



**Questions for Candidates for State Board of Education  
from the Conservative Coalition of Harris County**

*Our questionnaire is for candidates to indicate their reasons and opinions concerning issues surrounding their races. This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public voter viewing.*

Candidate Name	Position for which Candidate is Running
George Brian Vachris	State Board of Education district 8

*Please give your answer to each of the following questions and please include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise and clear.*

1. Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate for the State Board of Education office.

**Answer:** I have a broad spectrum of experience.

### **Vachris has educational experience**

- Licensed Professional Engineer in Texas
- Former Certified Teacher of mathematics, physical science, engineering (6-12)
- Taught 9 years at a Title 1 school in Houston ISD
- Testified before Texas State House and Senate
- Testified before State Board of Education
- M. S. Fire Protection Engineering
- B.S. Chemical Engineering
- B.S Mechanical Engineering
- B.A. History
- Environmental Management Certificate
- Member: AIChE, ASTM, ASME, NFPA, NRA, SFPE, TSRA
- Design Engineer on Naval Submarines and Offshore Oil Platforms
- Served on 2024 Texas Republican Platform Education and Finance Subcommittees
- Delegate to 2024 Republican National Convention
- Precinct Chair and Election Judge
- Former Candidate for Texas State Senate 15
- Formerly Elected to Town Board of Finance
- Former Volunteer Firefighter & EMT
- Worked through night engineering school as a machinist, factory worker, and technician – knows value of trades education
- Served as church ESL teacher & missionary
- Vachris has attended public schools, parochial schools, trade schools, community colleges, state universities, private universities – understands full spectrum of educational opportunities – Ready to serve on day 1
- Vachris has served as an active Republican campaigner and supporter of candidates
- Vachris has been endorsed by many precinct chairs and several S.R.E.C. members

2. Please describe your solutions to the two most pressing problems facing the State Board of Education.

**Answer:** As I see it, the most pressing and urgent problem is found in the manner in which the Board implements Texas Education Code Title 2, Subtitle B, Chapter 7, Subchapter D, Section 7.102, (c) (4) "The board shall establish curriculum and graduation requirements." The curriculum requirements are set in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) under various chapters for each subject area. For example, 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 113. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies is undergoing current revision. According to the Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) process and timeline approved 11/22/24, the TEKS for social studies should be adopted by April or June of 2026. The current TEKS for social studies lack specificity in the specific FACTS that students must be taught and learn at each grade level. I have submitted 8 pages of specific comments to the old social studies TEKS for grades K through 5 at the September meeting of the SBOE. One comment was to amend the grade 2 TEKS by inserting the word "county judge" as the chief executive officer of local county government, as many students do not live inside incorporated cities where the current word "mayor" is applicable. This is a small inserted extra word to add into the TEKS and is indicative of the type of change I would like to see. I also submitted 6 pages of written comments to incorporate the provisions of bill 89(R)-SB24 that amended section 28.002 by requiring the teaching, under sections h-11 and h-12, and student understanding of the problems that have accompanied communist regimes throughout the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in various countries. This bill must be incorporated into the new Social Studies TEKS as they are written. If elected, I would move to incorporate these and other items into the TEKS. These are two examples of current items in one subject area that must be accomplished. The follow up to the enactment of the new social studies TEKS is the review of Instructional materials that would extend into the next term of office. The IMRA rubric approval and examination of instructional materials (e.g. textbooks) for social studies would take place during the next term of office, whoever is elected. If elected, I will pay attention to the details of instruction and ensure that all state approved instructional materials cover the TEKS.

Additionally, in the same statutory section, the Board might benefit the students of Texas by examining all IB and AP materials for college credit that are taught in public high schools in Texas to ensure that they are in compliance with all statutes. It is my understanding that this has been done by the State of Florida.

3. Please describe your view of the proper independence and role of the State Board of Education.

**Answer:** If elected, I would lobby members of the legislature to amend the State Constitution to amend article 7 section 8 by deleting the words “appointed or” thus ensuring that the SBOE would forever be an elected body. This would ensure a more permanent level of independence than currently exists.

The role of the State Board of Education is defined by statute Texas Education Code Title 2, Subtitle B, Chapter 7, Subchapter D. There are 26 specific duties of the SBOE outlined by statute section 7.102 (34 numbered sections minus 8 repealed sections). I will follow the statutory requirements. Where I think statutory requirements need a change, I will consult with other Board members to try to find a consensus that could be presented to the Legislature for their consideration. Regardless, the statutes remain as the guide for the role of the SBOE.

While most of my specific comments herein relate to granular details in the TEKS as my opponent is chair of the Committee on Instruction, I recognize that this is only one area of responsibility of the SBOE. For example, the SBOE has majority responsibility over the Texas Permanent School Fund. See Texas Education Code Title 2, Subtitle B, Chapter 7, Subchapter D, Section 7.102, (c) (31). I recognize the responsibility of the SBOE as defined in Chapter 43 to wisely invest the Texas Permanent School Fund and to follow the statutory guidelines therein. I am familiar with the Texas Permanent School Fund Corporation and the latest Annual Comprehensive Financial Report dated August 31, 2024. If appointed to that committee of the Board, I would be fully prepared to work with the members of the TPSFC and have met most of the members of that Board already.

4. Please explain why the publicly elected State Board of Education should have greater or lesser power in setting policy and standards for public education.

**Answer:** The State Board of Education has the powers and duties defined in section 7.102 of the Education Code. Any changes to the powers defined therein are the purview of the State Legislature and not within the scope of authority of the State Board of Education. Nevertheless, I would urge the incorporation by the Legislature of the principles and planks of the Education section of the Platform of the Republican Party of Texas to the extent that they have not yet been incorporated by statutes of the 89<sup>th</sup> Legislature. In some cases, related to specific Platform suggestions for changes in curriculum, the State Board of Education could adopt the recommendations therein. This does NOT change the powers of the SBOE, but indicates a direction for the SBOE to follow, where not otherwise restricted by State or Federal statute or regulations.

5. Do you think that the current Curriculum Standards Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are well defined? What subjects are lacking in content or need to be revised?

**Answer:** I believe I have given some indication of the problems that exist in the current TEKS for social studies, above in response to question 2. This is not the only area where revision is required, but it is the chapter that is undergoing current revision under the 10-year current SBOE timeline. The board may, by vote, alter or revise that timeline according to section 7.102 (c) (1), which gives the SBOE the authority to develop a long-range plan for public education. For example, in the current Algebra 2 TEKS, the latest version does not specify Cramer's Rule using the determinant in the denominator as a method to determine the solution of the intersection of 2 or 3 equations. This is under course 111.40 Algebra 2, (c) (3). I taught this method to my students and most of them were able to master it. This is but one example of many courses that could be revised out of the normal time sequence. Nevertheless, I would not move to revise the timeline for mathematics as this subject has just been completed and is next scheduled for review in 2031. I would rather stick to the current SBOE Approved TEKS Review and Revision Process and IRMA timeline, but if significant complaints developed from teachers, parents, or students about a particular course, I would then move to revise the timeline for that course or group of courses, in consultation with other Board members.

In a general sense, I would like to see more specific mastery of specific facts or processes defined in the TEKS. For example, in English Language Arts and Reading, there is no requirement for students in any primary grade to learn how to grammatically diagram a sentence. This is a useful skill for determining the parts of a sentence and illustrates grammar in a visible graphical format. I learned this method in primary school and believe it should be taught to all students. This too, might require an update to the current timeline for review. There are many other areas where the TEKS could or should be altered to increase the specific required knowledge of students in a particular course or course sequence. Another example I could give is that nowhere in the K – 5 primary sequence for social studies do the TEKS specifically state that students shall be taught and know the names of all 50 States and the capitals of those states. I believe that FACTS matter and need to be taught, and that the TEKS are the appropriate location to define what facts students should be required to know. In high school mathematics where I was certified, for example, there are 10 specific courses where the SBOE has direct authority over the TEKS, and many possibilities for improvement too numerous to detail herein.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR LOCAL MACHINE IN THE EVENT THAT THERE ARE ANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO EMAIL IT BACK.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to:

[alex@cchc-pac.org](mailto:alex@cchc-pac.org)

\* **Please note:** You **must** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will **not** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC-PAC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.