

TEXAS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



TO: All County Extension Agents

SUBJECT: Annual Texas Education Agency and Local School Requirements

As an educational agency, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service supports the Texas Education Code and academic responsibility of student 4-H members. The dedication of Extension faculty to see that 4-H members comply with the provisions of the Texas Education Code is important to the effective adherence of the rule among our 4-H members. Extension faculty must be dedicated to complying with the Texas Education Code requirements in order for the Texas 4-H Program to maintain the status of an extracurricular organization.

The Commissioner of Education is not authorized to approve extracurricular organizations outside of school sponsored or UIL sponsored groups. Local Boards of Trustees are responsible for the sanctioning and approval of outside organizations as "extracurricular organizations" for their individual districts. Therefore, it is imperative for county Extension agents to ensure 4-H is designated as an extracurricular organization in each of the individual school districts residing in the county.

Because of the COVID-19 crisis that we continue to experience, educational options may vary among school districts this year. Schools have the authority to develop local policies that could impact 4-H event participation. As we move forward, Texas 4-H will continue to provide opportunities for personal growth and development of our members and will work with local school districts to determine academic eligibility. Any Texas youth who meets the age requirements can participate in the 4-H program because of the partnership that was established through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the creation of the Cooperative Extension Service (USDA, the land-grant university system, and local government). The tie with land-grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture assures a research and science base to the 4-H Youth Development Program.

The past two years have presented unprecedented challenges that have been different for every ISD and 4-H member. Due to the conditions surrounding 4-H participation and the various learning options available to students this year, some additional clarification is being provided regarding academic eligibility. Families are encouraged to know and understand school policy regarding learning options and the implications for participating in various activities.

Regardless of your school instructional status (face-to-face, virtual, homeschool, etc.), all youth who meet the age/grade requirements are eligible for 4-H membership. To participate in all 4-H competitive events, 4-H members must be academically eligible. To participate in 4-H non-competitive events that require missing school time, members must be academically eligible. Academic eligibility is the combination of several factors that includes but not limited to passing grades and no behavior/disciplinary restrictions specific to the time requested (i.e. DAEP, suspension). The Declaration of Eligibility Form sent to school will ask schools if the member is academically eligible.

The school will then be asked to denote if an excused absence will be granted if the 4-H event occurs during school time. This decision will vary across school districts and their local policies regarding participation in extracurricular activities. If the school does not approve the excused absence for a 4-H activity but the member is academically eligible, the decision to attend the 4-H activity during school time will be left up to the family. The family should recognize that attendance at the 4-H activity during school time may result in an unexcused absence and influence class ranking. Please understand and respect the school's decision to make policies for their own community.



Texas 4-H Youth Development Office
1470 William D. Fitch Parkway | College Station, Texas 77845
<http://texas4-h.tamu.edu> | Tel. 979.845.1211 | Fax. 979.845.6495

This document includes three important components for having a strong working relationship with local schools. The three areas are:

1. Establishment of the county 4-H Program as an extracurricular activity with local schools,
2. Securing Adjunct Faculty Status of all Extension Agents with local schools, and
3. Academic Eligibility for all active 4-H members who are participating in a 4-H event or activity.

All three of these processes are vital to both the school district for funding purposes and to Extension for 4-H youth to participate in events and activities throughout the school year.

It is considered best practice to meet and have open discussion about the 4-H program and how participation enhances the educational opportunities for every member depending on an individual's interests. The decision to seek extracurricular status for 4-H with a particular school will be based on the relationship with the administration of the particular ISD or individual school. Because of the many variables, one blanket "how to" or "must do" does not work in these circumstances.

Below are some important reminders as you start working on this annual process:

Adjunct Faculty: Adjunct Faculty:

- School districts requiring that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees be screened or have proof of screening is occurring statewide. Mrs. Jennifer Hobbs, Chief Human Resources Officer, can work with you to get proof of agency employee screening. Some school districts are also requiring finger printing. Extension employees must abide by their requirements to receive adjunct faculty status.

Eligibility of 4-H Members:

- Continuing on September 1, 2021, all 4-H youth, including youth in public, private, and/or home school, (whether physically in the classroom or receiving virtual instruction) must adhere to the following guidelines regarding extracurricular activities and academic eligibility:
 - Complete a "Declaration of Eligibility Form", or
 - Name of 4-H member must appear on a list of eligible students to participate in a specific activity.
- Consistent with the UIL rules, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program has adopted a three (3) school week waiting period upon change in status of school enrollment (i.e. from public to home, public to private, public to public, private to public, private to home, private to private, home to public, or home to private) before the 4-H member is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.
- All 4-H members must be officially enrolled (in an "active" status on 4HOnline) to be considered an official 4-H member. No excused absences can be requested for any youth who is not enrolled in the official 4-H enrollment system (4HOnline).

Please take time to review each of the enclosed attachments or link to resources.

ATTACHMENT	NAME	DESCRIPTION
	ANNUAL TASK LIST	Timeline for Extension Agents to review, plan, and implement request to schools for Extracurricular and Adjunct Faculty status, and Academic Eligibility.
A	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST: Cover Letter Requesting Extracurricular Status for 4-H	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate to send with the Extracurricular Status Resolution. This letter requests and explains the importance of 4-H being recognized as an extracurricular activity.
B	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST: Resolution Requesting Extracurricular Status for 4-H	This resolution will accompany the cover letter and is the document that will be presented by the school superintendent to the school board for official action. Once voted on, and approved, please request a signed copy for the county office files.
C	ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST: Cover Letter Requesting Adjunct Faculty Status	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate to send with the Adjunct Faculty Agreement. This letter requests approval of adjunct faculty status for all degreed Extension agents/employees who will be serving in an official chaperoning capacity of 4-H youth throughout the year.
D	ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST: Adjunct Faculty Agreement	Agreement that will be reviewed and approved by local school board granting adjunct faculty status to county staff. Once document has been approved, county office needs to send a copy to their District Extension Administrator or County Extension Director.
E	ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY: Procedures for Securing Eligibility Information and Excused Absences For 4-H Members to Participate in 4-H Event or Activity	Outlines procedures for the county Extension office to use in establishing protocol for checking academic eligibility and for 4-H members to receive an excused absence when participating in 4-H events.
F	ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY: Academic Eligibility Form	This is the form that will be used on an individual basis to receive a declaration of academic eligibility for a 4-H member. This form must be completed by the 4-H Parent/Guardian and County Extension Agent prior to being given to school for certification.
Website Link	TEA-UIL Side-by-Side Document	This document provides explanations and interpretations of Commissioner of Education rules, UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, and statutes. Additional updates to this document will be made as information becomes available. http://www.uiltexas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side

You will want to immediately update your files and replace them with these documents. It is critically important for all Extension faculty to become familiar with the contents of these materials in order to assure the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program complies with the Texas Education Code.

Please feel free to contact either one of us in the event that you have questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Montza Williams, Ed.D.
4-H Program Director



Jeff Ripley, Ph.D.
Associate Agency Director for County Operations

ANNUAL LIST OF TASK TO COMPLETED TO ENSURE PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

(These procedures cover all 4-H members in public, private, and home schools.)

Annual list of task to be completed by County Extension Staff

MONTH/DATE		ATTACHMENT
COUNTY LEVEL		
(July /August)	<p>As a total county Extension faculty, meet and discuss the Texas Education Code requirements and specify procedures the county is going to use during the upcoming year. Also, plan for interpretation of the educational value of 4-H participation to teachers, school administration, and school boards.</p> <p>During this discussion, the following components should be reviewed and completed as needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-H is a program available to all Texas' youth who meet the age requirements regardless of education option preferred • Request for Extracurricular Status for 4-H • Request for Adjunct Faculty Status • 4-H will utilize the local grading/discipline systems to determine academic eligibility regardless of the chosen educational platform • As always, Saturday competitive events will only require proof of academic eligibility. • Determine best practices for checking academic eligibility of 4-H members for event and activity participation. 	
JULY/AUGUST	<p>A meeting should be scheduled with each school superintendent and/or principal that has 4-H members that will be involved in 4-H activities during the year to discuss the procedures Extension plans to use. At this meeting, the following should occur:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek extracurricular status for 4-H. Note: The approval of organizations (approval of extracurricular organizations) outside of school sponsored or UIL sponsored groups continues to be the responsibility of the local board of trustees. A resolution regarding Extracurricular Status of 4-H and an example letter for agents to use in contacting school superintendents requesting that 4-H be recognized as an extracurricular organization is provided. 2. Request Adjunct Faculty Appointment for CEA(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counties are encouraged to develop a plan for cross-county CEA joint appointments to consolidate travel and supervisory responsibilities at major livestock shows. • Remember, when you have youth chosen for National 4-H Congress, National 4-H Conference, or Texas 4-H Leadership Conference, include one of the chaperones on your adjunct list. 	<p>Attachment A Attachment B</p> <p>Attachment C Attachment D</p>
AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER (MAY SEND REMINDERS DURING STOCK SHOW AND CONTEST TIME)	<p>Extension faculty, volunteers, 4-H members, and their parents should be informed in writing of the procedures that will be followed during the upcoming school year to ensure 4-H members abide by the provisions of the Texas Education Code, thus ensuring 4-H retain its extracurricular status.</p> <p>Families should visit with school officials to learn how the local school district will determine absences and how the various learning options could impact participation.</p>	

THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	The Declaration of Eligibility Form for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service/4-H provides an alternate approach to the current system in ensuring 4-H's compliance with the Texas Education Code requirements. This procedure does not replace the current system of Extension agents submitting a written request in advance of each 4-H event to the appropriate school administrator to determine academic eligibility of 4-H youth. It adds another method of determining eligibility of 4-H members. The decision as to which system to implement should be made by the total county Extension faculty with each faculty member fully aware of the implications.	Attachment E Attachment F
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	Thirty days prior to a 4-H competitive activity or a 4-H activity that requires a member to be absent from school, put the procedures into action.	
	To address any problems or violations during the school year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report them immediately to your District Extension Administrator. • Report them to the local school administrator for them to enforce their procedures covering violations of the Texas Education Code of members of approved non-UIL organizations. Many districts have incorporated these procedures into their discipline management systems. 	
DISTRICT		
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	District Extension Administrators will immediately report any problems or violations to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service administrators responsible for the Texas Education Code, Associate Director – County Operations and Assistant Director/State 4-H Program Director.	
STATE		
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	The Associate Director – County Operations and the State 4-H Program Director will facilitate resolution of the problem and communicate action to the Texas Education Agency Complaint Department.	

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST

SAMPLE LETTER: Request for Extracurricular Status For 4-H

ANYWHERE COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

Date

Superintendent's Name
 Name of School District
 School District Address
 School District City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of Superintendent):

On behalf of the 4-H members of _____ County, I/we hereby respectfully request that the 4-H organization, by the attached resolution, be sanctioned as an extracurricular activity. We request the enclosed RESOLUTION be presented for consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of the (name of school district). I/we further request that questions regarding this RESOLUTION be directed to me/us in a timely manner so that I/we may prepare and present an appropriate response so as not to delay action on this request.

Finally, I/we request that a signed copy of this RESOLUTION, along with a copy of the minutes of the Board meeting, be forwarded to me/us for my/our files.

Thank you and members of the Board of Trustees for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

County Extension Agent's Name
 Title

Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

Any County Extension Office
 123 Main Street | Anytown, Texas 12345
<http://texas4-h.tamu.edu> | Tel. 123.456.7890 | Fax. 987.654.3210

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST

SAMPLE RESOLUTION: Resolution Requesting Extracurricular Status For 4-H

RESOLUTION

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS OF 4-H ORGANIZATION

Be it hereby resolved that upon this date, the duly elected Board of Trustees of the

(Complete name of school district)

meeting in public with a quorum present and certified,
did adopt this resolution that recognizes the

(Name of County)

County Texas 4-H Organization as approved for recognition and eligible
for extracurricular status consideration under 19 Texas Administrative Code,
Chapter 76.1, pertaining to extracurricular activities.

Participation by 4-H members under provisions of this resolution are subject
to all rules and regulations set forth under the 19 Texas Administrative Code
as interpreted by this Board and designated officials of this school district.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
will request academic eligibility for all 4-H competitive activities,
regardless if a school absence is or is not required, and
for non-competitive purposes when an absence is required.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Board of Trustee

Superintendent

ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST

SAMPLE LETTER: Cover Letter Requesting Adjunct Faculty Status

ANYWHERE COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

Date

Superintendent's Name
 Name of School District
 School District Address
 School District City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of Superintendent):

On behalf of the _____ County Extension Staff, I/we hereby respectfully request approval of the attached Adjunct Faculty Agreement with the _____ Independent School District.

The State Board of Education passed an amendment to 19 TAC§129.21 (j). Requirements for Student Attendance Accounting for State Funding Purposes allows public school students to be considered "in attendance" when participating in off-campus activities with an adjunct staff member of the school district. Section 3 of the Student Attendance Handbook states:

(1) The student is participating in an activity that is approved by the local board of school trustees and is under the direction of a member of the professional or paraprofessional staff of the school district, or an adjunct staff member who:

- (A) has a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and*
- (B) is eligible for participation in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.*

_____ County requests the agents listed on the enclosed Adjunct Faculty Agreement be awarded adjunct staff member status for the period of time indicated on the agreement.

I hope _____ Independent School District will accept this request. Please let me know if you would like to schedule an appointment to discuss the amendment and request or if you need further information.

Thank you and members of the Board of Trustees for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

County Extension Agents Name
 Title

Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

Any County Extension Office
 123 Main Street | Anytown, Texas 12345
<http://texas4-h.tamu.edu> | Tel. 123.456.7890 | Fax. 987.654.3210

ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST

SAMPLE TEMPLATE: Adjunct Faculty Agreement

THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF _____

On this date, at a regularly scheduled and posted meeting, came the Board of Trustees of the _____ Independent School District, hereinafter referred to as "District." A quorum having been established, the Board proceeded to consider the appointment of the herein named individual as an adjunct member of the _____ Independent School District.

Upon consideration and vote of _____ in favor, _____ is hereby named as adjunct faculty member(s) of the _____ Independent School District subject to the following considerations and provisions of such appointment to wit:

1. This appointment shall commence on the _____ day of _____, 20____ and remain in effect until the _____ day of _____, 20____.

2. This appointment will include the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees listed below:

NAME	TITLE	DEGREE	INSTITUTION	DATE

3. Adjunct faculty member(s) will receive no compensation, salary, or remuneration from _____ Independent School District.

4. Adjunct faculty member(s) is and shall remain an employee, in good standing, of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

5. Adjunct faculty member(s) is and shall remain under the direct supervision of either the District Extension Administrator of District _____ or _____ County Extension Director.

6. Adjunct faculty member(s) shall receive all group insurance benefits, workman's compensation insurance benefits, unemployment insurance, and any and all other plans for the benefit of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees. District shall have no responsibility for any of such benefits or plans.

Adjunct faculty member (s) shall direct the activities and participation of students of the school district in sponsored and approved activities as designated from time to time by adjunct faculty members for which notice shall be given to School District administrative personnel. Adjunct faculty members' activities and participation with students of the School District are directed, supervised, and controlled by and through supervisory personnel of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service pursuant to the supervisory authority of the District Extension Administrator or County Extension Director. Adjunct faculty member(s) is not the employee of the School District, and School District does not nor shall not supervise, direct or control the activities and/or participation of such _____ County Extension Agent(s) who have/has been herein designated as an adjunct faculty member.

This appointment is made by the Independent School District by and through the Board of Trustees of said district for the benefit of allowing voluntary student participation in programs conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in recognition of the educational benefits arising from such participation and activities and/or directed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This appointment is made in accordance with the provisions of Section 129.21 (j)(1) of the Texas Administrative Code authorizing the school to deem such participating students in attendance for foundation school program purposes.

This appointment of the herein named _____ County Extension Agent(s), _____
_____ (Extension employee) is/are not intended nor shall be construed as a waiver of any claim or defense
of sovereign or governmental immunity from liability now possessed by _____ Independent School
District or any of its employees, agents, officers, and/or board members in the performance of governmental functions.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2019.

_____ Independent School District

By: _____

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Procedures For Securing Eligibility Information And Excused Absences For 4-H Members To Participate In 4-H Event Or Activity

This procedure applies to ALL 4-H events or activities (competitive or non-competitive) and all 4-H members in public, private, and/or home school that requires a 4-H member to be absent from school. For instance, if a 4-H member is a member of a state planning task force and needs to miss a day of school to participate, the 4-H member would have to be eligible according to the Texas Education Code to be excused from school.

There are two ways a County Extension Office can request academic eligibility for 4-H members. One is on an individual basis using the Declaration of Eligibility Form (Attachment B) for times when only one or two 4-H members may be needing an absence. The second option is for times when a large number of youth may be needing an excused absence, such as a county or major stock show. The steps below outline how the county office needs to proceed with each of the processes.

BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR	
August/September	County Extension Agents should meet with school officials to <u>determine the steps</u> the agent needs to take to assist 4-H members in obtaining excused absences to participate in 4-H events and to determine eligibility of 4-H members for competitive events.
30 DAYS PRIOR TO ANY 4-H EVENT/ACTIVITY NEEDING ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY CHECKED	
Declaring eligibility for small number of 4-H members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all members needing an excused absence are ACTIVE 4-H members. 2. Complete the County Agent section of the Declaration of Eligibility Form. Provide the form to either the 4-H member and request they submit to the school for completion, or have the 4-H parent/guardian complete the first section, return back to the County Extension Office and then submit as a group to the respective school campuses. 4-H member then returns completed form back to the County Extension Office within the timeframe given by the office.
Declaring eligibility for large number of 4-H members	<p>Extension agents should prepare a document on official letterhead which includes the items listed below and submit to each school/campus requesting eligibility status for each 4-H member.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name of 4-H member(s) involved b. School they attend c. Current grade level in school d. Dates of proposed absence(s) e. Name of event f. Educational value g. Chaperone <p>List is returned back to County Extension Office by school/campus.</p>
RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL ON DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY	
Eligible	The school should respond to CEA if there are any students who are academically eligible. County Extension Office should follow up with the school/campus if no response is received.
Ineligible	If a 4-H member is academically ineligible for a 4-H competitive event, the agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agency, by letter, of this situation. If the parent has any questions, they should be referred to the school administrator for the family and school to resolve eligibility issues.

If county Extension faculty and schools develop and agree on procedures they deem more efficient and effective and still ensures 4-H's compliance with the Texas Education Code requirements, they should inform their District Extension Administrator/County Extension Director of the plan to be followed.

DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM INSTRUCTIONS

4-H'ers should complete a separate form for each competitive event/activity in which they plan to participate. The original form should be returned to the county Extension office by the deadline established by the County Extension Office..

NOTE: Schools requiring a copy of this form should make their copy before returning it to the student.

Parent/Guardian Section

1. Parent/Guardian will select the information being requested. It is either:
 - Academic eligibility information only. (Used to verify academic eligibility only for 4-H competitive events/activities.), or
 - Academic eligibility information and authorization to receive an excused absence from school. (Used to verify academic eligibility as well as receive authorization to receive an excused absence. This would be used for events held during school hours such as stock shows, state and national 4H contests and events, etc.)
2. Complete the date and name of activity. (Used to notify school officials of exact dates/times a student would be participating in a 4-H activity or representing 4-H at an event.)
3. Parent/Guardian signature is required. The signature of the parent/guardian confirms that this person is aware of the academic eligibility and excused absence requirements of the Texas Education Code.

County Extension Agent Section

1. Extension Office will complete this section and certify the youth is a 4-H member and his/her participation in the event.
2. County Extension Agent (with adjunct faculty status) will sign the form.

School Principal/Designee Section

1. Principal, or designee, will indicate the 4-H members eligibility status, options are:
 - Academically eligible to participate
 - Not academically eligible to participate
2. The principal or designee will indicate whether or not an excused absence will be granted.
3. Principal, or designee, will sign and date the form in order to be valid.

4-H family should follow instructions provided by the
County Extension Office on returning form to the
Extension Office by the given deadline.



Texas 4-H Youth Development Program DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

This form is requested in accordance with the requirement of the Texas Education Code and in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency and local school board policies.

Instructions: Complete one form per activity. 4-H member should return original form to the County Extension Office

PARENT/GUARDIAN SECTION

In accordance with 4-H policy, provided by our local Extension office, I respectfully request:

(CHECK ONE)

- Academic eligibility information only.
- Academic eligibility information and authorization to receive an excused absence from school.

Date of Activity: _____ Name of Activity: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT SECTION

I hereby certify that _____ is a member of 4-H in _____ County and is scheduled to participate in this activity representing 4-H. He/she will be under the supervision of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service faculty or agency's designated volunteer leader.

Date

Signature of County Extension Agent

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY (CHECK ONE)

- I do certify that the student is academically eligible to participate in the above mentioned activity.
- I do not certify the student because he/she is **NOT** academically eligible to participate in the above mentioned activity.

EXCUSED ABSENCE (CHECK ONE)

- An excused absence will be granted.
- An excused absence will **NOT** be granted.
- Does not apply.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS (CHECK ONE)

- Face-to-Face (on campus)
- Virtual Option
- Homeschooled

Date

Signature of Principal or Designee

Name of School