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 rules 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 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 school districts residing in the county.

Educational options may still continue to vary among school districts. 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 connection with land-grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture assures a research and science base to the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Due to the conditions surrounding 4-H participation and the carious learning options available to students, some additional clarification is being provided regarding academic eligibility. Families are encouraged to know and understand school policy regarding learning options and 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 presented 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 the 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 schools decision to make policies for their own community.



Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Leader
Texas A&M University | 2473 TAMU | College Station, Texas 77843-2473
http://texas4-h.tamu.edu | Tel. 979.845.1211

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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 the 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

School districts requiring that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees be screened or have proof
of screening is occurring statewide. Ms. Elizabeth Schartz, 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 the specific school requirements to receive adjunct faculty status.
 Eligibility of 4-H Members:

- Continuing for this academic year, all 4-H youth, including youth in public, private, and/or homeschool, (whether physically in the classroom or receiving virtual instruction) must adhere to the following guidelines regarding extracurricular activities and academic eligibility.
 - o Complete a "Declaration of Eligibility Form", or
 - O Name of 4-H member must appear on a list of eligible students to participate in a specific activity.
- Academic eligibility is requested for extracurricular activities and is approved or declines by the member's school. In addition to following this UIL rule. The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program has adopted a school change policy to stay consistent across the educational systems. If a youth has a change in school status from public to private or homeschool, the member must adhere to a three (3) school-week waiting period before he/she 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 the time to review each of the enclosed attachments or links 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.
Α	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate
	REQUEST:	to send with the Extracurricular Status Resolution.
	Cover Letter Requesting	This letter requests and explains the importance of 4-
	Extracurricular Status for 4-H	H being recognized as an extracurricular activity.
В	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST:	This resolution will accompany the cover letter and is the document that will be presented by the school
	Resolution Requesting Extracurricular	superintendent to the school board for official action.
	Status for 4-H	Once voted on, and approved, please request a
		signed copy for the county office files.
С	ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST:	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate
	Cover Letter Requesting Adjunct	to send with the Adjunct Faculty Agreement. This
	Faculty Status	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:	Agreement that will be reviewed and approved by
	Adjunct Faculty Agreement	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:	Outlines procedures for the county Extension office
	Procedures for Securing Eligibility	to use in establishing protocol for checking academic
	Information and Excused Absences For	eligibility and for 4-H members to receive an
	4-H Members to Participate in 4-H	excused absence when participating in 4-H events.
	Event or Activity	PRIOR AND CONTRACTOR AND
F	ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:	This is the form that will be used on an individual basis to receive a declaration of academic eligibility
	Academic Eligibility Form	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-u i 1-side-by-s
		ide.

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.

Montza Williams, Ed.D.

4-H Program Director

Donald Kelm, Ed.D. Associate Director - County

Operations

ANNUAL LIST OF TASKS TO COMPLETED TO ENSURE PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

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

Annual list of tasks to be completed by County Extension Staff

MONTH/DATE ATTACHMENT		
COUNTY LEVEL		
JULY/AUGUST JULY/AUGUST	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. During this discussion, the following should be reviewed and completed as needed: • 4-H is a program available to all Texas' youth who meet the age requirements regardless of education 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 • Determine best process allowing for FERPA rules to seek eligibility A meeting should be scheduled with each school superintendent/principal/counselor/designated school personnel that has 4-H members who 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: 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) a. Counties are encouraged to develop a plan for cross-county CEA joint appointments to consolidate travel and supervisory responsibilities at major livestock shows. b. Remember, when you have youth chosen for National 4-H Congress, National 4-H Conference, or Texas	Attachment A Attachment B Attachment C Attachment D
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER (MAY SEND REMINDERS DURING STOCK SHOW AND CONTEST TIME)	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. 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.	

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	Following the agreed upon timeline with the ISD and 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. Best practice would be 15-30 days prior to the event.	
	Report them immediately to your District Extension Administrator. Report them to the local school administrator for them to enforce 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 State 4-H Program Director.	
STATE		KONGRUTT THE VIEW
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.	

Superintendent's Name

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST

SAMPLE LETTER: Request for Extracurricular Status for 4-H



ANYWHERE COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

Date

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 Extensions Agent's Name Title

Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

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

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUESTSAMPLE 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 19TexasAdministrative 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 19Texas 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 U). 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 faculty staff members status for the period of time indicated on the agreement.		
I hope Inde	ependent School District will accept this request. Please let me know if you would like to endment 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 Extensions Agent's Name	

Title

Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

Any County Extension Office

ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST

SAMPLE TEMPLATE: Adjunct Faculty Agreement

	ГАТЕ OF TEXAS ГҮ OF:
hereinaf	date, at a regularly scheduled and posted meeting, came the Board of Trustees of the Independent School District, fter referred to as "District." A quorum having been established; the Board proceeded to consider the appointment of the herein named anal{s} as an adjunct member of the Independent School District.
Upon co	onsideration 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
2.	
	NAME THE DEGREE INSTITUTION DATE
designate faculty resupervise County I supervise Extension This approvoluntary faccordary	Adjunct faculty member(s) is and shall remain under the direct supervision of either the District Extension Administrator of District or County Extension Director. 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. faculty member(s) shall direct the activities and participation of students of the school district in sponsored and approved activities as ted from time to time by adjunct faculty members for which notice shall be given to School District administrative personnel. Adjunct members' activities and participation with students of the School District are directed, supervised, and controlled by and through for personnel of Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service pursuant to the supervisory authority of the District Extension Administrator of Extension Director. Adjunct faculty member(s) is not the employee of the School District, and School District does not nor shall not be, direct or control the activities and/or participation of such County on Agent(s) who have/has been herein designated as an adjunct faculty member. Description of the educational benefits from such participation in programs conducted by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service in recognition of the educational benefits from such participation and activities and/or directed by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. This appointment is made in the ewith the provisions of Section 129.21 (j)(l) of the Texas Administrative Code authorizing the school to deem such participating
	in attendance for foundation school program purposes.
rom lia	pointment of the herein named County Extension Agent(s), (Extension ee) is/are not intended nor shall be construed as a waiver of any claim or defense of sovereign or governmental immunity ability now possessed by Independent School District or any of its employees, agents, officers, and/or members in the performance of governmental functions.
Signed	this day of, 20
	Independent School District
	By:

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Procedures for securing Academic 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 F) for times when only one or two 4-H members may be needing an absence. The second option is for situations when a large number of youths 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 determine the steps 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 academic eligibility for small number of 4-H members	 Ensure that all members needing an excused absence are ACTIVE 4-H members. Complete the County Agent section of the Declaration of Eligibility Form. Pro-vide 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 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 academic eligibility for large number of 4-H members	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. 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 List is returned back to County Extension Office by school/campus.
OF ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY	The state of the s
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, in writing – letter/email (a phone call can also be made but should be
number of 4-H members RESPONSE FROM SCHOOL ON DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY Eligible	school/campus requesting eligibility status for each 4-H member 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 List is returned back to County Extension Office by school/campus if no response is received. If a 4-H member is academically ineligible for a 4-H competitive event agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agent must notify the 4-H member agent must

If county Extension faculty and schools develop and agree on procedures the deem more efficient and effective and still ensures 4-H's compliance with the Texas Education Code requirements, they should inform their District 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 requested. It is either:
 - a. Academic eligibility information only. {Used to verify academic eligibility only for 4-H competitive events/activities.), or
 - b. 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 4-H contests and events, etc.)
- 2. Complete the date and name of the 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:

- Principal, or designee, will indicate the 4-H members eligibility status, options are:
 - a. Academically eligible to participate
 - b. Not academically eligible to participate
- 2. The principal, or designee, will indicate whether or not an excused absence will be granted.
- The principal, or designee, will provide the date being used to determine eligibility.
- 4. 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. The original form should be returned 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.		
e of Activity:Name of Activity:		
Signature of Parent/Guardian:		
COUNTY EXTENSI	ON AGENT SECTION	
I hereby certify that is a member of 4-H in _ this activity representing 4-H. He/she will be under the supervision of the volunteer leader.	County and is scheduled to participate in e Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service faculty or agency's designated	
Date: Signature:		
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL C	OR DESIGNEE SECTION	
☐ I do certify that the student is academically eligible to participate in t	he 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)	EDUCATIONAL STATUS (CHECK ONE)	
☐ An excused absence will be granted	☐ Face-to-Face (on campus)	
☐ An excused absence will NOT be granted.	☐ Virtual Option	
☐ Does not apply	Homeschooled	
Date used to determine eligibility:		
Date: Signature of Pri	incipal or Designee:	
1	Name of School:	