Landscape, Poultry, Woodlands Clinic

**Texas A&M** – Meats, Wool

**Tarleton State** – Dairy Cattle, Range

**Stephen F. Austin State** – Vet Technician, Entomology

- B. All entries will be completed through Judging Card.
- C. State Rules according to Dress Code will be followed at each Area event.
- D. Certification will come from Judging Card and the Area Coordinator.

## **Section 11: Executive Committee**

### **11.1 Members**

A. Area IX Executive Committee shall be the Area Coordinator, Area Leadership Coordinator, Area President, Area Vice President, Area Secretary, Area Treasurer, District President from each district in the Area, for a total of 10 members.

### **11.2 Meetings**

- A. Meetings will be set as deemed necessary throughout the year.