

# Best Practices for Meeting SBOE Training Content Requirements

A provider of school board training under SBOE rules may not engage in *political advocacy* during the training sessions under this section (19 TAC 61.1).

## ✓ Permitted

 Discussions on fostering legislative relationships, legislative or rulemaking processes, or legislative or policy updates.

## ✗ Prohibited

 Supporting or opposing political candidate(s), a particular party, or a group of candidates who hold a particular political viewpoint or position, specifically or by unmistakable implication, with the intent to influence the outcome of an election or appointment. [Example: Identification or promotion of candidates or legislators as "pro- or "anti-public education."]

 Supporting or opposing any measure with the intent to influence the outcome of a legislative, rulemaking, or other policy process or measure. [Example: Discussing pending legislation beyond the facts of proposed bills.]

## Tips for Maintaining Neutrality

- 1. State facts.** Avoid offering opinions about any legislation or legislators, especially during a legislative session. Be balanced when explaining potential implications of laws or discussing any issues districts and boards will need to consider during implementation.
- 2. Refrain from using names.** You can keep from inadvertently seeming "pro" or "anti" lawmaker if you just avoid such discussions altogether and focus on the facts of the new law or rules.
- 3. Avoid "blur" words.** These are words or phrases that can be perceived as editorializing or be interpreted differently depending on the audience. [Example: "This bill will have a significant impact on your district." **Alternative:** "This bill requires your district to XYZ, so you will want to work with your superintendent and district counsel to determine any implications for your district."]
- 4. Consider body language and non-verbal cues.** A raised eyebrow or slight smirk may be misinterpreted and negatively impact your message and presentation.

**Panelists and Co-presenters:** Even if you are not the training provider of record, you are still expected to adhere to the prohibition on political advocacy during training sessions. Failing to meet this standard can risk the TEA provider number for the provider of record.

## What to expect from me as a facilitator?

### ○ Panel discussions

I will provide questions ahead of time so that panelists can gather their thoughts in light of the rules on political advocacy.

### ○ Presentations

I will be engaged in the development of the session content to ensure that these expectations are met.

### ○ During sessions

I will step in to redirect the conversation if any speakers begin to veer into prohibited territory regarding political advocacy.