

Sec.1. SCHOOL NAME

The official name of the Charter Holder for the open-enrollment charter school is Priority Charter Schools.

The official name of the Charter School is Priority Charter Schools, which may be referred to throughout the Board Policy Manual as Priority Charter Schools”.

Sec.2. PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS BOUNDARIES

In accordance with the Priority Charter Schools charter on file with the Texas Education Agency, Priority Charter Schools is authorized to serve students who reside within the geographical boundaries of the following independent school districts:

Academy ISD / Austin ISD / Bartlett ISD / Belton ISD / Bremond ISD / Burnett ISD / Chilton ISD / Copperas Cove ISD / Eanes ISD / Elgin ISD / Florence ISD / Gatesville ISD / Georgetown ISD / Granger ISD / Groesbeck ISD / Holland ISD / Hutto ISD / Jarrell ISD / Killeen ISD / Lago Vista ISD / Lake Travis ISD / Lampasas ISD / Leander ISD / Liberty Hill ISD / Manor ISD / Marble Falls ISD / Marlin ISD / Mart ISD / McGregor ISD / Midway ISD / Moody ISD / Oglesby ISD / Pflugerville ISD / Riesel ISD / Robinson ISD / Rogers ISD / Rosebud-Lott ISD / Round Rock ISD / Salado ISD / Taylor ISD / Temple ISD / Thrall ISD / Troy ISD / Waco ISD / Westphalia ISD

Sec.1. CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Priority Charter Schools is governed under the governing structure described by its open-enrollment charter.

Sec.2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS OPERATIONS

a) *Primary Responsibilities*

The Board of Directors of Priority Charter Schools (the “Board”) has the primary responsibility for:

- (1) Implementing the public school program authorized by the Priority Charter Schools open-enrollment charter; and
- (2) Ensuring the performance of students enrolled in Priority Charter Schools in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1101(a).

b) *Alienation of Open-Enrollment Charter*

The Board derives its authority to operate Priority Charter Schools’ schools from the Priority Charter Schools open-enrollment charter.

- (1) The Board shall, acting as a body corporate in meetings posted in compliance with Government Code, Chapter 551, oversee the management of all Priority Charter Schools charter schools.
- (2) Except as provided below, the Board’s powers and duties to operate all Priority Charter Schools charter schools shall not be delegated, transferred, assigned, encumbered, pledged, subcontracted, or in any way alienated by the Board .
- (3) Priority Charter Schools shall notify the Texas Education Agency in writing prior to initiating bankruptcy proceeding respecting the charter holder.
- (4) Exclusive Method for Delegating Charter Powers and Duties. Any power or duty of the Board delegated to an officer, employee, contractor, management company, creditor, or any other person shall either be specified in the Priority Charter Schools open-enrollment charter or a charter delegation amendment approved by the Texas Education Agency division responsible for charter schools.

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1101(b)-(c).

c) *Accountability for Delegated Powers and Duties*

The Board remains responsible for the management, operation, and accountability of all Priority Charter Schools charter schools, regardless of whether the Board delegates any of its powers or duties.

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1101(d).

d) *Nondelegable Duties*

Absent specifically approved exceptions granted by the Commissioner of Education, the Board shall not delegate the following duties:

- (1) Final authority to hear or decide employee grievances, citizen complaints, or parental concerns;
- (2) Final authority to adopt or amend the Priority Charter Schools or Priority Charter Schools budget, or to authorize the expenditure or obligation of state funds or the use of public property;
- (3) Final authority to direct the disposition or safekeeping of public records, except that the Board may delegate this function to any person, subject to the Board's superior right of immediate access to, control over, and possession of such records;
- (4) Final authority to adopt policies governing Priority Charter Schools' operations;
- (5) Final authority to approve audit reports under TEC, §44.008(d); and
- (6) Initial or final authority to select, employ, direct, evaluate, renew, non-renew, terminate, or set compensation for the Superintendent or, as applicable, the administrator serving as the educational leader and chief executive officer.

19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1033(b)(14)(C).

Sec. 3. Immunity from Liability

- a) Statutory Immunity for the Charter Holder and Charter School. In matters related to operation of an open-enrollment charter school, an open-enrollment charter school or charter holder is immune from liability and suit to the same extent as a school district.
 - (1) An open-enrollment charter school is a governmental unit as defined by Section [101.001](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, and is subject to liability only as provided by Chapter [101](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, and only in the manner that liability is provided by that chapter for a school district.
 - (2) An open-enrollment charter school is a local government as defined by Section [102.001](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, and a payment on a tort claim must comply with Chapter [102](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

- (3) An open-enrollment charter school is a local governmental entity as defined by Section [271.151](#), Local Government Code, and is subject to liability on a contract as provided by Subchapter [I](#), Chapter [271](#), Local Government Code, and only in the manner that liability is provided by that subchapter for a school district.

Tex. Educ. Code §12.1056

- b) Statutory Immunity for Members of the Board of Directors. A member of the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school or of a charter holder is immune from liability and suit to the same extent as a school district trustee.

Tex. Educ. Code §12.1056

- c) Statutory Immunity for Damages Arising from a Pandemic. An educational institution is not liable for damages or equitable monetary relief arising from a cancellation or modification of a course, program, or activity of the institution if the cancellation or modification arose during a pandemic emergency and was caused, in whole or in part, by the emergency. An “educational institution” means an institution or program that facilitates learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs or habits. The term includes a public primary or secondary school.

Tex. Civil Prac & Rem. Code §148.004.

Sec. 1. MANAGEMENT BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with applicable law, the Board of Directors of Priority Charter Schools (the “Board”) shall manage the affairs of Priority Charter Schools.

Sec. 2. MANAGEMENT THROUGH BOARD POLICY AND DELEGATION

The Board shall manage the day-to-day affairs of Priority Charter Schools through authorized delegation and the adoption of policies conforming to applicable law and offering best practices.

Sec. 3. OVERSIGHT OF DAILY OPERATIONS

The Board’s daily oversight and management of Priority Charter Schools shall be through a chief executive officer, titled the Superintendent. As the Board’s representative, the Superintendent shall oversee and be responsible for the daily implementation of Board adopted policies, plans, budgets and other actions and resolutions.

Sec. 4. BOARD POLICY TO SUPPLEMENT LAW AND RULES

The policies adopted by the Board shall not supersede and are not in lieu of the legal requirements set out in state and federal law and rule. Instead, Board policy shall supplement existing legal requirements by providing direction to the Superintendent and Priority Charter Schools personnel, parents, students and other affected parties in the conduct of the affairs of Priority Charter Schools and in facilitating Priority Charter Schools’ compliance with state and Federal law and rule. In any instance in which Board policy conflicts with state and Federal law or rule, the pertinent legal requirement will govern and control.

Sec. 5. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION

In collaboration with Board members, Priority Charter Schools personnel, legal counsel, parents, and the public at large, the Superintendent may develop and propose to the Board policies that address legal requirements and/or best practices. In its sole discretion, the Board may consider and adopt the policy recommended by the Superintendent. A policy shall be adopted and become effective upon favorable approval by a majority of the Board members present and constituting a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Board. The Board may adopt a policy with a later effective date if a majority of the Board designates a later adoption.

Sec. 6. GENERAL POLICY DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply the individual policies contained in the Priority Charter Schools Board Policy Manual:

The Board: The Board refers to the Board of Directors of Priority Charter Schools.

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Parent or Guardian: A “parent” or “guardian” includes a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, a person standing in parental relation, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. The term does not include a person as to whom the parent-child relationship has been terminated or a person not entitled to possession of or access to a child under a court order.

Sec. 7. NON-SUBSTANTIVE EDITS TO POLICIES

The Superintendent may make non-substantive and otherwise inconsequential changes to adopted Board policies to ensure consistency with existing laws and rules (*e.g.*, to include valid legal citations) and Priority Charter Schools’ organizational structure and operations (*e.g.*, to reference appropriate titles and departments). Legal counsel shall review any and all changes to Board policy by the Superintendent to identify edits that alter the intent of the Board. The Superintendent shall, at the first regular board meeting opportunity, inform the Board of any changes made to policies passed by the Board and shall provide the Board an opportunity through appropriate agenda item to override any changes made.

Sec. 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF BOARD POLICY THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Superintendent or designee shall implement Board policy through administrative procedures which may include, but are not limited to the development and adoption of forms, department guides, manuals and/or handbooks. The Superintendent or designee may consult with Priority Charter Schools personnel, legal counsel or other qualified professionals in the preparation of the administrative procedures.

The Superintendent or designee may amend administrative procedures as needed in conformance with Board policy and law. Should administrative procedure and policy conflict, policy will prevail except in instances where an administrative procedure has been reviewed and adopted by the Board subsequent to the approval of the underlying and conflicting Board policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide instruction, training, and supervision to Priority Charter Schools personnel in the implementation of Board policy and corresponding administrative procedures and shall ensure that Board policy and administrative procedures are provided and available to school personnel, parents, students and other affected parties.

Sec. 9. OFFICIAL BOARD POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Superintendent shall maintain the original and official policies and administrative procedures adopted by the Board and the corresponding administrative procedures approved by the Superintendent in the central administrative office. In the event that a conflict arises between copies of a Board policy or administrative procedure, the official copy shall prevail as the authoritative record.

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Sec. 10. ACCESSIBILITY OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Board policies shall be made accessible to the public at large on the Priority Charter Schools website and at the Priority Charter Schools central administrative office. Administrative procedures shall be made available to the public at large as required by Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. Board policies and the administrative procedures implementing Board policies shall be provided and otherwise made readily accessible to all Priority Charter Schools personnel.

OR

Board policies and administrative procedures shall be made accessible to the public at large as required by Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code and other applicable law. Board policies and the administrative procedures implementing Board policy shall be provided and otherwise made readily accessible to all Priority Charter Schools personnel.

Sec. 11. CAMPUS AND DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES

Individual Priority Charter Schools campuses and departments may develop campus or departmental procedures, guides or manuals implementing and not conflicting with Board policy or administrative procedures.

Commented [A1]: Schools may choose one of the following options. There is no legal requirement for charter schools to post Board policies on the school website.

Sec. 1. BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Newly elected or appointed members to the Board shall participate in a local orientation session to familiarize the new Board member with the Priority Charter Schools organization, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Board policies, and relevant portions of the Texas Education Code and the Texas Administrative Code related to governance of an open-enrollment charter school.

a) *Training*

Unless exempted pursuant to applicable law, each new member of the Board must complete an introductory required training course consisting of 12 instructional hours, excluding breaks, administrative tasks, and other non-instructional time, delivered by a registered course. The training course may not use self-instructional materials, unless as otherwise provided.

b) *Timeline for Completion*

Each new member of the Board must complete the required training within one calendar year of election or appointment to the Board.

c) *Required Course Content*

The required training shall include nine hours of instruction provided by a Texas Education Agency trainer or other trainer authorized in law, and consist of instruction in:

1. Basic school law;
2. Basic school finance;
3. Health and safety issues;
4. Accountability requirements related to the use of public funds;
5. Other requirements relating to accountability to the public;
6. Open meetings requirements under Texas Government Code, Chapter 551; and
7. Requirements relating to public records.

d) *Additional Required Training*

Each new Board member must also receive an additional three hours of training from any of the modules identified above.

e) *Continuing Training*

Each Board member who has completed the 12 hours of required training shall annually thereafter receive six hours of training, excluding breaks, administrative tasks, and other non-instructional time, delivered by a registered course provider delivered by an authorized trainer. Self-instructional continuing training materials may be used in no more than one hour of the required

continuing training. A Board member may carry over as much as 25% of annual continuing training hours earned in excess of the required amount to meet the following year's training requirements.

f) *Exceptions and Exemptions*

The Board may adopt a resolution permitting individual members to meet the prescribed training through an alternate training program as permitted by 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1102(h).

Sec. 2. TRAINING FOR CHARTER SCHOOL OFFICERS

Priority Charter Schools employees serving in the position of a Chief Executive and Central Administrative Officer, Campus Administrative officer, and/or Business Manager, as those positions are defined by the Texas Education Agency, shall complete all applicable trainings required under 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 100.1103–.1105.

Sec. 3. RECORD OF COMPLIANCE

All Board members, Chief Executive and Central Administrative Officers, Campus Administrative Officers, and Business Managers shall comply with initial and annual training requirements established in law. Priority Charter Schools shall document compliance with these requirements. *19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1108(1).*

Sec. 4. CONTINUED SERVICE

Continued service as a member of the Board or as an Officer is conditioned on satisfaction of the training requirements set forth in 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 100.1102–.1105. *19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1108(2).*

Sec. 5. AUDIT DISCLOSURE

Priority Charter Schools shall separately disclose, in its annual audit report of its financial and programmatic operations, a member of the Board or Officer who fails to complete the training requirements set forth in 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 100.1102–.1105 and who continues to serve in such capacity as of the date of the audit report. *19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1108(3).*

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

As a not-for-profit organization organized under the laws of the State of Texas and exempt as a public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, Priority Charter Schools encourages the solicitation and acceptance of gifts for purposes that will assist Priority Charter Schools to further and fulfill its mission.

The purpose of this Policy is to govern the acceptance of gifts by Priority Charter Schools and to provide guidance to the Board, the Superintendent, and prospective donors when making gifts to Priority Charter Schools. The provisions of this Policy shall apply to all gifts received by Priority Charter Schools for any of its schools, programs or services, and to the acceptance of gifts made to Priority Charter Schools or for the benefit of any of its schools or programs.

Sec. 2. RESTRICTIONS ON GIFTS

Priority Charter Schools will accept unrestricted gifts, and gifts for specific schools, programs and purposes, provided that such gifts are consistent with Priority Charter Schools' mission, purposes, and priorities. Priority Charter Schools will not accept gifts that are too restrictive in purpose. Gifts that are too restrictive are those that violate the charitable and educational trust of Priority Charter Schools, or that are accompanied by an improper economic benefit to the donor or vest the donor with inappropriate control or influence. The Board shall make all final decisions on the restrictive nature of a gift and its acceptance or refusal.

Sec. 3. GIFT ACCEPTANCE COMMITTEE

The Board may establish a Gift Acceptance Committee of the Board to review gifts made to Priority Charter Schools and to carry out certain terms of this Policy. The Gift Acceptance Committee may be charged with the responsibility of reviewing all gifts made or proposed to be made to Priority Charter Schools, properly reviewing those gifts, and making recommendations to the Board on gift acceptance and related issues.

Sec. 4. USE OF LEGAL COUNSEL AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Priority Charter Schools shall seek the advice of legal counsel or other professional advisors (such as an accountant, financial advisor or professional money manager) when appropriate and as recommended in this Policy relating to the acceptance of certain types of gifts. Generally, Priority Charter Schools shall seek the advice of legal counsel in all matters pertaining to the acceptance of any gift which may have adverse legal, ethical (including a potential conflict of interest), or other consequence of concern to Priority Charter Schools.

All prospective donors shall be urged and encouraged by Priority Charter Schools to seek and secure the assistance of independent legal, tax and financial advisors in matters relating to their gifts and the resulting tax and estate planning implications. Priority Charter Schools shall not pay

the legal fees or any professional fees of the donor in connection with a gift to Priority Charter Schools. Priority Charter Schools shall not provide any opinion, statement or recommendation to the donor as to the tax deductibility of the gift or as to any tax consequences or tax implications of the gift that may affect the donor.

It shall be the responsibility of the donor to secure an appraisal of property where required. The donor shall pay any fees associated with securing such appraisal.

Sec. 5. TYPES OF GIFTS

The following types of gifts are generally acceptable:

1. Cash Donations
2. Testamentary Bequests
3. Charitable Remainder Trusts
4. Charitable Lead Trusts
5. Tangible Personal Property
6. Oil, Gas and Mineral Interests
7. Life Insurance/Life Insurance Beneficiary Designations
8. Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations
9. Securities
10. Real Estate

The following types of gifts are generally not acceptable:

1. Charitable gift annuities
2. Pooled income funds

Sec. 6. CRITERIA FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF GIFTS

The criteria below govern the acceptance of each type of gift. Unless indicated otherwise, each type of gift is subject to prior review by the Board and/or the Gift Acceptance Committee.

1. Cash or Cash Equivalents: Cash is acceptable in any form. Checks shall be made payable to “Priority Charter Schools” and shall be delivered to the Superintendent at the Priority Charter Schools’ administrative office.
2. Charitable Pledge Agreements: Acceptable if payable only in acceptable form as set forth in this Policy. Pledges payable over more than one year shall generally not be acceptable unless at least \$1,000.00.

3. Securities: Both publicly traded securities and marketable closely held securities are acceptable upon review by Board and/or the Gift Acceptance Committee and legal counsel. Review and recommendation by an outside financial professional or money manager may be sought prior to acceptance of the gift. Marketable securities may be transferred to an account maintained at one or more brokerage firms or delivered physically with the transferor's signature or stock power attached. As a general rule, Priority Charter Schools shall promptly sell all securities upon receipt.
4. Closely Held Securities; Other Intangibles: Priority Charter Schools shall not accept securities and other intangible assets (such as interests in LLPs and LLCs or other ownership forms) that may not be sold or transferred, that have no value, are not marketable, or that may generate additional liability or undesirable tax or other consequences for Priority Charter Schools. Review and recommendation by legal counsel and/or a financial professional should be sought before making a final decision on acceptance of closely held securities or other intangibles as a gift.
5. Tangible Personal Property: Gifts of tangible personal property are often called "in-kind" gifts and include gifts such as supplies, equipment, furniture, printed materials, books, food, software, motor vehicles and artwork. Gifts of tangible personal property will be examined as follows:
 - a) Will the property be used by Priority Charter Schools in furtherance of its mission?
 - b) Is the property marketable?
 - c) Are there restrictions on the use, display or disposition of the property?
 - d) Are there carrying costs of the property?

Priority Charter Schools shall not value or offer to value the property. The donor shall sign a statement of ownership and disclose any liens on the property. Priority Charter Schools shall not accept any property subject to a restriction on its ability to use, sell or otherwise dispose of the property as it deems necessary.

6. Life Insurance Policy/Beneficiary Designation: Priority Charter Schools may accept the gift of a life insurance policy, provided Priority Charter Schools is named as both the owner of the policy and irrevocable beneficiary of the policy prior to acceptance of the gift. Beneficiary designations shall not be recorded as gifts to Priority Charter Schools unless and until the gift is irrevocable. Where the gift is irrevocable, but is not due until a future date, the present value of that gift may be recorded at the time the gift becomes irrevocable. If the policy is not fully paid-up and the donor does not continue to make gifts to cover premium payments on the policy, Priority Charter Schools shall have the right to continue to pay the premiums, convert the policy to paid-up insurance, surrender the policy for its current cash value, or otherwise make use of its value.

7. Real Estate. Priority Charter Schools will not accept any real estate subject to a restriction on Priority Charter Schools's ability to use, sell or otherwise dispose of or deal with the property as it deems necessary. Prior to the acceptance of real estate, Priority Charter Schools shall require an initial environmental review of the property by a qualified environmental review firm to ensure that the property has no environmental damage or liabilities. In the event that the initial review reveals a potential problem or concern, the organization may retain a qualified environmental review firm to conduct an environmental audit. The cost of the environmental review and any environmental audit shall be the expense of the donor. Appraisal costs are the responsibility of the donor.

A title report or abstract of title shall be obtained by Priority Charter Schools prior to the acceptance of the real property gift. Criteria for acceptance of the property shall include:

- a) A review of a complete profile of the property, including the title report and environmental review or audit, inspection reports, the deed, any encumbrances, leases, and tax bills.
 - b) A review of the carrying costs, sale and holding costs of the property, such as insurance, property taxes, mortgages, notes, etc.
 - c) A review of the restrictions, reservations, easements or other limitations on the property.
 - d) A review of the use of the property for Priority Charter Schools's purposes.
 - e) A review of a recent appraisal of the property and consultation with a real estate advisor as to marketability of the property.
8. Oil, Gas and Mineral Interests: Priority Charter Schools may accept oil and gas property interests upon review by Board and/or the Gift Acceptance Committee and legal counsel. The property shall undergo an environmental review by an environmental firm. The property should be reviewed for liabilities or other considerations (such as undesirable tax consequences or valuation issues for working interests) that might make receipt of the gift inappropriate.
 9. Charitable Remainder Trusts: Priority Charter Schools may accept designation as remainder beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust upon the review by the Board and/or the Gift Acceptance Committee and legal counsel. Priority Charter Schools will not accept appointment as a trustee of a charitable remainder trust.
 10. Charitable Lead Trusts: Priority Charter Schools may accept designation as income beneficiary of a charitable lead trust upon review by the Board and/or the Gift Acceptance Committee and legal counsel. Priority Charter Schools will not accept appointment as trustee of a charitable remainder trust.

11. Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations: Donors and supporters of Priority Charter Schools are encouraged to name Priority Charter Schools as a beneficiary of a retirement plan. Such designations shall not be recorded as gifts unless and until the gift is irrevocable. When the gift is irrevocable, but is not due until a future date, the present value of that gift may be recorded at the time the gift becomes irrevocable.
12. Bequests: Donors and supporters of Priority Charter Schools are encouraged to make bequests to Priority Charter Schools under their wills and trusts. Such bequests will not be recorded as gifts unless and until the gift is irrevocable. When the gift is irrevocable, but is not due until a future date, the present value of that gift may be recorded at the time the gift becomes irrevocable.

Sec. 7. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFT BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Subject to the terms of this Policy, the Superintendent shall have discretion and authority to accept (i) unrestricted gifts of a value up to \$1,000.00 and (ii) restricted gifts of a value up to \$5,000.00. Only the Board may accept gifts above those amounts.

Sec. 8. VALUATION OF GIFTS

Priority Charter Schools shall record a gift received by Priority Charter Schools at its valuation for gift purposes on the date of gift and accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (“GAAP”).

Sec. 9. IRS FILING UPON SALE OF GIFT

Priority Charter Schools is responsible for filing IRS Form 8282 upon the sale or disposition of any asset sold by Priority Charter Schools within two years of receipt where the charitable deduction value of the item was \$5,000.00 or greater. Priority Charter Schools must file such form within 125 days of the date of sale or disposition of the asset. The Chief Financial Officer shall be responsible for the recordation and filing of this form to the IRS.

Sec. 10. WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Written Acknowledgement of all gifts made to Priority Charter Schools and compliance with the current IRS requirements in acknowledgement of such gifts shall be the responsibility of the Board. The Chief Financial Officer shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with IRS requirements regarding acknowledgments.

Sec. 11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Priority Charter Schools shall hold all information concerning donors or potential donors in strict confidence, subject to requests for information that Priority Charter Schools is required by law or court order to provide. Priority Charter Schools shall not release information about donors or the gift that is not otherwise public information unless permission from the donor is obtained. Priority Charter Schools will respect the confidentiality of donors who do not wish to be recognized.

Sec. 12. REVIEW OF POLICY; CHANGES TO POLICY

The Board shall review this Policy on a periodic basis (but no less than five years) or, if applicable, the Gift Acceptance Committee shall periodically review and recommend changes to this Policy for approval and adoption by the Board.

PART I: PREAMBLE

The Board of Directors (collectively, the “Board” or the “Directors,” and individually a “Director”) of Priority Charter Schools is committed to maintaining the highest legal and ethical standards in the conduct of the business of Priority Charter Schools, and to protecting the integrity and reputation of Priority Charter Schools, Priority Charter Schools, the Board, and all Priority Charter Schools employees, volunteers, and programs.

The Directors and Officers (as defined below) shall exercise their duties honestly, in good faith, and with a high standard of diligence and care. Accordingly, the Directors and Officers shall ensure that they (1) do not compromise their independence of judgment, (2) preserve confidence and trust in the organization and the Board, and (3) protect and fulfill the mission of Priority Charter Schools. As such, this Policy will assist Directors and Officers as they identify actual or potential conflicts of interest, and with a procedure to address conflicts which may arise.

PART II: ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Sec. 1. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

Directors and Officers shall conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, including the ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest, as set forth below.

Sec. 2. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

As a tax-exempt public charity, Priority Charter Schools shall expend funds and record those expenditures in a manner that advances the charitable and educational mission and objectives of Priority Charter Schools, and not the private interests of Directors or Officers.

Sec. 3. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Priority Charter Schools shall provide comprehensive and timely information in accordance with applicable state and federal law, and shall be responsive to reasonable requests for information about its activities. Additionally, informational data about Priority Charter Schools, such as IRS Form 990, audited financial statements and Annual Financial and Compliance Report, shall be made available to the public in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

Sec. 4. ACCURACY AND RETENTION OF RECORDS

Priority Charter Schools will create and maintain records that satisfy operational and legal requirements, including federal, state and local laws.

Sec. 5. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity, Priority Charter Schools shall not engage in political activities. Directors and Officers shall not use their relationship with Priority Charter Schools to promote or oppose political candidates or parties, or to create the appearance that Priority Charter Schools endorses or opposes a political candidate or party for elected office.

Sec. 6. ENDORSEMENTS AND USE OF THE PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS NAME AND AFFILIATION

The Priority Charter Schools and Priority Charter Schools name, logo, letterhead, or other intellectual property may not be used by any person to endorse or gain support for a cause without prior authorization in writing from the Directors.

Sec. 7. QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS

Should a Director or Officer believe a colleague is violating the obligations or expectations of this Policy, or is otherwise acting in an illegal or unethical manner, it is his or her duty to report the matter to the President of the Board, or the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent, as appropriate.

PART III: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Sec. 1. STATEMENT ON STATE LAW

Priority Charter Schools and its Officers and Directors shall comply with state law governing conflicts of interest among charter school and charter holder board members and officers, as described in Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code and 19 TAC §§ 100.1131–100.1135, including, but not limited to the following:

a) Employees Serving on the Board

- (1) Directors and Officers of Priority Charter Schools shall comply with Local Government Code, Chapter 171 in the manner provided by the conflict of interest provisions described in 19 TAC §§ 100.1131–100.1135.
- (2) Officers of Priority Charter Schools are defined by the Commissioner of Education to be persons charged with the duties of, or acting as a Chief Executive Officer, a Central Administration Officer, a Campus Administration Officer, or a Business Manager, regardless of whether the person is an employee or contractor of the charter holder, the school, a management company, or any other person; or a volunteer working under the direction of the charter holder, the school, or a management company. A charter holder employee or independent contractor engaged solely in non-charter activities for the charter holder is not an “officer” of Priority Charter Schools.

- (3) The Priority Charter Schools Chief Executive Officer is a person (or persons) directly responsible to the governing body of the charter holder for supervising one or more Central Administration Officers, Campus Administration Officers, and/or Business Managers.
- (4) A Central Administration Officer for Priority Charter Schools is a person charged with the duties of, or acting as, a Chief Operating Officer, director, or assistant director of the charter holder for Priority Charter Schools, including one or more of the following functions:
 - (A) assuming administrative responsibility and leadership for the planning, operation, supervision, or evaluation of the education programs, services, or facilities of the Board, for appraising the performance of the Board's or Priority Charter Schools' staff;
 - (B) assuming administrative authority or responsibility for the assignment or evaluation of any of the personnel of the Board, including those employed by a management company;
 - (C) making recommendations to the Board or Priority Charter Schools regarding the selection of personnel of the Board, including those employed by a management company;
 - (D) recommending the termination, non-renewal, or suspension of an employee or officer of the Board, including those employed by a management company; or recommending the termination, non-renewal, suspension, or other action affecting a management contract;
 - (E) managing the day-to-day operations of the Board, as its administrative manager;
 - (F) preparing or submitting a proposed budget to the charter holder Board or Priority Charter Schools (except for developing budgets for a Priority Charter Schools campus, if this is a function performed by a Campus Administration Officer under the terms of the open-enrollment charter);
 - (G) preparing recommendations for policies to be adopted by the Board, or overseeing the implementation of adopted policies, except for legal services provided by an attorney licensed to practice law in this state, or public accountancy services provided by a certified public accountant licensed to practice public accountancy in this state;
 - (H) developing, or causing to be developed, appropriate administrative regulations to implement policies established by the Board, except for legal services provided by an attorney licensed to practice law in this state, or public accountancy services provided by a certified public accountant licensed to practice public accountancy in this state;

- (I) providing leadership for the attainment of student performance in Priority Charter Schools, based on the indicators adopted under TEC §§ 39.053–39.054, or other indicators in the Priority Charter Schools charter; or
 - (J) organizing the central administration of the Board.
- (5) A Campus Administration Officer for Priority Charter Schools is a person charged with the duties of, or acting as, a principal or assistant principal of a Priority Charter Schools campus, including one or more of the following functions:
- (A) approving teacher or staff appointments for a Priority Charter Schools campus, unless this function is performed by a Central Administration Officer under the terms of the open-enrollment charter;
 - (B) setting specific education objectives for a Priority Charter Schools campus, unless this function is performed by a Central Administration Officer under the terms of the open-enrollment charter;
 - (C) developing budgets for a Priority Charter Schools campus, unless this function is performed by a Central Administration Officer under the terms of the open-enrollment charter;
 - (D) assuming the administrative responsibility or instructional leadership, under the supervision of a Central Administration Officer, for discipline at a Priority Charter Schools campus;
 - (E) assigning, evaluating, or promoting personnel assigned to a Priority Charter Schools campus, unless this function is performed by a Central Administration Officer under the terms of the open-enrollment charter; or
 - (F) recommending to a Central Administration Officer the termination or suspension of an employee assigned to a Priority Charter Schools campus, or recommending the non-renewal of the term contract of such an employee.
- (6) A Business Manager is a person charged with managing the finances of Priority Charter Schools or Priority Charter Schools.
- (7) **Also Excluded from the Board.** Except as otherwise provided by law, a person who receives “compensation or remuneration” (as defined by law and herein) from the nonprofit corporation holding Priority Charter Schools’ open-enrollment charter may not serve on the Board, with the following exceptions:
- (A) If each charter school operated by the Board as charter holder has received a satisfactory accountability rating, as defined by applicable law, for at least two of the

preceding three school years, Priority Charter Schools employees may serve on the Board, as described below, and as provided by law.

- (B) If the charter holder has operated at least one charter school which reported attendance that occurred prior to September 2, 2001, but no charter school operated by the charter holder has received a sufficient number of substantive ratings to determine whether it has received a satisfactory rating for at least two of the preceding three school years, then Priority Charter Schools employees may serve on the governing body of the charter holder, as provided by law.
- (C) An employee of Priority Charter Schools may serve as a Director if: (i) only employees of Priority Charter Schools, and not employees of the Board, serve on the Board; (ii) the compensation or remuneration received by that Director is limited to salary, bonuses, benefits, or other compensation received pursuant to the employment relationship with Priority Charter Schools; (iii) Priority Charter Schools employees do not constitute a quorum of the Board or any committee of the Board; and (iv) all Priority Charter Schools employees serving on the Board comply with all applicable conflict of interest provisions required by law.

b) *Conflicts Requiring an Affidavit and Abstention from Voting*

The following circumstances shall be deemed a Conflict of Interest (as defined below), and the Director or Officer shall, in addition to the procedures set forth in Part III, Section 3 (Conflict of Interest Procedures), take the following action:

- (1) If a Director or Officer has a substantial interest in a business entity or in real property, the Director or Officer shall file, before a vote, decision, or other action on any matter involving the business entity or the real property, an affidavit stating the nature and extent of the interest, and shall abstain from further participation in the matter if:
 - (A) In the case of a substantial interest in a business entity, the vote, decision, or other action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the business entity that is distinguishable from the effect on the public; or
 - (B) In the case of a substantial interest in real property, it is reasonably foreseeable that a vote, decision, or other action on the matter will have a special economic effect on the value of the property, distinguishable from its effect on the public.
- (2) The affidavit described above is filed with the Secretary of the Board.
- (3) The Director or Officer filing the affidavit shall abstain from further participation in the matter requiring the affidavit. A Director or Officer filing the affidavit shall abstain from further participation in the matter requiring the affidavit unless a majority of the Board is

composed of persons who are likewise required to file, and who do file affidavits of similar interests on the same official action.

c) *Separate Vote on Budget Item*

The Directors shall take a separate vote on any budget item specifically dedicated to a contract with a business entity in which a Director has a substantial interest. Abstention is required, except as provided above and in 19 TAC § 100.1133(c), otherwise the affected Director may not participate in that separate vote. The affected Director may vote on a final budget if: (1) the affected Director has complied with the above-stated requirements; and (2) the matter in which the affected Director is concerned has been resolved.

Sec. 2. STATEMENT ON FEDERAL LAW

Priority Charter Schools and its Officers and Directors shall comply with the federal regulations regarding private benefit and excess benefit transactions as described in Section 4958 of the Internal Revenue Code and 26 CFR § 53.4958 (the “federal tax rules”) when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that may benefit the private interest of a Director or Officer or other individual deemed to be a disqualified person under the federal tax rules. A “disqualified person” includes Directors and Officers, and any person who is in a position to exercise substantial influence over the affairs of the corporation. A “disqualified person” includes Family (as defined below) of the disqualified person.

a) *Interested Person*

Any Director or Officer, employee, or member of a committee with powers delegated by the Board who has a direct or indirect interest, as defined below, is an “Interested Person.”

- (1) A person has an “Interest” if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or Family:
 - (A) an ownership or investment interest, directly or indirectly, in any entity with which Priority Charter Schools has a transaction or arrangement;
 - (B) a compensation arrangement with Priority Charter Schools, or with any entity or individual with which Priority Charter Schools has a transaction or arrangement; or
 - (C) a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which Priority Charter Schools is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
- (2) “Compensation” is defined to include direct and indirect remuneration, as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

- (3) A person has an “Interest” if the person has a substantial interest in a business entity or a substantial interest in real property as described in Part III, Section 2-a-1 above.

b) *Interested Person with Conflict of Interest*

An Interested Person shall have a Conflict of Interest (as defined below) only if the Board or the appropriate committee determines that a Conflict of Interest exists in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

Sec. 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES

a) *Duty of Prior Disclosure*

In connection with any actual or potential conflict of interest, an Interested Person shall disclose the existence of the Interest in writing to the Board as soon as he or she has knowledge of it, and the Board shall give such Interested Person the opportunity to disclose all material facts related thereto to the Board or designated committee considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. Such written disclosure shall be made part of and set forth in the Board minutes. In any event, the disclosure of any actual or potential conflict of interest by an Interested Person should occur prior to any consideration of the proposed transaction by the Board.

- (1) **Transaction Not Subject to Board Action.** An Interested Person with any actual or potential conflict of interest with respect to a transaction or arrangement that is not the subject of Board action shall disclose to the President of the Board or Superintendent, any such Interest. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Interest is known to the Interested Person.
- (2) **Untimely Disclosure.** If an Interested Person fails to disclose the Interest before the Board acts on a transaction as to which a Director has an Interest, then the Interested Person shall promptly submit a written statement to the Board setting forth all material facts regarding the Interest, along with an explanation concerning the untimely nature of the notice.
- (3) **Failure to Disclose.** If the Board has reasonable cause to believe that an Interested Person failed to disclose an Interest, the Board shall inform the Interested Person of the basis for such belief and afford the Interested Person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. After hearing the Interested Person’s explanation, and conducting such investigation as may be warranted under the circumstances, the Board may determine that the Interested Person failed to disclose an actual Conflict of Interest. In such event, the Board shall vote on the appropriate corrective action.

b) *Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists*

After disclosure of the Interest and all material facts related thereto, the Interested Person *shall leave the meeting of the Board or designated committee while a determination is made by*

disinterested Directors as to whether a conflict of interest (“Conflict of Interest”) exists. No Director shall vote on any matter in which he or she has a Conflict of Interest.

c) *Vote by Disinterested Directors*

- (1) Nonparticipation of Directors with Conflict.** A Director who has a Conflict of Interest shall neither vote nor participate in, nor be permitted to hear the Board’s discussion of the matter, except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions. Such Director shall not attempt to exert his or her influence with respect to the matter, either before, during, or outside of the Board meeting.
- (2) Action by Disinterested Directors.** If the Board concludes that a Conflict of Interest exists, the Board shall determine by voting whether the transaction should be authorized, approved or ratified. The vote shall be conducted as follows:
 - (A) Except as otherwise permitted by law, Directors with a Conflict of Interest shall leave the room in which the meeting is conducted.
 - (B) Except as otherwise allowed by law, and as set forth in Part III, Section 1-b-3 (Conflicts Requiring an Affidavit and Abstention from Voting), a majority of the disinterested Directors, without regard to any quorum requirement, must vote affirmatively for the transaction to be authorized, approved or ratified. However, a transaction cannot be authorized, approved or ratified by a single Director.
- (3) Vote Not Disallowed by Presence of Directors with a Conflict.** The presence of, or a vote cast by, a Director with a Conflict of Interest in a transaction does not affect the validity of a vote regarding the transaction if the transaction is otherwise authorized, approved or ratified, as prescribed herein.
- (4) Circumstances in Which Comparability Data is Necessary.** If the transaction involves compensation for services of a Director, an Officer, or other individual deemed to be a disqualified person (as defined above at page 6(B)) under the federal tax rules, or if the transaction involves the transfer of property or other benefit to a Director, Officer, or other individual deemed to be a disqualified person under the federal tax rules, the disinterested Directors or committee must determine that the value of the economic benefit provided by Priority Charter Schools to the Interested Person or Persons does not exceed the value of the consideration received in exchange by obtaining and reviewing appropriate comparable data (“Comparability Data”).
 - (A) When considering the comparability of compensation for example, the relevant data which the Board or committee may consider includes, but is not limited to, the following: (i) compensation levels paid by similarly-situated schools; (ii) the availability of similar services within the same geographic area; (iii) current compensation surveys compiled by independent firms; and (iv) written offers from

similar institutions competing for the same person's services. When the transaction involves the transfer of real property as compensation, the relevant factors include, but are not limited to: (i) current independent appraisals of the property, and (ii) offers received in a competitive bidding process.

(B) Based on the Comparability Data, the Board or committee shall determine, by a majority vote of the disinterested Directors or committee members, whether the transaction or arrangement is fair and reasonable to Priority Charter Schools. In conformity with the above determination, the Board or committee shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

(C) If such transaction or arrangement is approved by the Board or committee, the Comparability Data and the approval shall be made part of the Board minutes in accordance with Part III, Section 3-d (Documentation) below.

d) Documentation

The Board Secretary shall keep accurate minutes reporting:

(1) **Interest Disclosed; Determination of Conflict of Interest.** That the Interested Person(s) disclosed the Interest and the Board determined whether a Conflict of Interest exists. The minutes should include:

(A) The name(s) of the person(s) who disclosed or otherwise were found to have an Interest in connection with an actual or possible Conflict of Interest, the nature of the Interest, any action taken to determine whether a Conflict of Interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a Conflict of Interest in fact existed.

(B) The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the Conflict of Interest, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

(C) A completed Affidavit of Abstention complying with Local Government Code Chapter 171 and 19 TAC §§ 100.1131-1134 (*see* Affidavit Exhibit A).

(2) **Nonparticipation of Directors with Conflict.** That the Director or Directors with an Interest or a Conflict of Interest left the room and did not participate in the determination of whether a Conflict of Interest exists or the vote regarding the transaction or arrangement;

(3) **Comparability Data.** The Comparability Data considered and relied upon by the Board in its consideration of the transaction or arrangement; and

- (4) **Vote of Disinterested Directors.** That the remaining disinterested Directors reviewed the Transaction and voted upon it, and the result of their vote.

Sec. 4. COMPENSATION

- (1) A Director who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Priority Charter Schools for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that Director's compensation.
- (2) A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Priority Charter Schools for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- (3) No voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from Priority Charter Schools, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.
- (4) Except with respect to Board decisions regarding a *bona fide* class or category of employees pursuant to Government Code § 573.062(b), a voting member of the Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters is precluded from voting on personnel matters (including matters related to compensation) concerning a person related within the third degree by consanguinity or within the second degree by affinity (as defined below and as specified by Government Code § 573.002).

Sec. 5. DEFINITIONS

The following terms shall have the following meaning:

- (1) **Director or Officer.** A member of the governing body of a charter holder, a member of the governing body of a charter school, or an officer of a charter school. An officer or director means a person charged with the duties of, or acting as, a Chief Executive Officer, a Central Administration Officer, a Campus Administration Officer, or a Business Manager, regardless of whether the person is an employee or contractor of a charter holder, charter school, management company, or any other person; or a volunteer working under the direction of a charter holder, charter school, or management company. A charter holder employee or independent contractor engaged solely in non-charter activities for the charter holder is not an "officer of a charter school." 19 TAC §100.1001(16).
- (2) **Business entity.** A sole proprietorship, partnership, firm, corporation, holding company, joint-stock company, receivership, trust, agency, political subdivision, or any other entity recognized by law.

- (3) **Substantial interest in business entity.** A person has a substantial interest in a business entity if: (1) the person owns 10% or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity or owns either 10% or more or \$15,000 or more of the fair market value of the business entity; or (2) funds received by the person from the business entity exceed 10% of the person's gross income for the previous year.
- (4) **Substantial interest in real estate.** A person has a substantial interest in real estate, if the interest is an equitable or legal ownership with a fair market value of \$2,500 or more.
- (5) **Substantial interest through a relative or family member.** A Director or Officer is considered to have a substantial interest if a person related to the Director or Officer within the third degree by consanguinity or the third degree by affinity (as defined below) has a substantial interest under **Sec. 1.6.2.5(iii)** above. 19 TAC § 100.1132(d).
- (6) **Family.** Family means a disqualified person's spouse, siblings, spouses of siblings, ancestors, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and spouses of children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

PART IV: NEPOTISM

Sec. 1. NEPOTISM GENERALLY PROHIBITED

A Director or Officer may not hire, select, appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the hiring, selection, appointment, or confirmation of an individual who is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees of office, if:

- (1) The person is related to the Director or Officer by consanguinity (blood) within the third degree or by affinity (marriage) within the second degree (as defined below); or
- (2) The Director or Officer holds the appointment or confirmation authority as a member of a local board and the person is related to another member of the Board by blood or marriage within a prohibited degree. Government Code §§ 573.002, 573.041.
- (3) Refer to attached diagram, Exhibit B.

Sec. 2. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

The nepotism law governs the hiring of an individual, whether the individual is hired as an employee or as an independent contractor.

Sec. 3. PAYMENT TO PROHIBITED PERSON

A Director or Officer may not approve an account or draw or authorize the drawing of a warrant or order to pay the compensation of an ineligible person if the Director or Officer knows the person is ineligible. Government Code § 573.083; 19 TAC § 100.1116.

Sec. 4. RELATION BY CONSANGUINITY

Two persons are related to each other by consanguinity (blood) if one is a descendant of the other or if they share a common ancestor. An adopted child is considered to be a child of the adoptive parents for this purpose. Government Code § 573.022.

a) *Third Degree of Consanguinity*

An individual's relatives within the third degree by consanguinity are the individual's:

- (1) Parent or child (first degree);
- (2) Brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild (second degree); and
- (3) Great-grandparent, great-grandchild, aunt or uncle (who is a sibling of a parent of the person), nephew or niece (who is a child of a brother or sister of the person) (third degree). Government Code 573.023.

Note: There is no distinction under the nepotism statute between half-blood and full-blood relations. Thus, half-blood relationships fall within the same degree as those of the full blood. *See Exhibit B.*

Sec. 5. RELATION BY AFFINITY

Two persons are related to each other by affinity (marriage) if they are married to each other, or if the spouse of one of the persons is related by consanguinity to the other person. The ending of a marriage by divorce, or the death of a spouse ends relationships by affinity created by that marriage unless a child of the marriage is living, in which case the marriage is considered to continue as long as a child of that marriage lives. This provision applies to a Board member or Officer only until the youngest child of the marriage reaches the age of 21 years. Government Code § 573.024.

a) *First Degree of Affinity*

A husband and wife are related to each other in the first degree by affinity. For other relationships, the degree of affinity is the same as the degree of the underlying relationship by consanguinity. For example, if two persons are related to each other in the second degree by consanguinity, the spouse of one of the persons is related to the other person in the second degree by affinity.

b) *Second Degree of Affinity*

If two individuals are related to each other in the second degree by consanguinity, the spouse of one of the individuals is related to the other individual in the second degree by affinity.

c) *Third Degree of Affinity*

An individual's relatives within the third degree of affinity are:

- (1) Anyone related by consanguinity to the person's spouse within the first or second degree; and
- (2) The spouse of anyone related to the person by consanguinity within the first or second degree. Government Code § 573.025.

Sec. 6. EXISTING EMPLOYEES/CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT

The nepotism prohibitions do not apply to the appointment of a person to a position if the person is employed in the position immediately before the election or appointment of the Director or Officer to whom the person is related in a prohibited degree, and that prior employment is continuous for at least:

- (1) Thirty days, if the Director or Officer is appointed;
- (2) Six months, if the Director or Officer is elected. Government Code § 573.062(a); or
- (3) A person who was not restricted or prohibited under Education Code 12.1055 as it existed before September 1, 2013, from being employed by Priority Charter Schools and who was employed by Priority Charter Schools before September 1, 2013, is considered to have been in continuous employment as provided by Government Code § 573.062(a), and is not prohibited from continuing employment with Priority Charter Schools. Education Code § 12.1055(d).

a) *Continuous Employment Exception*

For purposes of calculating the appropriate date for the applicability of the continuous-employment exception, a superintendent with final authority to select personnel is an appointed Director or Officer. *Atty. Gen. Op. GA-177 (2004)*. If an employee continues in a position under this exception, the Director or Officer to whom the employee is related in a prohibited degree may not participate in any deliberation or voting on the appointment, reappointment, employment, reemployment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of the employee, if the action applies only to the employee and is not taken regarding a *bona fide* class or category of employees. Government Code § 573.062(b). A "change in status" includes a reassignment within an organization, whether or not a change in salary level accompanies the reassignment. *Atty. Gen. Op. JC-193 (2000)*. For an action to be "taken with respect to a *bona fide* category of employees," the officeholder's action must be based on objective criteria, which do not allow for the preference

or discretion of the officeholder. *Atty. Gen. Op. DM-46 (1991)*. The nepotism prohibitions do not apply to appointment or employment of a substitute teacher. Government Code § 573.061.

b) *Retired Teachers*

A teacher who has retired from a full-time, certified teacher position has broken his or her employment with Priority Charter Schools, and does not qualify for the continuous employment exception to the nepotism laws. *Atty. Gen. Op. JC-442 (2001)*.

Sec. 7. TRADING PROHIBITED

A Director or Officer may not hire, select, appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the hiring, selection, appointment, or confirmation of an individual to a charter position in which the individual's services are under the Director or Officer's direction or control if:

- (1) The person is related to another Director or Officer within the prohibited degree; and
- (2) The appointment would be carried out, in whole or in partial consideration for the other Director or Officer's hiring, selecting, appointing, confirming, or voting for an individual who is related to the first Director or Officer within a prohibited degree. Government Code § 573.044.

Sec. 8. SOURCE OF FUNDING IRRELEVANT

The rules against nepotism apply to employees paid with public funds, regardless of the source of those funds. Thus, the rules apply in the case of a teacher paid with funds from a federal grant. *Atty. Gen. L.A. No. 80 (1974)*.

Sec. 9. NEPOTISM EXCEPTIONS

The nepotism exceptions described in 19 TAC § 100.1115 also apply. Notwithstanding an exception, a Director or Officer related in a prohibited degree may not participate in any deliberation or voting on the appointment, reappointment, or confirmation of same, employment, reemployment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of an individual, unless the action is taken regarding a *bona fide* class or category of employees.

Sec. 10. ENFORCEMENT OF NEPOTISM PROHIBITIONS

In accordance with state law, a Director or Officer who violates the nepotism regulations shall be removed from office by the Board. A failure to thus remove is a material charter violation.

- (1) Removal must be in accordance with the Articles and Bylaws of Priority Charter Schools and in accordance with the terms of the charter and other state and federal law.

- (2) A Director or Officer violating the nepotism laws may also be removed by the Attorney General and may be subject to criminal and other penalties.

Sec. 11. DELEGATION OF HIRING AUTHORITY

The Board may delegate final authority to select Priority Charter Schools personnel to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent, Human Resources Director, or other designated Officer.

If such authority is designated to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent, the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent is a “public official” for purposes of Chapter 573, Government Code, with respect to a decision made under that delegation of authority. Education Code § 11.1513(f). As such, if the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent has been delegated final authority to select Priority Charter Schools personnel, the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent may not hire, select, appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the hiring, selection, appointment, or confirmation of an individual who is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees of office, if:

- (1) The person is related to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent by consanguinity (blood) within the third degree or by affinity (marriage) within the second degree; or
- (2) The person is related to a Board member by blood or marriage within a prohibited degree. Government Code §§ 573.002, 573.041.

An individual who is related to the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent within the relevant level or consanguinity (blood) or by affinity (marriage) and was employed by Priority Charter Schools before September 1, 2013 is considered to have been in continuous employment as provided by Government Code § 573.062(a), and is not prohibited from continuing employment with Priority Charter Schools.

Notwithstanding the above, each Director remains subject to Chapter 573, Government Code with respect to all Priority Charter Schools employees. Education Code §§ 11.1513(f), 12.1055.

PART V: RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Sec. 1. COMPLIANCE WITH COMMISSIONER RULE

Priority Charter Schools shall comply with all rules issued by the Commissioner of Education concerning related party transactions under Education Code §§ 12.1166–.1167. This includes any rule concerning notification to the Commissioner if Priority Charter Schools intends to enter into a transaction with a related party and provide an appraisal from a certified appraiser to the Texas Education Agency.

Sec. 2. DEFINITIONS

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For purposes of this policy, the term “related party” includes:

1. A party seeking to enter into a financial transaction with Priority Charter Schools, and such party has a current or former Board member, administrator, or officer who is:
 - a. A Board member, administrator, or officer of Priority Charter Schools; or
 - b. Related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to a Board member, administrator, or officer of Priority Charter Schools;
2. Priority Charter Schools’s related organizations, joint ventures, and jointly governed organizations;
3. Priority Charter Schools’s Board members, administrators, or officers or a person related to a Board member, administrator, or officer within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code; and
4. Any other disqualified person, as that term is defined by 26 U.S.C. § 4958(f).

For purposes of subsection 1 above, a person is a former Board member, administrator, or officer if the person served in that capacity within one year of the date on which a financial transaction between Priority Charter Schools and a related party occurred.

Sec. 3. AUDIT BY COMMISSIONER

If the aggregate amount of all transactions between Priority Charter Schools and a related party exceeds \$5,000.00, the Commissioner may conduct an audit of such transaction. If the Commissioner determines a transaction with a related party using funds received under Education Code § 12.106 was structured in a manner that did not benefit Priority Charter Schools or that the transaction was in excess of fair market value, the Commissioner may order that the transaction be reclassified or that other action be taken as necessary to protect Priority Charter Schools’ interests. Failure to comply with the Commissioner’s order is a material charter violation,.

Sec. 4. ANNUAL AUDIT DISCLOSURE

Priority Charter Schools must include in its annual audit a list of all transactions with a related party. Additionally, the annual audit must separately disclose:

1. All financial transactions between Priority Charter Schools and any related party, separately stating the principal, interest, and lease payments; and
2. The total compensation and benefits provided by Priority Charter Schools and any related party for each member of the Board and each officer and administrator of Priority Charter Schools and the related party.

PART VI: CONFIDENTIALITY

A Director and Officer shall exercise care not to disclose Confidential Information. Confidential Information is information deemed confidential by law, and any information not generally known or publicly available, or that Priority Charter Schools maintains as confidential, proprietary, restricted, or otherwise as not to be disclosed generally, and any information that the Board or Priority Charter Schools otherwise determines or deems as Confidential Information.

A Director shall not use Priority Charter Schools property, Confidential Information, or the status of his or her position to solicit business for others, or in any other manner obtain a private financial, social or political benefit.

PART VII: DISCLOSURE AND ANNUAL REVIEW

Sec. 1. NEW DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Each new Director and Officer shall review a copy of this Policy and shall complete the Annual Statement of Disclosure and Compliance attached hereto as Exhibit C. The Board shall treat completed Annual Statements of Disclosure and Compliance as Confidential Information.

Sec. 2. PERIODIC REVIEW

To ensure that Priority Charter Schools operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes, and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects: (i) whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable based on competent survey information, and are the result of arm's length bargaining; (ii) whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to Priority Charter Schools' written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Sec. 3. ANNUAL REVIEW

Each current Director and Officer shall complete the Annual Statement of Disclosure and Compliance attached hereto as Exhibit C. The Board shall treat completed Annual Statements of Disclosure and Compliance as Confidential Information.

Sec. 4. APPLICABLE LAW

This Policy is supplemental to and does not replace federal, state or local laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to charter schools and charitable organizations. When in conflict, the applicable law shall control.

PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS BOARD POLICY MANUAL
POLICY GROUP 1 – GOVERNANCE
ETHICS, CONFLICT OF INTEREST, AND NEPOTISM

PG-1.6

Adopted the _____ day of _____, 2023

President

Member

Secretary

Member

Treasurer

DATE ISSUED: MAY 20, 2022

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EXHIBIT A
AFFIDAVIT OF ABSTENTION

STATE OF TEXAS §
§
COUNTY OF _____ §

I, _____, a local public official, make this affidavit and hereby under oath state the following:

I have a substantial interest in a business entity or real property that may receive a special economic effect that is distinguishable from the effect on the public by an action contemplated by Priority Charter Schools.

The business entity or real property in which I have a substantial interest is: [*name and address of business and/or description of property*]:

I or a person that is related to me within the first degree of consanguinity (blood) or affinity (marriage) as defined by state law has a substantial interest in this business entity or real property for the following reasons [*check all that apply*]:

- ☐ an ownership interest of 10 percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity;
- ☐ an ownership interest of 10 percent or more or \$15,000 or more of the fair market value of the business entity;
- ☐ funds received from the business entity exceed 10 percent of _____ (my, his, her) gross income for the previous year;

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☐ real property is involved and _____ (I, he, she) have/has an equitable or legal ownership with a fair market value of at least \$2,500;

Upon filing of this affidavit with the official record keeper of Priority Charter Schools, I affirm that I shall abstain from voting or further participating in any matter involving the business entity or real property, unless allowed by law.

SIGNED this the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Signature of Affiant

Title

Before me, the undersigned authority, this day personally appeared _____
_____ (Affiant Name) and by oath swore that the facts herein above stated are true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge or belief.

SWORN TO and SUBSCRIBED before me on the _____ day of _____,
20__.

Notary Public, State of Texas

(seal)

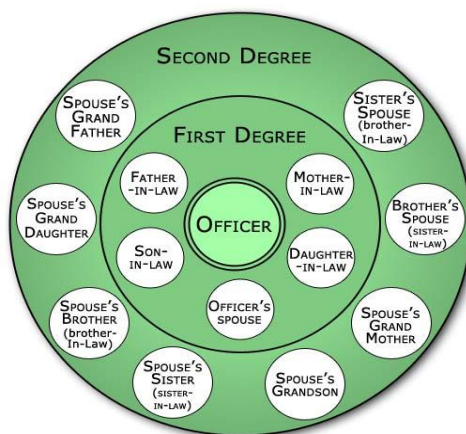
My commission expires: _____

EXHIBIT B
NEPOTISM CHART

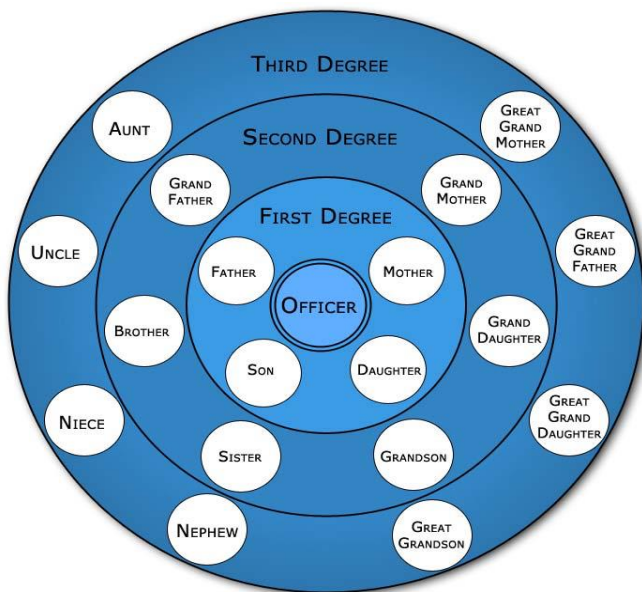
NEPOTISM CHART

The chart below shows

- **Affinity Kinship** (relationship by marriage)
- **Consanguinity Kinship** (relationship by blood) for purposes of interpreting nepotism as defined in VTCA Government Code, Chapter 573, §§573.021 - .025



AFFINITY KINSHIP
Relationship by Marriage



CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP
Relationship by Blood

EXHIBIT C

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE AND COMPLIANCE

Name: _____

Position: _____

- ☐ Please describe below any relationships, positions, or circumstances in which you are involved that you believe could be considered an Interest or that might be perceived as an actual or possible Conflict of Interest, as defined in the Priority Charter Schools Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy. Please also describe any familial relationships that would qualify as relationships within the prohibited degree as defined in the Priority Charter Schools Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy.

- ☐ I am involved in no activity, relationship, position or circumstance that could be considered an Interest or might be perceived as an actual or possible Conflict of Interest, as defined in the Priority Charter Schools Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy. I do not have any familial relationships that would qualify as relationships within the prohibited degree as defined in the Priority Charter Schools Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy.

I hereby certify that the information as set forth above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have reviewed and agree to abide by the Priority Charter Schools Ethics, Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy that is currently in effect.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sec. 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

a) *Public Information Defined*

For purposes of the Texas Public Information Act (“TPIA”), “public information” means information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

1. By the Board;
2. For the Board and the Board:
 - a. Owns the information;
 - b. Has a right of access to the information; or
 - c. Spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information; or
3. By an individual officer or employee of Priority Charter Schools in the officer’s or employee’s official capacity and the information pertains to official business of Priority Charter Schools.

“Official business” means any matter over which Priority Charter Schools has any authority, administrative duties, or advisory duties.

Information is “in connection with the transaction of official business” if the information is created by, transmitted to, received by, or maintained by an officer or employee of Priority Charter Schools in the officer’s or employee’s official capacity, or a person or entity performing official business or a governmental function on behalf of Priority Charter Schools, and pertains to official business of Priority Charter Schools.

The definition of “public information” applies to and includes any electronic communication created, transmitted, received, or maintained on any device if the communication is in connection with the transaction of official business.

end

b) *Forms of Public Information*

The general forms in which the media containing public information exist include a book, paper, letter, document, e-mail, Internet posting, text message, instant message, other electronic communication, printout, photograph, film, tape, microfiche, microfilm, photostat, sound recording, map, and drawing and a voice, data, or video representation held in computer memory.

The media on which public information is recorded include:

1. Paper;
2. Film;
3. A magnetic, optical, solid state, or other device that can store an electronic signal;

4. Tape;
5. Mylar; and
6. Any physical material on which information may be recorded, including linen, silk, and vellum.

Sec. 2. PRESERVATION OF INFORMATION

The Board may determine a time for which information that is not currently in use will be preserved, subject to any applicable law or rule governing the destruction and other disposition of state and local government records or public information.

The provisions of Chapter 441, Government Code and Title 6, Local Government Code, governing the preservation, destruction, or other disposition of records or public information apply to records and public information held by a temporary custodian.

Gov't Code 552.004(a), (c).

a) *Temporary Custodians*

For purposes of the TPIA, a “temporary custodian” means an officer or employee of Priority Charter Schools who, in the transaction of official business, creates or receives public information that the officer or employee has not provided to the officer for public information or the officer’s agent. The term includes a former officer or employee who created or received public information in the officer’s or employee’s official capacity that has not been provided to the officer for public information or the officer’s agent.

A current or former Board member, officer, or employee of Priority Charter Schools does not have, by virtue of the individual’s position or former position, a personal or property right to public information the individual created or received while acting in an official capacity.

A temporary custodian with possession, custody, or control of public information shall surrender or return the information to Priority Charter Schools not later than the 10th day after the date the officer for public information requests the temporary custodian to surrender or return the information.

A temporary custodian’s failure to surrender or return public information as requested by the officer for public information is grounds for disciplinary action by Priority Charter Schools, or any other applicable penalties authorized by the TPIA or other law.

Gov't Code § 552.003(7).

b) *Calculating Timelines*

For purposes of requesting an Attorney General determination related to surrendered or returned to Priority Charter Schools by a temporary custodian, Priority Charter Schools is considered to have received the request for that information on the date the information is surrendered or returned to Priority Charter Schools. *Gov't Code 552.233.*

Sec. 3. ONLINE MESSAGE BOARD

If the Board maintains an online message board or similar Internet application under Government Code 551.006, and the Board removes from the online message board or similar Internet application a communication that has been posted for at least 30 days, the Board shall maintain the posting for a period of six years. This communication is public information and must be disclosed in accordance with the TPIA. *Gov't Code § 551.006(d).*

Sec. 4. AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public information is available to the public, at a minimum, during Priority Charter Schools' normal business hours.

Sec. 5. OFFICER FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND REQUIRED NOTICES

a) *Officer for Public Information*

The Superintendent or designee shall be Priority Charter Schools' officer for public information. Each department head shall be an agent of the officer for purposes of complying with the TPIA.

The officer for public information is responsible for the release of public information as required by the TPIA, Government Code Chapter 552. The officer for public information shall:

1. Make public information available for public inspection and copying.
2. Carefully protect public information from deterioration, alteration, mutilation, loss, or unlawful removal.
3. Repair, renovate, or rebind public information when necessary to maintain it properly.
4. Make reasonable efforts to obtain public information from a temporary custodian if:
 - a. The information has been requested from Priority Charter Schools;
 - b. The officer for public information is aware of facts sufficient to warrant a reasonable belief that the temporary custodian has possession, custody, or control of the information;
 - c. The officer for public information is unable to comply with the duties imposed by the TPIA without obtaining the information from the temporary custodian; and
 - d. The temporary custodian has not provided the information to the officer for public information or the officer's agent.

The officer for public information is not responsible for the use made of the information by the requestor or the release of information after it is removed from a record as a result of an update, correction, or change of status of the person to whom the information pertains.

Gov't Code § 552.201(a)–.204.

b) *Sign*

The officer for public information shall prominently display a sign in the form prescribed by the Attorney General that contains basic information about the rights of a requestor, the responsibilities of Priority Charter Schools, and the procedures for inspecting or obtaining a copy of public information under the TPIA. The officer for public information shall display the sign at one or more places in the Priority Charter Schools administrative offices where it is plainly visible to:

1. Members of the public who request public information in person; and
2. Priority Charter Schools employees whose duties include receiving or responding to public information requests.

Sec. 6. ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

a) *Rules of Access*

Priority Charter Schools may promulgate reasonable rules of procedure by which public information may be inspected and copied efficiently, safely, and without delay. These rules may not be inconsistent with any provision of the TPIA. *Gov't Code § 552.230.*

It shall be the policy of Priority Charter Schools to provide a suitable copy of public information within a reasonable time after the date on which the copy is requested. *Gov't Code § 552.228.*

b) *Method of Making Written Request for Public Information*

A person may make a written request for public information only by delivering the request by one of the following methods to the designated officer for public information:

1. United States mail;
2. Electronic mail;
3. Hand delivery; or
4. Any other appropriate method approved by Priority Charter Schools, including facsimile transmission and electronic submission through the Priority Charter Schools website.

Priority Charter Schools may designate one mailing address and one electronic mail address for receiving written requests for public information and shall provide the designated mailing address and electronic mail address to any person on request.

If Priority Charter Schools posts a designated mailing address or electronic mail address on the Priority Charter Schools website, or if Priority Charter Schools prints those addresses on the TPIA sign noted in Section 5(b), Priority Charter Schools is not required to respond to a written request for public information unless the request is received:

1. At one of those addresses;
2. By hand delivery; or
3. By a method that has been approved by Priority Charter Schools.

Gov't Code § 552.234.

c) *Inquiry of Requestors*

The officer for public information and agent shall not make an inquiry of a requestor, except to establish proper identification or to ask the requestor to narrow or clarify the request. The officer for public information or agent shall treat all requests for information uniformly without regard to the position or occupation of the requestor, the person on whose behalf the request is made, or the status of the individual as a member of the media. The officer for public information or agent shall give the requestor all reasonable comfort and facility for the full exercise of the right granted by the TPIA. *Gov't Code §§552.222(a)-(b), .223-.224.*

d) *Location of Access*

Priority Charter Schools complies with a request for public information by:

1. Providing the information for inspection or duplication in Priority Charter Schools' offices (see TIME FOR EXAMINATION, section 6-g below); or
2. Sending copies of the information by first class mail, if the requestor requests that copies be provided and pays the postage and any other applicable charges that the requestor has accrued under Subchapter F of the TPIA (see COSTS AND CHARGES, below).
3. By referring a requestor to an exact Internet location or uniform resource locator ("URL") address on a website maintained by Priority Charter Schools and accessible to the public if the requested information is identifiable and readily available on that website. If the requestor prefers a manner other than access through the URL, Priority Charter Schools must supply the information by sending copies to the requestor, as described above. If the officer for public information provides by e-mail an Internet location or URL address, the e-mail must contain a statement in a conspicuous font clearly indicating that the requestor may nonetheless access the requested information by inspection or duplication or by receipt through the United States mail, as described above.

The TPIA does not authorize a requestor to remove an original copy of a public record from Priority Charter Schools.

Gov't Code § 552.221(b)-(b-2), .226.

e) *Time for Response*

Priority Charter Schools shall promptly produce public information for inspection, duplication, or both, on application by any person. “Promptly” means as soon as possible under the circumstances, that is, within a reasonable time, without delay.

If Priority Charter Schools cannot produce the public information for inspection or duplication within 10 business days after the date the information is requested, the officer for public information or designee shall certify that fact in writing to the requestor and set a date and hour within a reasonable time when the information will be available for inspection or duplication.

If the requested information is unavailable because it is in storage or active use, the officer for public information or designee shall certify this fact in writing to the requestor and set a date and hour within a reasonable time when the information will be available for inspection or duplication.

Gov't Code § 552.221.

f) *Requests to Clarify or Narrow*

If a large amount of information has been requested, Priority Charter Schools may discuss with the requestor how the scope of the request might be narrowed, but Priority Charter Schools may not inquire into the purpose for which the information will be used. If what information is requested is unclear to Priority Charter Schools, Priority Charter Schools may ask the requestor to clarify the request.

If the request included the requestor’s physical or mailing address, Priority Charter Schools must send the request for discussion or clarification to that address by certified mail. The written request for discussion or clarification must include a statement as to the consequences of failure by the requestor to timely respond. If Priority Charter Schools does not receive a written response by the 61st day after Priority Charter Schools sends the written request, the underlying request for public information is considered to have been withdrawn by the requestor.

g) *Time for Examination*

A requestor shall complete the examination of the information not later than the 10th business day after the date the custodian of the information makes it available. If the requestor does not complete

the examination within 10 business days and does not file a request for additional time, the requestor is considered to have withdrawn the request.

Priority Charter Schools shall extend the initial examination period by an additional 10 business days if, within the initial period, the requestor files with the officer for public information or designee a written request for additional time. The officer or designee shall extend an additional examination period by another 10 business days if, within the first additional period, the requestor files with the officer a written request for more additional time.

The time during which a person may examine information may be interrupted by Priority Charter Schools if the information is needed for use by Priority Charter Schools. The period of interruption is not considered to be a part of the time during which the person may examine the information.

A request is considered to have been withdrawn if the requestor fails to inspect or duplicate the public information in the offices of Priority Charter Schools on or before the 60th day after the date the information is made available or fails to pay the postage and any other applicable charges accrued under Government Code, Chapter 552, Subchapter F on or before the 60th day after the date the requestor is informed of the charges.

Gov't Code § 552.221(e), .225.

h) Electronic Data

If public information exists in an electronic or magnetic medium, the requestor may request a copy in an electronic medium, such as on diskette or on magnetic tape. Priority Charter Schools shall provide a copy in the requested medium:

1. If Priority Charter Schools has the technological ability to produce the information in the requested medium;
2. If Priority Charter Schools is not required to purchase any software or hardware to accommodate the request; and
3. Providing the copy will not violate any copyright agreement between Priority Charter Schools and a third party.

If Priority Charter Schools is unable to comply with a request to produce a copy of information in a requested medium for any of these reasons, Priority Charter Schools shall provide a copy in another medium that is acceptable to the requestor. Priority Charter Schools is not required to copy information onto a diskette or other material provided by the requestor but may use Priority Charter Schools supplies.

Gov't Code § 552.228.

i) Requests Requiring Programming or Manipulation of Data

Priority Charter Schools shall provide the requestor a written statement, described below, if Priority Charter Schools determines:

1. That responding to a request for information will require programming or manipulation of data; and
2. That:
 - a. Compliance with the request is not feasible or will result in substantial interference with operations; or
 - b. The information could be made available in the requested form only at a cost that covers the programming and manipulation of data.

The written statement shall include:

1. A statement that the information is not available in the requested form;
2. A description of the form in which the information is available;
3. A description of any contract or services that would be required to provide the information in the requested form;
4. A statement of the estimated cost of providing the information in the requested form, as determined in accordance with rules established by the Attorney General; and
5. A statement of the anticipated time required to provide the information in the requested form.

Priority Charter Schools shall provide the written statement to the requestor within 20 days after the date Priority Charter Schools receives the request. Priority Charter Schools has an additional 10 days to provide the statement if Priority Charter Schools gives written notice to the requestor, within 20 days after receiving the request, that additional time is needed.

After providing the written statement described above, Priority Charter Schools has no further obligation to provide the information in the requested form or in the form in which it is available, unless within 30 days the requestor states in writing that the requestor:

1. Wants the information in the requested form according to the time and cost parameters set out in the written statement, or according to other terms to which the requestor and Priority Charter Schools agree; or
2. Wants the information in the form in which it is available.

If a requestor does not make a timely written statement, the requestor is considered to have withdrawn the request for information.

The officer for public information shall establish policies that assure the expeditious and accurate processing of requests for information that require programming or manipulation of data. Priority

Charter Schools shall maintain a readily accessible file containing all written statements issued concerning requests for information that require programming or manipulation of data.

Gov't Code § 552.231.

j) *Repetitious or Redundant Requests*

If Priority Charter Schools determines that a requestor has made a request for information for which Priority Charter Schools has previously furnished or made copies available to the requestor, Priority Charter Schools may:

1. Respond to the request for information as set forth below, at PROCEDURES, section 6-k below; or
2. Furnish the information, or make the information available to the requestor again in accordance with the request. If Priority Charter Schools selects this option, Priority Charter Schools is not required to comply with the procedures described below.

These provisions do not apply to information not previously furnished to a requestor. Priority Charter Schools shall treat a request for information for which copies have not been previously furnished or made available to the requestor, including information that was not furnished or made available because the information was redacted or because the information did not exist at the time of an earlier request, in the same manner as any other request for public information.

Gov't Code § 552.232(a), (d).

k) *Procedures*

Priority Charter Schools shall, free of charge, certify to the requestor that copies of all or part of the requested information were previously furnished or made available to the requestor. The certification must include:

1. A description of the information for which copies have been previously furnished or made available to the requestor;
2. The date Priority Charter Schools received the requestor's original request for that information;
3. The date Priority Charter Schools previously furnished copies or made available copies of the information to the requestor;
4. A certification that no subsequent additions, deletions, or corrections have been made to that information; and
5. The name, title, and signature of the officer for public information or agent making the certification.

Gov't Code § 552.232(b), (c).

1) *Requests for Contracting Information Not Maintained by Priority Charter Schools*

Priority Charter Schools shall comply with the requirements of Government Code 552.371 with respect to requests for public information related to certain contracts involving at least \$1 million in public funds when information related to the contract is in the custody or possession of the contracting entity and is not maintained by Priority Charter Schools. *Gov't Code § 552.371.*

Sec. 7. ATTORNEY GENERAL DECISIONS

a) *Request for Attorney General Decision*

If Priority Charter Schools receives a written request for information that Priority Charter Schools reasonably considers to be within one of the exceptions to required disclosure and that Priority Charter Schools wishes to withhold from public disclosure, Priority Charter Schools shall request a decision from the Attorney General about whether the information is within the exception (see SUBMISSION TO ATTORNEY GENERAL, section 7-f below). For these purposes, the term “written request” includes a request sent by electronic mail or facsimile transmission to the officer or designee. *Gov't Code § 552.301(a).*

b) *Time for Request*

Priority Charter Schools must submit the request to the Attorney General not later than the 10th business day after receiving the written request. If Priority Charter Schools does not timely request a decision from the Attorney General and comply with the requirements at STATEMENT TO REQUESTOR, section 7-e below, the information is presumed to be subject to public disclosure and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold it. *Gov't Code §§ 552.301(b), .302.*

c) *Calculating Timelines*

For the purposes of requesting an Attorney General decision, if Priority Charter Schools receives a written request by United States mail and cannot adequately establish the actual date of receipt, the request is considered to have been received by Priority Charter Schools on the third business day after the date of the postmark on a properly addressed request. *Gov't Code § 552.301(a-1).*

For information surrendered or returned to Priority Charter Schools by a temporary custodian, Priority Charter Schools is considered to have received the request for that information on the date the information is returned or surrendered to Priority Charter Schools. *Gov't Code § 552.233(d).*

d) *Previous Determinations*

Except as set forth at Government Code section 552.301(g), Priority Charter Schools may not request an Attorney General decision if Priority Charter Schools has previously requested and received a determination from the Attorney General concerning the precise information at issue in a pending request and the Attorney General or a court determined that the information is not within one of the exceptions. This exception applies to specific information that is again requested from Priority Charter Schools after the Attorney General has previously issued a decision regarding the precise information or records at issue.

Priority Charter Schools may rely on a previous determination by the Attorney General regarding a specific, clearly delineated category of information if:

1. The previous decision is applicable to a school district or charter school;
2. The previous decision concludes that the category of information is or is not excepted from public disclosure;
3. The elements of law, fact, and circumstances are met to support the previous decision's conclusion that the requested records and information at issue are not excepted from public disclosure; and
4. The previous decision explicitly provides that the governmental body or bodies to which the decision applies may withhold the information without the necessity of seeking a decision from the Attorney General.

Priority Charter Schools shall notify the requestor in writing of the decision or ruling upon which it is relying if it relies on any previous determination to withhold information from disclosure.

Priority Charter Schools may withhold from public disclosure the categories of records listed at Texas Attorney General Open Records Decision 684 (2009).

Priority Charter Schools may withhold from public disclosure personally identifiable, non-directory information in "education records" as defined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

e) *Statement to Requestor*

If Priority Charter Schools requests an Attorney General decision, it shall provide to the requestor within a reasonable time, but not later than the 10th business day after the date of receiving the requestor's written request:

1. A written statement that Priority Charter Schools wishes to withhold the requested information and has asked for a decision from the Attorney General about whether the information is within an exception to public disclosure; and
2. A copy of Priority Charter Schools's written communication to the Attorney General asking for the decision. If Priority Charter Schools' written communication to the Attorney

General discloses the requested information, Priority Charter Schools shall provide a redacted copy of that written communication.

Gov't Code § 552.301(d).

f) *Submission to Attorney General*

When Priority Charter Schools requests an Attorney General decision, it shall, within a reasonable time but not later than the 15th business day after receiving the request for information, submit to the Attorney General all of the following:

1. Written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld;
2. A copy of the written request for information;
3. A signed statement as to the date on which the written request for information was received by Priority Charter Schools or evidence sufficient to establish that date; and
4. A copy of the specific information requested, or representative samples of the information if a voluminous amount of information was requested. Priority Charter Schools shall label the copies or representative samples to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the copy.

Priority Charter Schools shall send a copy of the comments to the requestor not later than the 15th business day after Priority Charter Schools receives the written request. If the written comments disclose or contain the substance of the information requested, the copy of the comments provided to the requestor shall be redacted.

Gov't Code § 552.301(e), (e-1).

Unless the information is confidential by law, Priority Charter Schools may disclose the requested information to the public or the requestor before a final determination that the information is public has been made by the Attorney General or a court with jurisdiction. *Gov't Code § 552.303(a).*

g) *Additional Information*

If the Attorney General determines that additional information is necessary to render a decision, the Attorney General shall give Priority Charter Schools and the requestor written notice of that fact. Priority Charter Schools shall submit the necessary additional information to the Attorney General not later than the seventh calendar day after the date the notice is received. If Priority Charter Schools does not comply with the Attorney General's request, the information is presumed to be subject to required public disclosure and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information. *Gov't Code § 552.303(c)-(e).*

h) *Privacy or Property Interests*

If information is requested and a person's privacy or property interests may be involved, including a case under Government Code 552.101 (information confidential by law), 552.110 (trade secrets), 552.1101 (proprietary information), 552.114 (student records), 552.131 (economic development information), or 552.143 (investment information), Priority Charter Schools may decline to release the information for the purpose of requesting a decision from the Attorney General. A person whose interests may be involved, or any other person, may submit in writing to the Attorney General the person's reasons why the information should be withheld or released. Priority Charter Schools may, but is not required to, submit its reasons why the information should be withheld or released. *Gov't Code § 552.305(a)-(c)*.

i) *Notice to Owner of Proprietary Information*

If release of a person's proprietary information may be subject to exception under Government Code 552.101 (information confidential by law), 552.110 (trade secrets), 552.1101 (Proprietary Information), 552.113 (geological or geophysical information), 552.131 (economic development information), or 552.143 (investment information), Priority Charter Schools shall, when requesting an Attorney General decision, make a good faith attempt to provide written notice to that person of its request. The notice must:

1. Be sent within a reasonable time not later than the 10th business day after Priority Charter Schools receives the request for information; and
2. Include:
 - a. A copy of any written request Priority Charter Schools received for the information; and
 - b. A statement, in the form prescribed by the Attorney General, that the person is entitled to submit to the Attorney General, not later than the 10th business day after the person receives the notice, a written statement of the reason(s) why the information should be withheld and a letter, memorandum, or brief supporting the reason(s).

Gov't Code § 552.305(d).

Sec. 8. CHARGES REGARDING TPIA REQUESTS

a) *Costs and Charges*

The charge for providing a copy of public information shall be an amount that reasonably includes all costs related to reproducing the information, including costs of materials, labor, and overhead. The charges shall not be excessive and shall not exceed the actual cost of producing the information or for making public information that exists in a paper record available. Charges for providing a copy of public information are considered to accrue at the time Priority Charter Schools advises the requestor that the copy is available on payment of the applicable charges.

i. 50 Pages or Fewer

If a request is for 50 or fewer pages of paper records, the charge for providing the copy of the information shall be limited to the charge for each page of the paper record that is photocopied, unless the pages to be photocopied are located in two or more separate buildings that are not physically connected with each other or a remote storage facility. The charge for providing a copy may not include costs of materials, labor, or overhead.

ii. Statement of Labor Costs

If the charge for providing a copy of public information includes costs of labor, the requestor may require the officer for public information or agent to provide the requestor with a written statement as to the amount of time that was required to produce and provide the copy. The statement must be signed by the officer or agent, and the officer or agent's name must be typed or legibly printed below the signature. A charge may not be imposed for providing the written statement to the requestor.

All requests received in one calendar day from an individual may be treated as a single request for purposes of calculating costs. Priority Charter Schools may not combine multiple requests from separate individuals who submit requests on behalf of an organization.

iii. Attorney General's Rules

Priority Charter Schools shall use the Attorney General's rules to determine the charges for providing copies of public information and to determine the charge, deposit, or bond required for making public information that exists in a paper record available for inspection, except to the extent that other law provides for charges for specific kinds of public information.

Priority Charter Schools may determine its own charges for providing copies of public information and its own charge, deposit, or bond for making public information that exists in a paper record available for inspection. However, Priority Charter Schools may not charge an amount that is greater than 25 percent more than the amount established by the Attorney General, unless Priority Charter Schools requests an exemption.

iv. Exemptions

Priority Charter Schools may request that it be exempt from part or all of the rules adopted by the Attorney General for determining charges. The request must be made in writing to the Attorney General and must state the reason for the exemption. If Priority Charter Schools receives notice from the Attorney General that an exemption has been granted, Priority Charter Schools may amend its charges according to the Attorney General's determination.

v. Copies for Parents

Priority Charter Schools may charge a reasonable fee in accordance with the above requirements for copies of materials provided to parents pursuant to Education Code 26.012.

vi. Statement of Estimated Charges

If a request for a copy of public information will result in the imposition of a charge that exceeds \$40, Priority Charter Schools shall provide the requestor with a written itemized statement that details all estimated charges that will be imposed, including any allowable charges for labor or personnel costs. If an alternative less costly method of viewing the records is available, the statement must include a notice that the requestor may contact Priority Charter Schools regarding the alternative method. Priority Charter Schools must inform the requestor of the responsibilities imposed on the requestor by Government Code 552.2615 and the rights granted by that section and give the requestor the information needed to respond as detailed in Government Code 552.2615(a).

If, after Priority Charter Schools provides the requestor the itemized statement but before it makes the copy or the paper record available, Priority Charter Schools determines that the estimated charges will exceed the charges detailed in the original itemized statement by 20 percent or more, Priority Charter Schools shall send to the requestor an updated written itemized statement that details all estimated charges that will be imposed, including any allowable charges for labor or personnel costs.

vii. Requestor's Response

A request for which Priority Charter Schools is required to produce an (original or updated) itemized statement of estimated charges is considered to have been withdrawn if the requestor does not respond in writing to the itemized statement by informing Priority Charter Schools within 10 business days after the date the statement is sent to the requestor that:

1. The requestor will accept the estimated charges;
2. The requestor is modifying the request in response to the itemized statement; or
3. The requestor has sent to the Attorney General a complaint alleging that the requestor has been overcharged for being provided with a copy of the public information.

viii. Actual Charges

If the actual charges exceed \$40, the charges may not exceed:

1. The amount estimated in the updated itemized statement; or
2. If an updated itemized statement is not sent to the requestor, an amount that exceeds by 20 percent or more the amount estimated in the original itemized statement.

ix. Timing of Deadlines

An original or updated itemized statement is considered to have been sent by Priority Charter Schools, and a requestor is considered to have responded to the statement, on the date that the statement or response is:

1. Delivered in person;
2. Deposited, properly addressed, in the U.S. mail; or
3. Transmitted by electronic mail or facsimile, provided the requestor agrees to receive the statement by those means.

The time deadlines for providing or responding to the required statement of estimated charges do not affect the application of a time deadline imposed on Priority Charter Schools for requesting a decision by the Attorney General under Government Code 552, Subchapter G.

Gov't Code § 552.2615.

b) Deposit or Bond

The officer for public information or agent may require a deposit or bond for payment of anticipated costs for the preparation of a copy of public information if:

1. The officer or agent has provided the requestor with the written itemized statement required by Government Code 552.2615 (see STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED CHARGES, section 8-a-vi above); and
2. The charge for providing the copy is estimated by Priority Charter Schools to exceed \$100, if Priority Charter Schools has more than 15 full-time employees, or \$50, if Priority Charter Schools has fewer than 16 full-time employees.

The officer or agent may not require a deposit or bond as a down payment for copies of public information that the requestor may request in the future.

Gov't Code § 552.263(a), (b).

For the purposes of charging for providing copies of public information or for requesting an Attorney General's opinion, a request for a copy of public information is considered to have been received by Priority Charter Schools on the date Priority Charter Schools receives the deposit or bond. *Gov't Code § 552.263(e).*

A requestor who fails to make such a deposit or post such a bond before the 10th business day after the date the deposit or bond is required is considered to have withdrawn the request. *Gov't Code § 552.263(f).*

i. Modified Request

If a requestor modifies a request in response to the requirement of a deposit or bond, the modified request is considered a separate request and is considered received on the date Priority Charter Schools receives the written modified request. *Gov't Code § 552.263(e-1)*.

ii. Unpaid Amounts

The officer for public information or agent may require a deposit or bond for payment of unpaid amounts the requestor owes Priority Charter Schools in relation to previous public information requests before preparing a copy of public information in response to a new request, if those unpaid amounts exceed \$100. The officer for public information or agent may not seek payment of those unpaid amounts through any other means. *Gov't Code § 552.263(c)*.

If Priority Charter Schools receives a request from a requestor who, within the preceding 180 days, has accepted but failed to pay written itemized statements of estimated charges from Priority Charter Schools as provided under Government Code 552.261(b), Priority Charter Schools may require the requestor to pay the estimated charges for the request before the request is fulfilled. *Gov't Code § 552.2661*.

iii. Documentation of Unpaid Amounts

Priority Charter Schools must fully document the existence and amount of those unpaid amounts or the amount of any anticipated costs before requiring a deposit or bond. The documentation is subject to required public disclosure. *Gov't Code § 552.263(d)*.

iv. Waivers

Priority Charter Schools shall provide a copy of public information without charge or at a reduced charge if Priority Charter Schools determines that waiver or reduction of the charge is in the public interest because providing the information primarily benefits the public. If the cost to Priority Charter Schools of processing the collection of a charge for providing a copy of public information will exceed the amount of the charge, Priority Charter Schools may waive the charge. *Gov't Code § 552.267*.

c) Government Publications

The cost provisions described above do not apply to a publication that is compiled and printed by or for Priority Charter Schools for public dissemination. If the cost of the publication is not determined by state law, Priority Charter Schools may determine the charge for providing the publication, or Priority Charter Schools may provide the publication free of charge, if state law does not require a certain charge. *Gov't Code § 552.270*.

Sec. 9. INSPECTION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

a) *Inspection of Public Information*

If the requestor does not request a copy of public information, Priority Charter Schools may not impose a charge for making available for inspection any public information that exists in a paper record, except as set forth below. *Gov't Code § 552.271(a)*.

i. Confidential Information

If a page contains confidential information that must be edited from the record before the information can be made available for inspection, Priority Charter Schools may charge for the cost of making a photocopy of the page from which the confidential information must be edited. No charge other than the cost of the photocopy may be imposed. *Gov't Code § 552.271(b)*.

ii. Payment, Deposit, or Bond

The officer for public information or agent may require a requestor to pay, or to make a deposit or post a bond for the payment of, anticipated personnel costs for making available for inspection public information that exists in paper records if:

1. The information specifically requested by the requestor is older than five years or completely fills, or when assembled will completely fill, six or more archival boxes; and
2. The officer for public information or agent estimates that more than five hours will be required to make the information available for inspection.

Gov't Code § 552.271(c).

If Priority Charter Schools has fewer than 16 full-time employees, the payment, deposit, or bond may be required only if:

1. The information specifically requested by the requestor is older than three years or completely fills, or when assembled will completely fill, three or more archival boxes; and
2. The officer for public information or agent estimates that more than two hours will be required to make the information available for inspection.

Gov't Code § 552.271(d).

b) *Electronic Records*

If Priority Charter Schools receives a request to inspect information that exists in an electronic medium and that is not available directly online to the requestor, Priority Charter Schools may not impose a charge for access to the information unless complying with the request will require

programming or manipulation of data. If programming or manipulation of data is required, Priority Charter Schools shall notify the requestor before assembling the information and provide the requestor with an estimate of charges that will be imposed.

If public information exists in an electronic form on a computer owned or leased by Priority Charter Schools, and the public has direct access to that computer through a computer network or other means, the electronic form of the information may be electronically copied from that computer without charge if accessing the information does not require processing, programming, or manipulation on Priority Charter Schools' computer before the information is copied. If such information does require processing, programming, or manipulation before it can be copied, Priority Charter Schools may impose charges.

If Priority Charter Schools creates or keeps information in an electronic form, Priority Charter Schools is encouraged to explore options to separate confidential information from public information and make the public information available to the public through electronic access through a computer network or other means.

Gov't Code § 552.272.

Sec. 10. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF TPIA DUE TO CATASTROPHE

The requirements of the TPIA do not apply if Priority Charter Schools is currently significantly impacted by a catastrophe such that that catastrophe directly causes the inability of the school to comply with the TPIA and complies with the requirements below for declaring a suspension period.

“Catastrophe” means a condition or occurrence that directly interferes with the ability of Priority Charter Schools to comply with the TPIA’s requirements, including:

1. Fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or wind, rain, or snow storm;
2. Power failure, transportation failure, or interruption of communication facilities;
3. Epidemic; or
4. Riot, civil disturbance, enemy attack, or other actual or threatened acts of lawlessness or violence.

“Catastrophe” does not mean a period when staff is required to work remotely and can access information responsive to an application for information electronically, but the physical office of the school is closed.

“Suspension period” means the period of time during which Priority Charter Schools may suspend the applicability of the TPIA’s requirements.

a) Initial Suspension Period

The Board may suspend the applicability of the TPIA to Priority Charter Schools for an initial suspension period. The School may suspend the TPIA only once for each catastrophe. The initial suspension may not exceed seven consecutive days and must occur during the period that:

1. Begins not earlier than the second day before the date Priority Charter Schools submits notice to the Attorney General; and
2. Ends not later than the seventh day after the date Priority Charter Schools submits that notice.

b) *Extension of Initial Suspension Period*

The Board may extend an initial suspension period if the Board determines that Priority Charter Schools is still impacted by the catastrophe on which the initial suspension period was based. The initial suspension period may be extended one time for not more than seven consecutive days that begin on the day following the day the initial suspension period ends. The combined suspension period may not exceed a total of 14 consecutive calendar days with respect to any single catastrophe.

c) *Informing the Attorney General*

If the Board elects to suspend the TPIA, Priority Charter Schools must submit notice to the Attorney General that Priority Charter Schools is currently impacted by a catastrophe and has elected to suspend the applicability of the TPIA during the initial suspension period. The notice must be on the form prescribed by the Attorney General, and must require Priority Charter Schools to:

1. Identify and describe the catastrophe that Priority Charter Schools is currently impacted by;
2. State the date the initial suspension period determined by the Board begins and the date that period ends;
3. If the Board has determined to extend the initial suspension period:
 - a. State that Priority Charter Schools continues to be impacted by the catastrophe; and
 - b. State the date the extension to the initial suspension period begins and the date the period ends; and
4. Provide any other information the Attorney General determines necessary.

d) *Informing the Public*

If the Board elects to suspend the TPIA, Priority Charter Schools must provide notice to the public of the suspension in a place readily accessible to the public and in each other location Priority Charter Schools is required to post a notice under the Open Meetings Act. Priority Charter Schools must maintain the notice of the suspension during the entire suspension time.

e) Requests Received During a Suspension Period

A request for public information received by Priority Charter Schools during a suspension period is considered to have been received by Priority Charter Schools on the first business day after the date the suspension period ends.

f) Pending Requests Tolled During a Suspension Period

A TPIA request received by Priority Charter Schools before the date an initial suspension period begins is tolled until the first business day after the date the suspension period ends.

Gov't Code § 552.233.

Sec. 11. PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION WHEN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES CLOSED.

If the Priority Charter Schools closes its physical offices but requires staff to work, including remotely, then the School shall make a good faith effort to continue responding to applications for public information, to the extent staff have access to responsive information. Failure to respond to an application for information may constitute a refusal to request an AG decision or a refusal to supply public information or information that the Attorney General has determined is public information.

Tex. Gov't Code §552.2211.

SEC 12. MISCELLANEOUS

a) Limit on Personnel Time for Large or Frequent Requests

After Priority Charter Schools personnel collectively have spent 36 hours of time producing public information for a requestor during the Priority Charter Schools fiscal year, Priority Charter Schools shall charge the requestor for any additional personnel time spent producing information for the requestor, in accordance with law.

i. Request by Minor

Any time spent complying with a request submitted in the name of a minor, as defined by Family Code 101.003(a), is to be included in the calculation of the cumulative amount of time spent complying with a request for public information by a parent, guardian, or other person who has control of the minor under a court order and with whom the minor resides, unless that parent, guardian, or other person establishes that another person submitted that request in the name of the minor.

ii. Exception

This section does not apply if the requestor is an individual who, for a substantial portion of the individual's livelihood or for substantial financial gain, gathers, compiles, prepares, collects, photographs, records, writes, edits, reports, investigates, processes, or publishes news or information for and is seeking the information for:

1. Dissemination by a news medium or communication service provider, including (a) an individual who supervises or assists in gathering, preparing, and disseminating the news or information; or (b) an individual who is or was a journalist, scholar, or researcher employed by an institution of higher education at the time the person made the request for information; or
2. Creation or maintenance of an abstract plant as described by Insurance Code § 2501.004.

“Communication service provider” has the meaning assigned by Civil Practice and Remedies Code § 22.021.

“News medium” means a newspaper, magazine or periodical, a book publisher, a news agency, a wire service, an FCC-licensed radio or television station or a network of such stations, a cable, satellite, or other transmission system or carrier or channel, or a channel or programming service for a station, network, system, or carrier, or an audio or audiovisual production company or Internet company or provider, or the parent, subsidiary, division, or affiliate of that entity, that disseminates news or information to the public by any means, including:

1. Print;
2. Electronic;
3. Mechanical;
4. Photographic;
5. Radio;
6. Television; and
7. Other means, known or unknown, that are accessible to the public.

This section also does not apply if the requestor is an elected official of the United States, the State of Texas, or a political subdivision of the State of Texas, or a representative of a publicly funded legal services organization that is a federal tax exempt entity under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

iii. Written Statement of Personnel Time

Each time Priority Charter Schools complies with a request for public information, Priority Charter Schools shall provide the requestor with a written statement of the amount of personnel time spent complying with that request and the cumulative amount of time spent complying with requests for

public information from that requestor during the applicable monthly or yearly period. The amount of time spent preparing the written statement may not be included in the amount of time in the statement.

iv. Written Estimate of Charges

If the cumulative amount of personnel time spent complying with requests for public information from the same requestor equals or exceeds the established time limit, Priority Charter Schools shall provide the requestor with a written estimate of the total cost, including materials, personnel time, and overhead expenses, necessary to comply with the request. Priority Charter Schools shall provide the written estimate on or before the 10th day after the date on which the request was made. The amount of this charge relating to the cost of locating, compiling, and producing the public information shall be established by rules prescribed by the Attorney General.

When a request is made by a requestor who has made a previous request to Priority Charter Schools that has not been withdrawn, for which Priority Charter Schools has located and compiled documents in response, and for which Priority Charter Schools has issued a written estimate of charges that remains unpaid on the date the requestor submits the new request, Priority Charter Schools is not required to locate, compile, produce, or provide copies of documents or prepare an estimate of charges in response to a new request until the date the requestor pays each unpaid statement issued in connection with a previous request or withdraws the previous request to which the statement applies.

v. Additional Time

If Priority Charter Schools provides the requestor with written notice that additional time is required to prepare the written estimate, Priority Charter Schools must provide the written estimate as soon as practicable, but on or before the 10th day after the date Priority Charter Schools provided the notice that additional time was required.

vi. Acceptance of Charges

If Priority Charter Schools provides a requestor with the estimate of charges and the time limits regarding the requestor have been exceeded, Priority Charter Schools is not required to produce public information for inspection or duplication or to provide copies of public information in response to the requestor's request unless on or before the 10th day after the date Priority Charter Schools provided the written estimate, the requestor submits payment of the amount stated in the written estimate. If the requestor fails or refuses to submit payment, the requestor is considered to have withdrawn the request.

vii. Waived or Reduced Charges

This section does not prohibit Priority Charter Schools from providing a copy of public information without charge or at a reduced rate, or from waiving a charge for providing a copy of public information, under Government Code 552.267.

Gov't Code § 552.275.

b) *Filing Suit to Withhold Information*

Priority Charter Schools may file suit seeking to withhold information if Priority Charter Schools receives a determination from the Attorney General that information must be disclosed to a requestor. The suit must be filed in Travis County district court against the Attorney General and must seek declaratory relief from compliance with the Attorney General's decision.

Priority Charter Schools must bring the suit not later than the 30th calendar day after Priority Charter Schools receives the Attorney General's decision. If Priority Charter Schools wishes to preserve an affirmative defense for its officer for public information, as provided by Government Code 552.353(b)(3), Priority Charter Schools must file suit not later than the 10th calendar day after receipt of the Attorney General's decision.

Gov't Code §§ 552.324, .353(b)(3).

c) *Parent's Request for Information*

Priority Charter Schools shall comply with a TPIA request upon receipt of a request from a parent for public information relating to the parent's child.

If Priority Charter Schools seeks to file suit to challenge a decision by the Attorney General in order to withhold information it must bring the suit not later than the 30th calendar day after the date Priority Charter Schools receives the decision of the Attorney General, unless an earlier deadline is established by the TPIA. Notwithstanding any other law, Priority Charter Schools may not appeal the decision of the court. This prohibition does not affect the right of a parent to appeal the decision. If Priority Charter Schools does not bring suit within the period established, Priority Charter Schools shall comply with the decision of the Attorney General.

Gov't Code § 26.0085.

PART I: BOARD MEETINGS IN GENERAL

Sec. 1. DEFINITIONS

a) *Deliberation*

“Deliberation” means a verbal or written exchange between a quorum of the Board, or between a quorum of the Board and another person, concerning an issue within the jurisdiction of the Board. *Gov’t Code 551.001(2)*.

b) *Meeting*

“Meeting” means a deliberation among a quorum of the Board, or between a quorum of the Board and another person, during which public business or public policy over which the Board has supervision or control is discussed or considered, or during which the Board takes formal action. “Meeting” also means a gathering:

1. That is conducted by the Board or for which the Board is responsible;
2. At which a quorum of members of the Board is present;
3. That has been called by the Board; and
4. At which Board members receive information from, give information to, ask questions of, or receive questions from any third person, including an employee of Priority Charter Schools, about the public business or public policy over which the Board has supervision or control.

Gov’t Code 551.001(4)

A communication or exchange of information between Board members about public business or public policy over which the Board has supervision or control does not constitute a meeting or deliberation for purposes of the Texas Open Meetings Act if the communication is posted to an online message board or similar Internet application in compliance with Government Code 551.006. *Gov’t Code 551.006*.

The term “meeting” does not include:

1. The gathering of a quorum of the Board at a social function unrelated to the public business that is conducted by the Board;
2. The attendance by a quorum of the Board at a regional, state, or national convention or workshop, ceremonial event, or press conference; or
3. The attendance by a quorum of the Board at a candidate forum, appearance, or debate to inform the electorate, if formal action is not taken and any discussion of public business is incidental to the social function, convention, workshop, ceremonial event, press conference, forum, appearance, or debate.

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Gov't Code 551.001(4).

The attendance by a quorum of the Board at a meeting of a committee or agency of the legislature is not considered to be a meeting if the deliberations at the meeting by the Board members consist only of publicly testifying, publicly commenting, and publicly responding to a question asked by a member of the legislative committee or agency. *Gov't Code 551.0035(b).*

c) *Recording*

“Recording” means a tangible medium on which audio or a combination of audio and video is recorded, including a disc, tape, wire, film, electronic storage drive, or other medium now existing or later developed. *Gov't Code 551.001(7).*

d) *Videoconference Call*

“Videoconference call” means a communication conducted between two or more persons in which one or more of the participants communicates with the other participants through duplex audio and video signals transmitted over a telephone network, a data network, or the Internet. *Gov't Code 551.001(8).*

Sec. 2. SUPERINTENDENT PARTICIPATION

The Board shall provide the Superintendent an opportunity to present at a meeting an oral or written recommendation to the Board on any item that is voted on by the Board at the meeting.

Sec. 3. MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Every Board meeting shall be open to the public. The Board may, however, exclude a witness from a hearing during the examination of another witness in a matter being investigated and may enter into a closed meeting, as provided by law. *Gov't Code 551.002, .084.*

Sec. 4. PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BOARD MEMBERS

A Board member commits an offense if the member:

1. Knowingly engages in at least one communication among a series of communications that each occur outside of a meeting authorized by the Open Meetings Act and that concern an issue within the jurisdiction of the Board in which the members engaging in the individual communications constitute fewer than a quorum of members, but the members engaging in the series of communications constitute a quorum of members; and
2. Knew at the time the member engaged in the communication that the series of communications:

- a. Involved or would involve a quorum; and
- b. Would constitute a deliberation once a quorum of members engaged in the series of communications.

Gov't Code 551.143.

Sec. 5. RECORDING OPEN MEETINGS

All or any part of an open meeting may be recorded by any person in attendance by means of a recorder, video camera, or other means of aural or visual reproduction. The Board may adopt reasonable rules to maintain order at a meeting, including rules relating to the location of recording equipment and the manner in which the recording is conducted. These rules may not prevent or unreasonably impair a person from exercising the right to record a meeting that is open to the public. *Gov't Code 551.023.*

Sec. 6. MEETING MINUTES

The Board shall keep minutes or make a recording of each open meeting. The minutes shall state the subject matter of each deliberation and indicate each vote, order, decision, or other action taken. *Gov't Code 551.021.*

The minutes and recording are public records and shall be available for public inspection and copying on request to the Superintendent or designee. *Gov't Code 551.022.*

Sec. 7. NOTICE REQUIRED

The Board shall give written notice of the date, hour, place, and subject(s) of each Board meeting. *Gov't Code 551.041.*

If the Board recesses an open meeting to the following regular business day, the Board is not required to post notice of the continued meeting if the action is taken in good faith and not to circumvent Government Code Chapter 551. If an open meeting is continued to the following regular business day and, on that following day, the Board continues the meeting to another day, the Board must give the required written notice of the meeting continued to that other day. *Gov't Code 551.0411(a).*

a) Questions from the Public During Meeting

If a member of the public or the Board inquires at a meeting about a subject for which notice has not been given, the notice provisions do not apply to a statement of specific factual information given in response to the inquiry or a recitation of existing policy in response to the inquiry. Any deliberation of or decision about the subject of the inquiry shall be limited to a proposal to place the subject on the agenda of a subsequent meeting. *Gov't Code 551.042.*

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b) *Time of Notice and Accessibility*

Notice of a Board meeting shall be posted on a bulletin board at a place convenient to the public in the Central Administration Office for at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting. That notice or a notice posted at another Board-designated place shall at all times be readily accessible to the public for at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting. *Gov't Code 551.043(a), .051.*

If Priority Charter Schools is required to post notice of a meeting on the Internet, Priority Charter Schools satisfies the requirement that the notice must be posted in a place readily accessible to the general public at all times by making a good-faith attempt to continuously post the notice on the Internet during the prescribed period.

Priority Charter Schools must still comply with the duty to physically post the notice in the Central Administration Office, and if Priority Charter Schools makes a good-faith attempt to continuously post the notice on the Internet during the prescribed period, the physically posted notice must be readily accessible to the general public during normal business hours. *Gov't Code 551.043(b).*

c) *Internet Posting of Agenda/Notice*

If Priority Charter Schools maintains an Internet website, in addition to the other place at which notice is required to be posted, the Board must also concurrently post notice of a meeting on the Internet website.

If Priority Charter Schools' geographic boundaries contain all or part of the area within the corporate boundaries of a municipality with a population of 48,000 or more, the Board must also, concurrently with the notice, post on the Priority Charter Schools Internet website the agenda for a Board meeting, if the agenda differs from the posted notice.

The validity of a posting by Priority Charter Schools in a good-faith attempt to comply with the Internet posting requirements is not affected by a failure to comply that is due to a technical problem beyond Priority Charter Schools' control. *Gov't Code 551.056.*

d) *Specificity of Agenda/Notice*

Agendas for all meetings shall be sufficiently specific to inform the public of the subjects to be deliberated at the meeting, setting out any special or unusual matters to be considered or any matter in which the public has a particular interest. Deliberations or actions pertaining to the Superintendent and principals are of particular public interest, and notice of those subjects must be worded with such clarity that the public will understand what the Board proposes to discuss or accomplish.

The terms “employee briefing” or “staff briefing” do not give adequate notice of the subject matter to be presented to the Board by employees or staff members.

The subject of a report or update by Priority Charter Schools staff or a Board member must be set out in the notice in a manner that informs a reader about the subjects to be addressed.

e) *Emergency Meeting or Emergency Agenda Additions*

In an emergency or when there is an urgent public necessity, the notice of a meeting to deliberate or take action on the emergency or urgent public necessity, or the supplemental notice to add the deliberation or taking action on the emergency or urgent public necessity as an item to the agenda for a meeting for which notice has been posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act is sufficient if the notice or supplemental notice is posted for at least one hour before the meeting is convened.

The Board may not deliberate or take action on a matter at a meeting for which notice or supplemental notice is posted other than:

1. A matter directly related to responding to the emergency or urgent public necessity identified in the notice or supplemental notice of the meeting; or
2. An agenda item listed on a notice of the meeting before the supplemental notice was posted.

An emergency or urgent public necessity exists only if immediate action is required because of:

1. An imminent threat to public health and safety, including a threat described in item 2 below, if imminent; or
2. A reasonably unforeseeable situation, including:
 - a. Fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or wind, rain, or snow storm;
 - b. Power failure, transportation failure, or interruption of communication facilities;
 - c. Epidemic; or
 - d. Riot, civil disturbance, enemy attack, or other actual or threatened act of lawlessness or violence.

The Board shall clearly identify the emergency or urgent public necessity in the notice of an emergency meeting or supplemental notice.

The sudden relocation of a large number of residents from the area of a declared disaster within Priority Charter Schools’ geographic boundaries is considered a reasonably unforeseeable situation for a reasonable period immediately following the relocation.

Gov’t Code 551.045.

f) *Catastrophe*

If the Board is prevented from convening an open meeting that was otherwise properly posted under Government Code Section 551.041 because of a catastrophe, the Board may convene the meeting in a convenient location within 72 hours pursuant to Government Code Section 551.045 if the action is taken in good faith and not to circumvent Government Code Chapter 551. If the Board is unable to convene the open meeting within those 72 hours, the Board may subsequently convene the meeting only if the board gives the required written notice of the meeting.

“Catastrophe” means a condition or occurrence that interferes physically with the ability of the Board to conduct a meeting, including:

1. Fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or wind, rain, or snow storm;
2. Power failure, transportation failure, or interruption of communication facilities;
3. Epidemic; or
4. Riot, civil disturbance, enemy attack, or other actual or threatened act of lawlessness or violence.

Gov’t Code 551.0411(b), (c).

g) *Notice to News Media*

Priority Charter Schools shall provide special notice of each meeting by telephone, facsimile transmission, or electronic mail to any news media that has requested special notice and agreed to reimburse Priority Charter Schools for the cost of providing the special notice. *Gov’t Code 551.052.*

The Board President or other Board member who calls an emergency meeting or adds an emergency item to the agenda of a Board meeting shall notify the news media of the emergency meeting or emergency item. The Board President or other Board member is required to notify only those members of the news media that have previously filed a request containing all pertinent information for the special notice and agreed to reimburse Priority Charter Schools for the cost of providing the special notice. The Board President or other Board member shall give the notice by telephone, fax transmission, or electronic mail at least one hour before the meeting is convened. *Gov’t Code 551.047.*

Sec. 8. QUORUM

A majority of the Board constitutes a quorum for meetings. *Gov’t Code 551.001(6).*

Sec. 9. SECRET BALLOT

No vote shall be taken by secret ballot.

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Sec. 10. MEETING BY TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL

The Board may hold a meeting by telephone conference call if an emergency or public necessity exists within the meaning of Government Code 551.045 and the convening at one location of a quorum of the Board is difficult or impossible, or if the meeting is held by an advisory board.

Each part of the telephone conference call meeting that is required to be open shall be audible to the public at the location specified in the notice of the meeting. The location designated in the notice as the location of the meeting shall provide two-way communication during the entire telephone conference call meeting and the identification of each party to the telephone conference shall be clearly stated prior to speaking.

a) *Notice*

The telephone conference call meeting is subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings. The notice must specify as the location of the meeting the location where Board meetings are usually held.

b) *Recording*

The conference call meeting shall be recorded and made available to the public.

Gov't Code 551.125.

Sec. 11. MEETING BY VIDEOCONFERENCE CALL

A Board member or Priority Charter Schools employee may participate remotely in a Board meeting by means of a videoconference call if the video and audio feed of the Board member's or employee's participation, as applicable, is broadcast live at the meeting and complies with the provisions below. A Board member who participates by videoconference call shall be counted as present at the meeting for all purposes. A Board member who participates in a meeting by videoconference call shall be considered absent from any portion of the meeting during which audio or video communication with the Board member is lost or disconnected. The Board may continue the meeting only if a quorum remains present at the meeting location or, if applicable, continues to participate in a meeting conducted as specified in **Multiple Counties**, below. *Gov't Code 551.001(8), .127(a-1)-(a-3).*

a) *Requirement for Quorum*

A Board meeting may be held by videoconference call only if a quorum of the board is physically present at one location of the meeting, except as provided at **Multiple Counties**, below.

b) *Multiple Counties*

If Priority Charter Schools extends into three or more counties, a Board meeting may be held by videoconference call only if the Board member presiding over the meeting is physically present at one location of the meeting that is open to the public during the open portions of the meeting.

c) *Notice of Videoconference Meeting*

A meeting held by videoconference call is subject to the notice requirements applicable to other meetings in addition to the notice requirements applicable to meetings by videoconference call.

The notice of a meeting to be held by videoconference call must specify as a location of the meeting the location where a quorum of the Board will be physically present and specify the intent to have a quorum present at that location; the notice of a meeting held by videoconference call described above at “Multiple Counties” must specify as a location of the meeting the location where the Board member presiding over the meeting will be physically present and specify the intent to have the presiding officer present at that location.

Gov’t Code 551.127(b)-(e).

d) *Quality of Audio and Video Signals During Videoconference Meetings*

Each portion of a meeting held by videoconference call that is required to be open to the public shall be visible and audible to the public at the location specified in the notice. If a problem occurs that causes a meeting to no longer be visible and audible to the public at that location, the meeting must be recessed until the problem is resolved. If the problem is not resolved in six hours or less, the meeting must be adjourned.

The location specified in the notice, and each remote location from which a member of the board participates, shall have two-way audio and video communication with each other location during the entire meeting. The face of each participant in the videoconference call, while that participant is speaking, shall be clearly visible, and the voice audible, to each other participant and, during the open portion of the meeting, to the members of the public in attendance at the physical location described by the notice and at any other location of the meeting that is open to the public.

The quality of the audio and video signals perceptible at each location of the meeting must meet or exceed standards specified by the Texas Department of Information Resources. The audio and video signals perceptible by members of the public at the location of the meeting described by the notice and each remote location from which a Board member participates must be of sufficient quality so that members of the public at each location can observe the demeanor and hear the voice of each participant in the open portion of the meeting.

Gov’t Code 551.127(f), (h)-(j).

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e) *Recording Meetings by Videoconference*

The Board shall make at least an audio recording of the meeting; the recording shall be made available to the public.

f) *Public Participation During Meetings by Videoconference*

The Board may allow a member of the public to testify at a meeting from a remote location by videoconference call even if a Board member is not participating in the meeting from a remote location.

Gov't Code 551.127(g), (k).

Sec. 12. VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDING OF MEETING

If Priority Charter Schools has a student enrollment of 10,000 or more, the Board shall make a video and audio recording of reasonable quality of each:

1. Regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting; and
2. Open meeting that is a work session or special called meeting at which the Board votes on any matter or allows public comment or testimony.

The Board shall make available an archived copy of the video and audio recording of each meeting on the Internet not later than seven days after the date the recording was made. The Board shall maintain the archived recording on the Internet for not less than two years after the date the recording was first made available. The Board is exempt from the requirements in this paragraph if the Board's failure to make the required recording of a meeting available is the result of a catastrophe, as defined by Government Code 551.0411 (see **Catastrophe**, Part 1, Section 7-f), or a technical breakdown. Following a catastrophe or breakdown, the Board must make all reasonable efforts to make the required recording available in a timely manner.

The Board may make the archived recording available on an existing Internet site, including a publicly accessible video-sharing or social networking site. The Board is not required to establish a separate Internet site and provide access to archived recordings of meetings from that site.

If Priority Charter Schools maintains an Internet site, Priority Charter Schools shall make available on that site, in a conspicuous manner, the archived recording of each meeting or an accessible link to the archived recording of each such meeting.

Gov't Code 551.128(b-1)–(b-6).

Sec. 13. INTERNET BROADCAST

If Priority Charter Schools and the Board are not subject to the provisions above at **Video and Audio Recording of Meeting** (Part I, Section 12), the Board may broadcast an open meeting over the Internet. If the Board broadcasts a meeting over the Internet, it shall establish an Internet site and provide access to the broadcast from that site. The Board shall provide on the Internet site the same notice of the meeting, within the time required for posting that notice, that the Board is required to post under the Open Meetings Act. *Gov't Code 551.128(b), (c)*.

Sec. 14. ATTORNEY CONSULTATION

The Board may use a telephone conference call, videoconference call, or communications over the Internet to conduct a public consultation with its attorney in an open meeting of the Board or a private consultation with its attorney in a closed meeting.

Each part of a public consultation by the Board with its attorney in an open meeting must be audible to the public at the location specified in the notice of the meeting as the location of the meeting.

This does not apply to a consultation with an attorney who is an employee of Priority Charter Schools. An attorney who receives compensation for legal services performed, from which employment taxes are deducted by Priority Charter Schools, is an employee of the Priority Charter Schools.

Gov't Code 551.129.

Sec. 15. HEARING-IMPAIRED PERSONS

In a proceeding before the Board in which the legal rights, duties, or privileges of a party are to be determined by the Board after an adjudicative hearing, the Board shall supply for a party who is deaf or hearing impaired an interpreter who has qualifications approved by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

For purposes of this requirement, “deaf or hearing impaired” means having a hearing impairment, regardless of the existence of a speech impairment, that inhibits comprehension of a proceeding or inhibits communication with others.

Gov't Code 558.001, .003.

PART II: CLOSED MEETINGS

Sec. 1. AUTHORIZATION TO CONVENE IN CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board may conduct a closed meeting for the purposes described in Subchapter D, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, including but not limited to:

1. Consultation with the Board's attorney in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.071;
2. Deliberations regarding the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.072;
3. Deliberations regarding a negotiated contract for a prospective gift or donation to Priority Charter Schools in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.073;
4. Deliberations regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a Priority Charter Schools officer or employee or to hear a complaint against a Priority Charter Schools officer or employee, in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.074;
5. Deliberations regarding the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel or devices or a security audit, in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.076;
6. Deliberations in matters involving certain information regarding insurance, health, or retirement plans, in accordance with Gov't Code 551.0785;
7. Deliberations in a case in which a complaint or charge is brought against a Priority Charter Schools employee by another Priority Charter Schools employee and the complaint or charge directly results in the need for a hearing in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.082;
8. Deliberations in a case involving discipline of a Priority Charter Schools student in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.082;
9. Deliberations in a matter regarding a student if personally identifiable information about the student will necessarily be revealed by the deliberation in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.0821;
10. Excluding a witness from a hearing during the examination of another witness in an investigation in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.084;
11. Deliberations to discuss or deliberate regarding economic development negotiations in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.087;
12. Deliberations regarding security assessments or deployment relating to information resources technology; network security information as described by Gov't Code 2059.055(b); or the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices, in accordance with Gov't Code § 551.089; and
13. Deliberations to discuss or adopt individual assessment instruments or assessment instrument items in accordance with Education Code 39.030(a).

Sec. 2. PROCEDURES FOR CLOSED MEETINGS

If a closed meeting is allowed, the Board shall not conduct the closed meeting unless a quorum of the Board first convenes in an open meeting for which proper notice has been given and the presiding officer has publicly announced that a closed meeting will be held and has identified the section or sections of the Open Meetings Act or other applicable law under which the closed meeting is held. *Gov't Code 551.101.*

Sec. 3. VOTE OR FINAL ACTION IN OPEN SESSION

A final action, decision, or vote on a matter deliberated in a closed meeting shall be made only in an open meeting for which proper notice has been given. *Gov't Code 551.102.*

Sec. 4. CERTIFIED AGENDA OR RECORDING

The Board shall either keep a certified agenda or make a recording of the proceedings of each closed meeting, except for private consultation with the Board and/or Priority Charter Schools' attorney. The certified agenda must include a statement of the subject matter of each deliberation, a record of any further action taken, and an announcement by the presiding officer at the beginning and end of the closed meeting indicating the date and time. A presiding officer shall certify that a certified agenda is a true and correct record of the proceedings. If a recording is made, it must include announcements by the presiding officer at the beginning and end of the meeting indicating the date and time. *Gov't Code 551.103.*

“Recording” means a tangible medium on which audio or a combination of audio and video is recorded, including a disc, tape, wire, film, electronic storage drive, or other medium now existing or later developed. *Gov't Code 551.001(7).*

Closed meetings may not be recorded by an individual Board member against the wishes of a majority of the Board.

a) *Preservation*

The Board shall preserve the certified agenda or recording of a closed meeting for at least two years after the date of the meeting. If a legal action involving the meeting is brought within that period, the Board shall preserve the certified agenda or recording while the action is pending. *Gov't Code 551.104(a).*

b) *Public Access*

A certified agenda or recording of a closed meeting is available for public inspection and copying only under a court order issued as a result of litigation involving an alleged violation of the Open Meetings Act. *Gov't Code 551.104(b), (c).*

Sec. 5. PROHIBITIONS

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No Board member shall participate in a closed meeting knowing that neither a certified agenda nor a recording of the closed meeting is being made. *Gov't Code 551.145.*

No individual, corporation, or partnership shall, without lawful authority, disclose to a member of the public the certified agenda or recording of a meeting that was lawfully closed to the public. *Gov't Code 551.146.*

No Board member shall knowingly call or aid in calling or organizing a closed meeting that is not permitted under the Open Meetings Act, close or aid in closing a regular meeting to the public except as permitted under the Open Meetings Act, or participate in a closed meeting that is not permitted under the Open Meetings Act. *Gov't Code 551.144(a).*

It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under Government Code 551.144(a) that a Board member acted in reasonable reliance on a court order or a written interpretation of the open meetings law contained in an opinion of a court of record, the attorney general, or the Board's attorney. *Gov't Code 551.144(c).*

PART III: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

Sec. 1. RIGHT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Priority Charter Schools shall take no action abridging the freedom of speech or the right of people to petition the Board for redress of grievances. *U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV.* Additionally, citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. *Tex. Const. Art. I, Sec. 27.*

The Board may confine its meetings to specified subject matter, and may hold non-public sessions to transact business. When the Board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech or the message it conveys. *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of Univ. of Virginia, 515 U.S. 819 (1995); City of Madison v. Wis. Emp. Rel. Comm'n, 429 U.S. 167 (1976); Pickering v. Bd. of Educ., 391 U.S. 563 (1968).*

The Board may create a limited public forum for the purpose of hearing comments from the public, so long as:

1. The Board does not discriminate against speech on the basis of viewpoint;
2. Any restrictions are reasonable in light of the purpose served by the forum; and
3. The Board provides alternative paths for expressing categories of protected speech that are excluded from the forum.

Fairchild v. Liberty Indep. Sch. Dist., 597 F.3d 747 (5th Cir. 2010).

Sec. 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board shall allow each member of the public who desires to address the Board regarding an item on an agenda for an open meeting of the Board to address the Board regarding the item at the meeting before or during the Board's consideration of the item. At all other times during a Board meeting, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless requested by the presiding officer.

a) *Time Limits*

The Board may adopt reasonable rules regarding the public's right to address the Board under this policy, including rules that limit the total amount of time that a member of the public may address the Board on a given item.

b) *Additional Time for Translation*

A member of the public who addresses the Board through a translator must be given at least twice the amount of time as a member of the public who does not require the assistance of a translator in order to ensure that non-English speakers receive the same opportunity to address the Board. This requirement applies only if the Board does not use simultaneous translation equipment in a manner that allows the Board to hear the translated public testimony simultaneously.

c) *Public Criticism*

The Board may not prohibit public criticism of the Board, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program, or service. This does not apply to public criticism that is otherwise prohibited by law.

Gov't Code § 551.007.

d) *Board's Response*

Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries during public comment, but the Board shall not deliberate or decide regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

Sec. 3. COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

The presiding officer or designee shall determine whether a person addressing the Board has attempted to solve a matter administratively through resolution channels established by policy. If not, the person shall be referred to the appropriate policy (see list below) to seek resolution:

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Employee complaints: Board Policy PG-1.10 (Employee Complaints and Grievances – General).

Student or parent complaint: Board Policy PG-1.10 (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances – General).

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation: Board Policy PG-1.10 (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation); Board Policy PG-1.10 (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation); Board Policy PG-1.10 (Sexual Harassment).

Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504: Board Policy PG-1.10 (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances), subject to the time limitations referenced in Board Policy PG-1.10 (Equal Educational Opportunity).

Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Board Policy PG-1.10 (Equal Educational Opportunity) and Board Policy PG-1.10 (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances).

Public complaints: Board Policy PG-1.10 (Public Complaints).

Sec. 4. DISRUPTION

The Board shall not tolerate disruption of the meeting by members of the audience. If, after at least one warning from the presiding officer, any person continues to disrupt the meeting by his or her words or actions, the presiding officer may request assistance from law enforcement officials to have the person removed from the meeting.

Sec. 1. PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS PROPERTY GENERALLY

The Board of Priority Charter Schools shall be the final authority for authorizing the use of Public Property. Priority Charter Schools shall not authorize use or application of public property inconsistent with this policy.

Sec. 2. PUBLIC PROPERTY DEFINED

An interest in real estate or personal property acquired, improved, or maintained using state funds that were received by Priority Charter Schools on or after September 1, 2001 is public property for all purposes under state law. The date on which the property was acquired, improved, or maintained is not determinative. An interest in real estate acquired, improved, or maintained using state funds that were received by the charter holder before September 1, 2001, is public property only to the extent specified by 19 TAC § 100.1065 (relating to Property Acquired with State Funds Received Before September 1, 2001–Special Rules). Where the property is acquired with federal funds, federal law may preempt this policy and state law in whole or part.

Sec. 3. FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Public property is held by Priority Charter Schools in trust for the benefit of Priority Charter Schools' students. With respect to the public property they manage, the Board and officers of Priority Charter Schools and Priority Charter Schools are trustees under Texas law and the students enrolled in Priority Charter Schools are beneficiaries of a trust. Each trustee shall be held to the standard of care and fiduciary duties that a trustee owes the beneficiary of a trust under Texas law.

Public property may be used only for a purpose for which a school district may use school district property, implementing a program described in Priority Charter Schools' open-enrollment charter and only to implement a program that is described in the open-enrollment charter and is consistent with law and Rule.

Notwithstanding the delegation of authority, the Board and officers of Priority Charter Schools and Priority Charter Schools shall remain fully responsible to authorize all uses and applications of public property and to enforce this policy.

Sec. 4. PERSONAL USE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY

In compliance with Commissioner of Education Rule, Priority Charter Schools employees shall use Priority Charter Schools public property only for purposes described in the Priority Charter Schools charter.

Priority Charter Schools employees may, however, use local telephone service, Priority Charter Schools-issued cellular phones, electronic mail, Internet connections, and similar property for incidental personal use, provided that such personal use does not, as determined by the Priority

Charter Schools administration, impede Priority Charter Schools functions or result in direct cost(s) paid with state funds. Should employee use result in direct cost paid with state funds, Priority Charter Schools shall require the employee incurring the cost(s) to reimburse Priority Charter Schools for such cost(s) within five business days of Priority Charter Schools' having incurred the cost(s).

In further compliance with Commissioner Rule, only incidental amounts of employee time, comparable to a five–seven minute coffee break during each day, may be used by employees for such personal matters.

This policy does not authorize incidental personal use of public property for private commercial purposes. Any such incidental use of public property is a privilege not a right, and the Priority Charter Schools administration may remove or rescind such privilege from time to time on a case-by-case basis for any employee, or all employees.

Sec. 5. USE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY REAL ESTATE FOR CHARTER AND NON-CHARTER ACTIVITIES

Joint use of Priority Charter Schools' public real property for charter and non-charter activities shall be approved by separate vote and recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Priority Charter Schools, setting forth the methodology to be used to allocate shared costs and the percentage allocation basis between charter and non-charter activities.

Sec. 6. CONTRACT FOR USE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY

Priority Charter Schools may contract for the use of its property for the purpose of providing goods or services under the contract, if such use is an express contract term, factored into the price of the contract, and the contract is one that is authorized by the Board.

Sec. 7. ACCOUNTING FOR PUBLIC PROPERTY

Priority Charter Schools' annual audit report shall separately disclose the cost basis and accumulated depreciation of public or privately held or owned property held, acquired, improved, or maintained by Priority Charter Schools' operating Board and charter holder, or provide with the annual audit report a statement that all property acquired, improved, or maintained during the term of Priority Charter Schools' charter, and all property presently held by the charter holder Board, is public property.

Sec. 8. RETURN OF PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS PROPERTY

Upon separation of employment with Priority Charter Schools or cessation of volunteer services, or upon the request of Priority Charter Schools, an individual will return to Priority Charter Schools all such materials, including copies thereof, in the individual's possession or under the

individual's control. Such materials will be returned within 24 hours of notice of separation or upon request of Priority Charter Schools, whichever comes first.

The cost of repairing or replacing any supplies, materials, or equipment belonging to Priority Charter Schools, or other property that is damaged (other than normal wear and tear), stolen, or lost by an employee or that is not returned to Priority Charter Schools upon separation of employment may be deducted from the employee's wages, so long as the deduction does not take the employee's pay below minimum wage or, if the employee is a salaried employee, reduce the salary below its predetermined amount and so long as the employee has signed an appropriate wage deduction authorization form.

Any materials created by staff members for use by Priority Charter Schools, or created on Priority Charter Schools' time, or produced using the staff or resources of Priority Charter Schools, are considered works-for-hire and all intellectual property rights are vested exclusively in Priority Charter Schools.

Sec. 1. COMPLAINTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There is no requirement that the Board negotiate or even respond to complaints. However, the Board must stop, look, and listen and must consider the petition, address, or remonstrance. *Prof'l Ass'n of Coll. Educators v. El Paso Cmty. Coll. Dist.*, 678 S.W.2d 94 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.)

The complaint process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

Sec. 2. GENERAL RULES FOR COMPLAINTS

In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning.

Complaints by members of the public must be filed under this policy, unless the terms of another policy apply. In such instance, Priority Charter Schools shall inform the complainant of the complaint policy that will be used in response to a grievance by a member of the public.

Priority Charter Schools encourages the public to discuss concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate administrator. Concerns should be raised as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal resolution is encouraged, but will not extend any deadlines in this policy except by written mutual consent.

The complaint process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary “mini-trial” at any level.

Sec. 3. FILING A COMPLAINT

a) General

Complaint forms and appeal notices must be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication (email or fax), or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings will be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designee no more than three days after the deadline.

b) *Conferences*

Priority Charter Schools shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually aggregable time. If the individual fails to appear at a scheduled conference, Priority Charter Schools may issue a decision in the individual's absence.

c) *Response*

At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the individual from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the individual's email address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the individual's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

If the administrator addressing the complaint determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the complainant in writing of the necessity to extend the response time and a specific date by which the response will be issued.

d) *Consolidating Complaints*

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Priority Charter Schools may consolidate separate or serial complaints that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

e) *Days*

The term "days" shall mean Priority Charter Schools business days. The day a document is filed is "day zero." The following school business day is considered "day one."

f) *Representative*

"Representative" means any person or organization that is designated by an individual to represent the individual in the complaint process.

An individual may designate a representative through written notice to Priority Charter Schools at any level of the process. If the individual designates a representative with fewer than three days' notice to Priority Charter Schools before a scheduled conference or hearing, Priority Charter Schools may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include Priority Charter Schools' counsel. Priority Charter Schools may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

g) *Untimely Filings*

If a written complaint or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the individual, at any point during the complaint process. The individual may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

h) *Costs Incurred*

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

i) *Grievance Forms*

Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be filed in writing on a form provided by Priority Charter Schools.

Copies of all documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the individual does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the individual unless the individual did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be refiled with all required information, if the refiling is within the designated time for filing.

Sec. 4. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

a) *Level One*

Complaints must be filed:

1. Within ten days of the date the individual first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the complaint is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the complainant within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The administrator shall provide the individual with a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

b) *Level Two*

If the individual did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, he or she may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed, in writing, within ten days of the date of the written Level One decision or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Priority Charter Schools or designee. This record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the individual at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Priority Charter Schools or designee shall hold a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the individual at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. The Priority Charter Schools or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Priority Charter Schools or designee shall provide the individual a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the Priority Charter Schools or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Priority Charter Schools or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

c) *Level Three*

If the individual did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, he or she may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed, in writing, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Priority Charter Schools or designee shall inform the individual of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for consideration by the Board.

The Priority Charter Schools or designee shall provide the Board with the record of the Level Two appeal, which shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at Level Three the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the individual notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the Board meeting.

Priority Charter Schools shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law.

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the individual and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels. The Board may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The Board is Priority Charter Schools' final authority to hear or decide citizen complaints. *19 Tex. Admin. Code § 100.1033(13)(C)(i)*. Failure of the Board to take action on the complaint or schedule a complaint offered at Public Comments on a future agenda indicates the Board's approval of the decision below.

Sec. 5. FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION

Neither the Board nor any Priority Charter Schools employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any individual for bringing a concern or complaint.

Sec. 1. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Custodian” means the appointed or designated Priority Charter Schools official who is in charge of an office that creates or receives local government records.
- B. “Essential record” means any Priority Charter Schools record necessary to the resumption or continuation of operations of Priority Charter Schools in an emergency or disaster, to the recreation of the legal and financial status of Priority Charter Schools, or to the protection and fulfillment of obligations to the people of the state.
- C. “Permanent record” or “record of permanent value” means any record for which the retention period on a records retention schedule issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission is given as permanent.
- D. “Records” means any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph, sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic media, or other information-recording media, regardless of physical form or characteristic, and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under the laws of Texas, created or received by Priority Charter Schools or any of its officers or employees, pursuant to law or in the transaction of public business. The term “records” does not include:
1. Extra identical copies of documents created only for convenience of reference or research by Priority Charter Schools officers or employees;
 2. Notes, journals, diaries, and similar documents created by Priority Charter Schools officers or employees for the officer’s or employee’s personal convenience;
 3. Blank forms, stocks of publications, and library and museum materials acquired solely for purposes of reference or display; or
 4. Copies of documents in any media furnished to members of the public to which they are entitled under the Texas Public Information Act or other state law.
- E. “Records control schedule” means a document prepared by or under the authority of a records management officer listing the records maintained by Priority Charter Schools, their retention periods, and other records disposition information that the Priority Charter Schools records management program may require.
- F. “Records management” means the application of management techniques to the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purposes of reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of record keeping. The term includes the development of records control schedules, the management of filing and information retrieval systems, the protection of essential and permanent records, the economical and space-effective storage of inactive records, control over the creation and distribution of forms, reports, and correspondence, and the management of micrographic and electronic and other records storage systems.

- G. “Records Liaison Officers” means the persons designated under Section 9 of this policy.
- H. “Records Management Committee” means the committee established under Section 5 of this policy.
- I. “Records Management Officer” means the person designated in Section 4 of this policy.
- J. “Records management plan” means the plan developed under Section 6 of this policy.
- K. “Records Retention Schedule” means a document issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission under authority of Subchapter J, Chapter 441, Government Code, establishing mandatory retention periods for local government records retained by Priority Charter Schools.
- L. “Retention period” means the minimum time that must pass after the creation, recording, or receipt of a record, or the fulfillment of certain actions associated with a record, before it is eligible for destruction.

Sec. 2. RECORDS DECLARED PUBLIC PROPERTY

All records as defined in Section 1-C of this policy are hereby declared to be the property of Priority Charter Schools. No Priority Charter Schools official or employee has, by virtue of his or her position, any personal or property right to such records, even though he or she may have developed or compiled them. The unauthorized destruction, removal from files, or use of such records is prohibited.

Sec. 3. POLICY

It is hereby declared to be the policy of Priority Charter Schools to provide for efficient, economical, and effective controls over the creation, distribution, organization, maintenance, use, and disposition of all records of this office through a comprehensive system of integrated procedures for the management of records from their creation to their ultimate disposition, consistent with the requirements of the Local Government Records Act and accepted records management practice.

Sec. 4. RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICER

The Executive Director of Finance will serve as Records Management Officer for Priority Charter Schools as provided by law, and will ensure that the maintenance, destruction, electronic storage, or other disposition of the records of this office are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Records Act.

Sec. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE; DUTIES

The Records Management Officer, in consultation with the Director of Communications and Superintendent, shall appoint a Records Management Committee consisting of:

- A financial officer for Priority Charter Schools; and
- An executive or administrative officer for Priority Charter Schools

The committee shall:

- a. Assist the Records Management Officer in the development of policies and procedures governing the records management program;
- b. Review the performance of the program on a regular basis and propose changes and improvements if needed;
- c. Review and approve records control schedules submitted by the Records Management Officer;
- d. Give final approval to the destruction of records in accordance with approved records control schedules; and
- e. Actively support and promote the records management program throughout Priority Charter Schools.

Sec. 6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PLAN TO BE DEVELOPED; APPROVAL OF PLAN; AUTHORITY OF PLAN

The Records Management Officer and the Records Management Committee shall develop a records management plan for Priority Charter Schools to be submitted to the Board. The plan must contain policies and procedures designed to reduce the costs and improve the efficiency of record keeping, to adequately protect the essential records of Priority Charter Schools, and to properly preserve those records of Priority Charter Schools that are of historical value. The plan must be designed to enable the Records Management Officer to carry out his or her duties prescribed by state law and this policy effectively.

Once approved by the Board, the records management plan shall be binding on all offices, departments, divisions, programs, commissions, bureaus, boards, committees, or similar entities of Priority Charter Schools, and records shall be created, maintained, stored, microfilmed, or disposed of in accordance with the plan.

Sec. 7. DUTIES OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICER

In addition to other duties assigned in this policy, the Records Management Officer shall:

- a. Administer the records management program and provide assistance to department heads in its implementation;
- b. Plan, formulate, and prescribe records disposition policies, systems, standards, and procedures;
- c. In cooperation with principals and department heads, identify essential records and establish a disaster plan for each Priority Charter Schools campus and department to ensure maximum availability of the records in order to re-establish operations quickly and with minimum disruption and expense;
- d. Develop procedures to ensure the permanent preservation of the historically valuable records of Priority Charter Schools;
- e. Establish standards for filing and storage equipment and for record keeping supplies;
- f. Study the feasibility of and, if appropriate, establish a uniform filing system and a forms design and control system for Priority Charter Schools;
- g. Provide records management advice and assistance to all Priority Charter Schools departments by preparing a manual or manuals of procedure and policy and by on-site consultation;
- h. Monitor records retention schedules and administrative rules issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to determine if the records management program and Priority Charter Schools' records control schedules are in compliance with state regulations;
- i. Disseminate to the Board, department heads, and principals information concerning state laws and administrative rules relating to local government records;
- j. Instruct Records Liaison Officers and other personnel in policies and procedures of the records management plan and their duties in the records management program;
- k. Direct Records Liaison Officers or other personnel in the conduct of records inventories in preparation for the development of records control schedules as required by state law and this policy;

- l. Ensure that the maintenance, preservation, microfilming, destruction, or other disposition of Priority Charter Schools records is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures of the records management program and the requirements of state law;
- m. Maintain records on the volume of records destroyed under approved records -- control schedules, the volume of records microfilmed or stored electronically, and the estimated cost and space savings as the result of such disposal or disposition;
- n. Report annually to the Superintendent on the implementation of the records management plan in each department of Priority Charter Schools; and
- o. Bring to the attention of the Superintendent non-compliance by department heads, principals, or other Priority Charter Schools personnel with the policies and procedures of the records management program or the Local Government Records Act.

Sec. 8. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT HEADS AND PRINCIPALS

In addition to other duties assigned in this policy, department heads and principals shall:

- a. Cooperate with the Records Management Officer in carrying out the policies and procedures established by Priority Charter Schools for the efficient and economical management of records and in carrying out the requirements of this policy;
- b. Adequately document the transaction of government business and the services, programs, and duties for which the department head, principal, and his or her staff are responsible; and
- c. Maintain the records in his or her care and carry out their preservation, microfilming, destruction, or other disposition only in accordance with the policies and procedures of the records management program of Priority Charter Schools and the requirements of this policy.

Sec. 9. DESIGNATION OF RECORDS LIAISON OFFICERS

Each department head and principal shall designate a member of his or her staff to serve as a Records Liaison Officer for the implementation of the records management program in the department and/or campus.

If the Records Management Officer determines that in the best interests of the records management program more than one Records Liaison Officer should be designated for a department or campus, the department head or principal shall designate the number of Records Liaison Officers specified by the Records Management Officer.

Persons designated as Records Liaison Officers shall be thoroughly familiar with all records created and maintained by the department.

In the event of the resignation, retirement, dismissal, or removal by action of the department head or principal of a person designated as a Records Liaison Officer, the department head or principal shall promptly designate another person to fill the vacancy.

A department head or principal may serve as Records Liaison Officer for his or her department or campus.

Sec. 10. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RECORDS LIAISON OFFICERS

In addition to other duties assigned in this policy, Records Liaison Officers shall:

- a. Conduct or supervise the conduct of inventories of the records of the department in preparation for the development of records control schedules;
- b. In cooperation with the Records Management Officer, coordinate and implement the policies and procedures of the records management program in their department; and
- c. Disseminate information to department staff concerning the records management program.

Sec. 11. RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES TO BE DEVELOPED; APPROVAL; FILING WITH STATE

- a. The Records Management Officer, in cooperation with department heads, principals, and Records Liaison Officers, shall prepare records control schedules on a department by department basis, listing all records created or received by the department and the retention period for each record. Records control schedules shall also contain such other information regarding the disposition of Priority Charter Schools records as the records management plan may require.
- b. Each records control schedule shall be monitored and amended as needed by the Records Management Officer on a regular basis to ensure that it is in compliance with records retention schedules issued by the state, and that it continues to reflect the record keeping procedures and needs of the department and the records management program of Priority Charter Schools.
- c. Before its adoption, a records control schedule or amended schedule for a department must be approved by the department head or principal and the members of the Records Management Committee.
- d. Before its adoption, a records control schedule must be submitted to and accepted for filing by the director and librarian as provided by state law. If a schedule is not accepted for

filing, the schedule shall be amended to make it acceptable for filing. The Records Management Officer shall submit the records control schedules to the director and librarian.

Sec. 12. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES; DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS UNDER SCHEDULE

- a. A records control schedule for a department that has been approved and adopted under Section 11 shall be implemented by department heads, principals and Records Liaison Officers according to the policies and procedures of the records management plan.
- b. A record whose retention period has expired on a record control schedule shall be destroyed unless an open records request is pending on the record, the subject matter of the records is pertinent to a pending lawsuit, or the department head or principal requests in writing to the Records Management Committee that the record be retained for an additional period.
- c. Prior to the destruction of a record under an approved records control schedule, authorization for the destruction must be obtained by the Records Management Officer from the Records Management Committee.

Sec. 13. DESTRUCTION OF UNSCHEDULED RECORDS

A record that has not yet been listed on an approved records control schedule may be destroyed if its destruction has been approved in the same manner as a record destroyed under an approved schedule and the Records Management Officer has submitted to and received back from the director and librarian an approved destruction authorization request.

Sec. 14. CONTRACT SERVICES

With approval of the Board, the Records Management Officer and Committee may assign and delegate duties under this Policy to contracted services. The engagement of contract services will not relieve persons assigned and responsible under this policy from such assignment and responsibilities.

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

Local Schedule SD applies to charter schools and Local Schedule GR applies to all local governments. The schedules are available from the Texas state Library and Archives Commission website at <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/recordspubs/localretention.html>. The following from Schedule GR apply specifically to charter schools and school districts:

GR 1000-01 Agendas

Open meetings.

- 1) If the minutes describe each matter considered by the governing body and reference to an agenda is not required.
- 2) If the minutes do not describe each matter considered by the governing body and reference to an agenda is required.

GR 1000-25 Contracts, Leases, and Agreements

(a) Open meetings

- 1) If the minutes describe each matter considered by the governing body and reference to an agenda is not required.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

- 2) If the minutes do not describe each matter considered by the governing body and reference to an agenda is required.

RETENTION: Permanent.

(b) Certified agendas of closed meetings.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

GR 1000-03 Minutes

(a) Written minutes.

RETENTION: Permanent.

(b) Notes taken during meetings from which written minutes are prepared.

RETENTION: 90 days after approval of minutes by the governing body.

(c) Audiotapes of open meetings, except as described in (d), for which written minutes are not prepared.

RETENTION: Permanent.

- (d) Audiotapes of workshop sessions of governing bodies in which votes are not made and written minutes are not required by law to be taken.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

- (e) Audiotapes of open meetings for which written minutes are prepared.

RETENTION: 90 days after approval of minutes by the governing body.

- (f) Certified audiotapes of closed meetings.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

- (g) Supporting documentation – One copy of each document of any type submitted to a meeting of a governing body for consideration, approval, or other action, if such action is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

GR 1000-26 Correspondence, Internal Memoranda, and Subject Files

Retention Note: The minimum retention period for correspondence or internal memoranda in categories (a) and (b) directly linked to another record series or group listed in this or other commission schedules is that assigned to the other group or series. The retention periods that follow are for correspondence and internal memoranda that do not readily fall within other record groups.

- (a) Administrative – Incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence pertaining to the formulation, planning, implementation, modification, or redefinition of the programs, services, or projects of a local government and the administrative regulations, policies, and procedures that govern them. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics.

RETENTION: Four (4) years.

- (b) General – Incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence pertaining to the regular operation of the policies, programs, services, or projects of a local government. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics.

RETENTION: Two (2) years.

- (c) Routine - Correspondence and internal memoranda such as letters of transmittal, requests for publications, internal meeting notices, and similar routine matters. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics.

RETENTION: AV (as long as administratively valuable)

GR 1075-01 Bids and Bid Documentation

- (a) Successful bids and requests for proposals, including invitations to bid, bid bonds and affidavits, bid sheets, and similar supporting documentation.

RETENTION: Fiscal year end + **five (5) years**.

Retention Note: If a formal written contract is the result of a successful bid or request for proposal, the successful bid or request for proposal and its supporting documentation must be retained for the same period as the contract. See item number GR1000-25.

- (b) Unsuccessful bids.

RETENTION: **Two (2) years**.

- (c) Requests for informal bid estimates, quotes, or responses from providers for the procurement of goods or services for which state law or local policy does not require the formal letting of bids.

RETENTION: **One (1) year**.

- (d) Requests for information (RFI) preliminary to the procurement of goods or services by direct purchase or bid.

RETENTION: **AV**

GR 1075-03 Purchase Order and Receipt Records

- (a) Purchase orders, requisitions, and receiving reports.

RETENTION: Fiscal year end + **five (5) years**

- (b) Purchasing log, register, or similar record providing a chronological record of purchase orders issued, orders received, and similar data on procurement status.

RETENTION: Fiscal year end + **three (3) years**

- (c) Packing slips and order acknowledgments.

RETENTION: **AV**

- (d) Vendor and commodity lists.

RETENTION: **Until superseded**

GR 1075-16 Construction Project Records

- (a) Records concerning the planning, design, construction, conversion, or modernization of local government-owned facilities, structures, and systems, including feasibility, screening, and implementation studies; topographical and soil surveys and reports; architectural and engineering drawings, elevations, profiles, blueprints, and as-builts; inspection and investigative reports; laboratory test reports; environmental impact

statements; construction contracts and bonds; correspondence; and similar documentation except as described in (b), (c) or (d).

RETENTION: Permanent.

Retention Note: If a structure, facility, or system is sold or transferred to another person or entity, the local government must retain the original records relating to its construction. Copies of the records may be given to the person or entity to which the structure, facility, or system is sold or transferred.

- (b) Records of the types described in GR1075-16a relating to the construction of prefabricated storage sheds, bus shelters, parking lot kiosks, non-structural recreational facilities such as baseball diamonds and tennis courts, and similar structures and facilities.

RETENTION: Completion of the project + **ten (10) years.**

- (c) Records relating to construction projects described in GR1075-16a and GR1075-16b, that are transitory or of ephemeral relevance, and are not required for maintaining, modifying, and repurposing the building or structure. Records may include, but are not limited to, rejected design plans, delivery tickets for expendable products, daily work reports, etc.

RETENTION: Five (5) years.

- (d) Line Locate Requests, Call Before You Dig records, or other similar records documenting requests for information regarding locations of the underground cable or utility lines.

RETENTION: Completion of project requiring the locate request + **two (2) years.**

Sec. 1. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL VISITORS

Notices shall be posted at each Priority Charter Schools campus requiring all visitors to first report to the campus administrative office. This policy shall apply to parents, board members, volunteers, social service workers, invited speakers, maintenance and repair persons not employed by Priority Charter Schools, vendors, representatives of the news media, former students, and any other campus visitors.

A visit by visitors to individual classrooms during instructional time requires prior approval of both the campus Principal and teacher whose class is to be visited. Such visits may not be approved or may be terminated where their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or in any other way disrupts the educational environment.

Priority Charter Schools or the Principal may:

1. Require a visitor requesting entry onto a campus to show a driver's license or other form of identification issued by a governmental entity displaying the visitor's photograph.
2. Establish an electronic or paper database for storing campus visitor information. Information stored in the campus databases may be used only for purposes of Priority Charter Schools security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to third parties.
3. Verify whether the visitor is a registered sex offender as identified in the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety, or in any other database accessible by Priority Charter Schools.

The Superintendent or designee, in conjunction with campus administrators, shall develop and implement procedures addressing campus visitors identified as registered sex offenders. These procedures shall include but are not limited to provisions dealing with:

1. Parental rights to visit;
2. Escorts by Priority Charter Schools personnel;
3. Access to common areas of the campus;
4. Access to classrooms;
5. Drop off and release of students; and
6. Eligibility to serve as volunteers.

Sec. 2. NOTICE OF ENTRY BY REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS

A registered sex offender who enters Priority Charter Schools premises (meaning a building or portion of a building and the grounds on which the building is located, including any public or private driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, or parking garage on the grounds) during standard operating hours of the school shall immediately notify the administrative office of the school of the person's presence on the premises of the school and the person's registration

status. The office may provide a chaperone to accompany the person while the person is on the premises of the school.

These requirements do not apply to:

1. A student enrolled in Priority Charter Schools;
2. A student from another school participating in an event at Priority Charter Schools; or
3. A person who has entered into a written agreement with Priority Charter Schools that exempts the person from these requirements.

Sec. 3. VISITOR CONDUCT

Priority Charter Schools invites and welcomes parents and other members of the public to its schools. Priority Charter Schools is committed to treating parents and other community members with respect and expects the same in return. To that end, Priority Charter Schools must keep schools and administrative offices free from disruptions and prevent unauthorized persons from entering the schools and school grounds.

Accordingly, this policy promotes mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among Priority Charter Schools employees, parents, students, volunteers and the public. Priority Charter Schools seeks to maintain to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students and staff. In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, Priority Charter Schools encourages positive communication and discourages volatile, hostile, or aggressive actions. Priority Charter Schools seeks and encourages patrons to cooperate with this endeavor.

Priority Charter Schools recognizes the importance of employees, students, and parents engaging, collaborating, and sharing in digital environments. Accordingly, the use of technology on Priority Charter Schools property and at school-sponsored events shall be appropriate, not disruptive to the educational environment, and not detrimental to the safety of employees and students. It must also be in compliance with other applicable Priority Charter Schools policies.

An individual engaging in disruptive behavior shall be required to leave Priority Charter Schools property. Any individual who disrupts or threatens to disrupt school or office operations, threatens the health and safety of students or staff, willfully causes property damage, uses loud and/or offensive language that could provoke a violent reaction, or who has otherwise established a pattern of unauthorized entry on Priority Charter Schools property shall be directed to leave Priority Charter Schools property by the Principal or other administrator. In certain circumstances, a criminal trespass warning may also be issued or law enforcement contacted.

Sec. 4. ACCESS TO STUDENTS BY MILITARY RECRUITERS

To the extent Priority Charter Schools receives assistance under the ESEA, Priority Charter Schools shall provide military recruiters the same access to secondary students as is generally provided to institutions of higher education or to prospective employers of those students. *20 U.S.C. § 7908(a)(3)*.

Except as allowed under Education Code § 29.9015(d) or (e), Priority Charter Schools shall each year provide students in grades 10 through 12 an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Batter test and consult with a military recruiter. *Education Code § 29.9015(a)*.

Sec. 1. INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of Priority Charter Schools to:

- (a) Prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- (b) Prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity;
- (c) Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and
- (d) Comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA”), the Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act (“NCIPA”), and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, to the extent such laws are applicable to Priority Charter Schools.

It is the goal of this policy not only to prevent and protect, but also to educate employees, students, parents and the Priority Charter Schools community in Internet safety. The CIPA guidelines for an Internet Safety Policy have also been incorporated by Priority Charter Schools into its Acceptable Use Policy and/or Acceptable Use Agreement(s). All limitations and penalties set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy and/or Acceptable Use Agreement(s) are deemed to be incorporated into this policy. Terms used in this policy and that also appear in CIPA have the meanings defined in CIPA.

Sec. 2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF CIPA

a) *Technology Protection Measures*

A Technology Protection Measure is a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access.¹ It must protect against access by adults and minors to visual depictions that are obscene, involve

¹ As defined by CIPA, the term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

- 1. Obscene, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
- 2. Child Pornography, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United States Code; or
- 3. Harmful to minors.

The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

- 1. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- 2. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- 3. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

The terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meanings given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

child pornography, or are harmful to minors. Priority Charter Schools utilizes a sophisticated content filtering system that is compliant with CIPA and NCIPA on all computers that access the Internet.

b) *Access to Inappropriate Material*

To the extent practical, Technology Protection Measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communication, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by CIPA, blocking shall be applied to visual and textual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to administrative approval, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Any attempt to bypass, defeat, or circumvent the Technology Prevention Measures is punishable as a violating of this policy and of the Acceptable Use Policies.

c) *Inappropriate Network Usage*

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of Priority Charter Schools’ online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, blogging, instant messaging, online discussions and other forms of direct electronic communications. Without limiting the foregoing, access to such means of communication is strictly limited by the Acceptable Use Policies.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes:

1. Unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking” and other unlawful activities; and
2. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

d) *Supervision and Monitoring*

It shall be the responsibility of all professional employees (pedagogical and administrative staff) to supervise and monitor usage of Priority Charter Schools’ computers, computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Acceptable Use Policies, and CIPA. Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of each Principal or designee.

e) *Education*

Priority Charter Schools will advocate and educate employees, students, parents and Priority Charter Schools community on Internet safety and “cyber-bullying.” Education will be provided

through such means as professional development training and materials to employees, PTO/PTA presentations, and the Priority Charter Schools website.

Additionally, the Principal or designee will provide age-appropriate training for students who use Priority Charter Schools' Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Priority Charter Schools commitment to:

1. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Acceptable Use Policies.
2. Student safety with regard to:
 - a. safety on the Internet;
 - b. appropriate behavior while online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms; and
 - c. cyberbullying awareness and response.
3. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of CIPA.

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she has received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the Acceptable Use Policy and/or Acceptable Use Agreement(s).

f) *Cyberbullying*

The Acceptable Use Policies include provisions intended to prohibit and establish penalties for inappropriate and oppressive conduct, including cyber-bullying.

Priority Charter Schools is a place of tolerance and good manners. Students may not use the network or any Priority Charter Schools computer facilities for hate mail, defamatory statements, statements intended to injure or humiliate others by disclosure of personal information (whether true or false), personal attacks on others, and statements expressing animus towards any person or group by reason of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Network users may not use vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language. Network users also may not post inappropriate anonymous messages or forge e-mail or other messages.

Furthermore, Priority Charter Schools computers and network facilities may not be used for any activity, or to transmit any material, that violates United States, State of Texas, or local laws. This includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act of intimidation or harassment against another person.

Sec. 1. SCHOOL WEBSITE

Priority Charter Schools will maintain a website for informing employees, students, parents, and members of the community of school programs, policies, and practices. Requests for publication of information on the Priority Charter Schools website must be directed to the Communications Director or designee. The Communications Director or designee will establish guidelines for the development and format of web pages controlled by Priority Charter Schools. These guidelines shall incorporate the benchmarks for measuring website accessibility identified in Section 2 and Section 3 of this policy.

Sec. 2. WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

Priority Charter Schools is committed to compliance with the provisions of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 so that students, parents, and members of the public with disabilities able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits and services within the same timeframe as those without disabilities, and not be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination through any of Priority Charter Schools' web content.

Sec. 3. PLAN FOR ONLINE CONTENT

All Priority Charter Schools staff granted permission to post online content to the Priority Charter Schools website must ensure that all new, newly added, or modified online content and functionality meets the following benchmarks for measuring accessibility:

1. the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA; and
2. the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 for web content.

When adding new content to a page, or editing existing content, the content owner/editor may contact the Communications Department or designee to discuss accessibility resources and/or support for accessibility testing. The Communications Department or designee will also provide content owners/editors instruction regarding accessibility standards and testing necessary before adding third-party content to their pages.

If information cannot be made accessible without an undue burden or fundamentally altering the nature of a Priority Charter Schools program, benefit, or service, the information will be made available in an alternate format, to the maximum extent possible.

Sec. 4. MONITORING

The Communications Department or designee will perform an accessibility audit at least once per year. All web pages housed and distributed through the Priority Charter Schools website will be measured against the W3C's WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. The content owner/editor will have the option to either fix the issue within 30 days or remove the page or element that does not meet the applicable accessibility standard.

Priority Charter Schools may also engage an outside auditor to conduct the annual accessibility audit.

Sec. 5. TRAINING

Annual training on website accessibility will be provided to web content owners/editors who are responsible for creating and/or distributing information through the Priority Charter Schools website. The training will include information regarding the roles and responsibilities of staff to ensure that web design, documents, and multimedia content are accessible.

Sec. 6. WEBSITE ASSISTANCE

An individual having difficulty accessing information on the Priority Charter Schools website may contact the Communications Director or designee to report accessibility issues. The individual should provide the following information to Priority Charter Schools:

- A description of the accessibility concern.
- The format in which the person prefers to receive the materials.
- The web page address of the requested material(s).
- The best way to contact the person (email address or phone number, or both).

Additionally, any individual may submit a written complaint or grievance related to the accessibility of the Priority Charter Schools website through the process outlined in Board Policy PG-1.10 (Public Complaints). A complaint should be filed within the timeframe referenced in Board Policy PG-1.10 (Public Complaints).

If content is not readily available in an accessible format, Priority Charter Schools will have the option to either fix the issue within a reasonable time period or remove the page or element that does not meet the applicable accessibility standard. Priority Charter Schools may also make the information available in an alternate format, to the maximum extent possible.

Sec. 1. MULTIHAZARD EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

a) *General Plan Requirements*

Priority Charter Schools shall adopt and implement a multihazard emergency operations plan (MEOP) for use in Priority Charter Schools' facilities. The MEOP must address prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as defined by the Texas School Safety Center (TSSC) in conjunction with the governor's office of homeland security and the Commissioner of Education. The MEOP must provide for:

1. Training in responding to an emergency for Priority Charter Schools employees, including substitute teachers;
2. Measures to ensure Priority Charter Schools employees, including substitute teachers, have classroom access to a telephone, including a cellular telephone, or another electronic communication device allowing for immediate contact with emergency services or emergency services agencies, law enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire departments;
3. Measure to ensure Priority Charter Schools' communications technology and infrastructure are adequate to allow for communication during an emergency;
4. Mandatory or required drills and exercises, including those required under Education Code 37.114, to prepare staff and students for responding to an emergency;
5. Measures to ensure coordination with the Department of State Health Services (DSSH) and local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, health departments, and fire department in the event of an emergency; and
6. The implementation of a safety and security audit as required by Education Code 37.108(b).

Education Code 37.108(a).

The MEOP shall also include:

1. A chain of command that designates the individual responsible for making final decisions during a disaster or emergency situation and identifies other individuals responsible for making those decisions if the designated person is unavailable;
2. Provisions that address physical and psychological safety for responding to a natural disaster, active shooter, and any other dangerous scenario identified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or TSSC;
3. Provisions for ensuring the safety of students in portable buildings;
4. Provisions for ensuring that students and Priority Charter Schools personnel with disabilities are provided equal access to safety during a disaster or emergency situation;
5. Provisions for providing immediate notification to parents, guardians, and other persons standing in parental relation in circumstances involving a significant threat to the health or

- safety of students, including identification of the individual with responsibility for overseeing the notification;
6. Provisions for supporting the psychological safety of students, Priority Charter Schools personnel, and the community during the response and recovery phase following a disaster or emergency situation that:
 - a. Are aligned with best practice-based programs and research-based practices recommended under Health & Safety Code 161.325;
 - b. Include strategies for ensuring any required professional development training for suicide prevention and grief-informed and trauma-informed care is provided to appropriate school personnel;
 - c. Include training on integrating psychological safety and suicide prevention strategies into the emergency operations plan, such as psychological first aid for schools training, from an approved list of recommended training established by the Commissioner and TSSC for (i) members of Priority Charter Schools' school safety and security committee under Education Code 37.109; (ii) Priority Charter Schools counselors and mental health professionals; and (iii) educators and other personnel as determined by Priority Charter Schools;
 - d. Include strategies and procedures for integrating and supporting physical and psychological safety that align with the provisions described by in item (2) above; and
 - e. Implement trauma-informed policies;
 7. A policy for providing a substitute teacher access to school campus buildings and materials necessary for the substitute teacher to carry out the duties of a Priority Charter Schools employee during an emergency or a mandatory emergency drill;
 8. The name of each individual on the school safety and security committee established under Education Code 37.109 and the date of each committee meeting during the preceding year;
 9. Provisions for responding to a train derailment, but only if a school is located within 1,000 yards of a railroad track as measured from any point on Priority Charter Schools' real property boundary line; and
 10. Provisions for responding to an active shooter emergency.

Priority Charter Schools may use any available community resources in developing the MEOP.

Education Code 37.108(d), (f)-(g).

b) *MEOP Review*

Priority Charter Schools shall submit its MEOP to the TSSC upon request and as required with the TSSC review cycle developed under Education 37.2071(a).

i. Noncompliance Notification

The TSSC shall review the Priority Charter Schools MEOP and verify that the plan meets the requirements of Education Code 37.108 or provide Priority Charter Schools with written notice

describing the plan’s deficiencies and stating that the deficiencies must be corrected and that Priority Charter Schools must resubmit the revised plan to the TSSC.

If Priority Charter Schools fails to submit its MEOP to the TSSC, the TSSC shall provide Priority Charter Schools with written notice stating that Priority Charter Schools has failed to submit a plan and must submit a plan for review and verification.

ii. *Failure to Comply after Notice*

If Priority Charter Schools has not corrected plan deficiencies or has failed to submit a plan three months after the date of initial notification from the TSSC, the TSSC shall provide written notice to Priority Charter Schools and the TEA that Priority Charter Schools has not complied with the requirements and must comply immediately.

If Priority Charter Schools has not corrected plan deficiencies or has failed to submit a plan six months after the date of initial notification, the TSSC shall provide written notice to Priority Charter Schools stating that Priority Charter Schools must hold a public hearing as outlined in Sec. 1-c below (Public Hearing due to Noncompliance), below.

c) ***Public Hearing due to Noncompliance***

If Priority Charter Schools receives notice of noncompliance for reasons identified under Education Code 37.207(e) or 37.2071(g), the Board shall hold a public hearing to notify the public of:

1. Priority Charter Schools’ failure to submit or correct deficiencies in a MEOP or report the results of a safety and security audit to the TSSC as required by law;
2. The dates during which Priority Charter Schools has not been in compliance; and
3. The names of each Board member and the Superintendent serving in that capacity during the dates Priority Charter Schools was not in compliance. Priority Charter Schools shall provide this information in writing to each person at the hearing.

The Board shall give members of the public a reasonable opportunity to appear before the Board and to speak on the issue of Priority Charter Schools’ failure to submit or correct deficiencies in a MEOP. Priority Charter Schools shall submit written confirmation to the TSSC that the public hearing was held.

Education Code 37.2071.

d) ***Disclosure of MEOP Documents***

A document relating to the Priority Charter Schools MEOP is subject to disclosure if the disclosure allows a person to:

1. Verify that Priority Charter Schools has established a MEOP and determine the agencies involved in the development of the plan and the agencies coordinating with Priority Charter Schools to respond to an emergency, including the DSHS, local emergency services agencies, law enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire departments;
2. Verify that the MEOP was reviewed within the last 12 months and determine the specific review dates;
3. Verify that the MEOP addresses the phases of emergency management plans under Education Code 37.108(a);
4. Verify that Priority Charter Schools employees have been trained to respond to an emergency and determine the types of training, the number of employees trained, and the person conducting the training;
5. Verify that each campus has conducted mandatory emergency drills and exercises in accordance with the plan and determine the frequency of the drills;
6. To the extent required by law, verify that the MEOP has established a plan for responding to a train derailment;
7. Verify that Priority Charter Schools has completed a safety and security audit and determine the date the audit was conducted, the person conducting the audit, and the date the audit results were presented to the Board;
8. Verify that Priority Charter Schools has addressed any recommendations by the Board for improvement of the MEOP and determine Priority Charter Schools' progress within the last 12 months; and
9. To the extent required by law, verify that Priority Charter Schools has established a visitor policy and identify the provisions governing access to a school building or other school property.

Education Code 37.108(c-2).

e) *Superintendent Duties*

The Superintendent shall ensure updating of the MEOP and ongoing staff training.

Sec. 2. SAFETY AND SECURITY AUDIT

a) *Audit Requirements*

At least once every three years, Priority Charter Schools shall conduct a safety and security audit of Priority Charter Schools facilities. To the extent possible, Priority Charter Schools shall follow safety audit and security audit procedures developed by the TSSC or a person included in the TSSC's registry of persons providing school safety or security consulting services.

The safety and security audit must certify that Priority Charter Schools used funds provided through the school safety allotment only for purposes provided by Education Code 42.168.

The results of the safety and security audit shall be reported to the Board and, in the manner required by the TSSC, to the TSSC. The report provided to the TSSC must be signed by the Board and Superintendent.

Education Code 37.108(b), (b-1), (c).

b) *Disclosure and Confidentiality*

Except as provide under Education Code 37.108(c-2), any document or information collected, developed, or produced during a safety and security audit is not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act. *Education Code 37.108(c-1).*

Sec. 3. SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Priority Charter Schools shall establish a school safety and security committee in accordance with guidelines established by the TSSC.

a) *Committee Membership*

The school safety and security committee, to the greatest extent practicable, must include:

1. One or more representatives of an office of emergency management of a county or city in which Priority Charter Schools is located;
2. One or more representatives of the local police department or sheriff's office;
3. One or more representatives of Priority Charter Schools' police department, if applicable;
4. The Board president;
5. A member of the Board other than the Board president;
6. The Superintendent;
7. One or more designees of the Superintendent, one of whom must be a Priority Charter Schools classroom teacher; and
8. Two parents or guardians of students enrolled in Priority Charter Schools.

Education Code 37.109(a-1).

b) *Committee Responsibilities*

The school safety and security committee shall:

1. Participate on behalf of Priority Charter Schools in developing and implementing emergency plans consistent with the MEOP to ensure that the plans reflect specific campus, facility, or support services needs;

2. Periodically provide recommendations to the Board and school administrators regarding updating the MEOP in accordance with best practices identified by TEA, the TSSC, or a person included in the registry of persons established by the TSSC as providing school safety or security consulting services;
3. Provide Priority Charter Schools with any campus, facility, or support services information required in connection with a safety and security audit or other report required to be submitted to the TSSC;
4. Review each report required to be submitted by Priority Charter Schools to the TSSC to ensure that the report contains accurate and complete information regarding each campus, facility, or support service in accordance with criteria established by the TSSC; and
5. Consult with local law enforcement agencies on methods to increase law enforcement presence near school campuses.

Education Code 37.109(b).

c) *Committee Meetings*

The school safety and security committee shall meet at least once during each academic semester and at least once during the summer. The committee is subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act and may meet in executive session as provided by Chapter 551, Government Code. Notice of a committee meeting must be posted in the same manner as notice of a Board meeting. *Education Code 37.109(c)-(d).*

Sec. 4. NOTICE OF ACTIVE THREAT EXERCISE

Before Priority Charter Schools conducts an active threat exercise, including an active shooter simulation, Priority Charter Schools shall ensure that adequate notice of the exercise is provided to students expected to participate in the exercise, the parents of those students, and staff likely to be part of the exercise, including information regarding:

1. The date on which the exercise will occur;
2. The content, form, and tone of the exercise; and
3. Whether the exercise will include a live simulation that mimics or appears to be an actual shooting incident.

Education Code 37.1141(a)(1). Priority Charter Schools shall also ensure that:

1. The exercise is announced to students and faculty before the start of the exercise, including, if applicable, an announcement that the exercise will include a live simulation that mimics or appears to be an actual threat, such as a shooting incident.
2. First responder organizations that would likely respond in the event of a false report or alarm are notified regarding the exercise; and

3. A safe zone is created around the area in which the exercise will be conducted to keep out actual firearms, ammunition, and other weapons, other than firearms, ammunition, or other weapons carried by a peace officer, school resource officer, or school marshal or any other person authorized by the district to carry those items on school grounds.

Education Code 37.1141(a)(2)-(4). Priority Charter Schools shall ensure that the content of any active threat exercise:

4. Is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate;
5. Has been developed by a team of school administrators, teachers, school-based mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers, with input from parents and students; and
6. Is designed to support the well-being of students who participate in the exercise before, during, and after the exercise is conducted.

Education Code 37.1141(a)(5). Priority Charter Schools shall track data regarding the efficacy and impact of the exercise, including any feedback regarding the exercise from students, staff, or family members of students or staff and submit such data to the Texas School Safety Center.
Education Code 37.1141(a)(6), (c).

Sec. 5. NOTIFICATION REGARDING BOMB THREAT OR TERRORISTIC THREAT

Upon receiving a bomb threat or terroristic threat relating to a campus or other Priority Charter Schools facility at which students are present, Priority Charter Schools shall provide notification of the threat as soon as possible to the parent or guardian of or other person standing in parental relation to each student who is assigned to the campus or who regularly uses the facility, as applicable. *Education Code 37.113.*

Sec. 6. TRAUMATIC INJURY RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Priority Charter Schools shall develop and annually make available a protocol for employees and volunteers to follow in the event of a traumatic injuries.

a) Protocol Requirements

The protocol must:

1. Provide for Priority Charter Schools to maintain and make available to school employees and volunteers bleeding control stations for use in the event of a traumatic injury involving blood loss;
2. Ensure that bleeding control stations are stored in easily accessible areas of the campus that are selected by the school safety and security committee or the Board;

3. Require that a TEA-approved training on the use of a bleeding control station in the event of an injury to another person be provided to:
 - a. To the extent applicable, each Priority Charter Schools peace officer commissioned or school security personnel employed under Education Code 37.081 who provides security services at the campus;
 - b. Each school resource officer who provides law enforcement at the campus; and
 - c. All other Priority Charter Schools personnel who may be reasonably expected to use a bleeding control station; and
4. Require Priority Charter Schools to annually offer instruction on the use of a bleeding control station from a school resource officer or other appropriate school personnel who has received appropriate training to students enrolled in grade seven or higher.

b) *Bleeding Control Stations*

The school safety and security committee or the Board may select, as easily accessible areas of the campus at which bleeding control stations may be stored, areas of the campus where automated external defibrillators are stored.

A bleeding control station contain all of the following required supplies in quantities determined appropriate by the Superintendent:

1. Tourniquets approved for use in battlefield trauma care by the armed forces of the United States;
2. Chest seals;
3. Compression bandages;
4. Bleeding control bandages;
5. Space emergency blankets;
6. Latex-free gloves;
7. Markers;
8. Scissors; and
9. Instructional documents developed by the American College of Surgeons or the United States Department of Homeland Security detailing methods to prevent blood loss following a traumatic event.

Bleeding control stations may also include medical material or equipment that:

1. May be readily stored in a bleeding control station;
2. May be used to adequately treat an injury involving traumatic blood loss; and
3. Is approved by local law enforcement or emergency medical services personnel.

Education Code 38.027.

Sec. 7. AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

a) *Campus Availability*

Priority Charter Schools shall make available at each campus at least one automated external defibrillator (AED). A campus defibrillator must be readily available during any Universal Interscholastic League (UIL) athletic competition held on the campus. In determining the location at which to store a campus defibrillator, the Principal shall consider the primary location on campus where students engage in athletic activities.

b) *Athletic Practices*

To the extent practicable, Priority Charter Schools, in cooperation with the UIL, shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that an AED is available at each UIL athletic practice held at a Priority Charter Schools campus. If Priority Charter Schools is not able to make an AED available in such manner, Priority Charter Schools shall determine the extent to which an AED must be available at each UIL athletic practice held at a campus; the determination must be based, in appropriate to any other appropriate considerations, on relevant medical information.

c) *Athletic Competitions*

Priority Charter Schools, in cooperation with the UIL, shall determine the extent to which an AED must be available at each UIL athletic competition held at a location other than a Priority Charter Schools campus. The determination must be based, in addition to any other appropriate considerations, on relevant medical information and whether emergency services personnel are present at the athletic competition under a contract with Priority Charter Schools.

d) *Trained Staff*

Priority Charter Schools shall ensure the presence at each location at which an AED is required at least one school employee trained in the proper use of the defibrillator at any time a substantial number of Priority Charter Schools students are present at the location.

e) *AED Maintenance*

Priority Charter Schools shall ensure that AEDs are used and maintained in accordance with standards established under Chapter 779, Health & Safety Code.

Education Code 38.017.

Sec. 8. RESPONSE TO CARDIAC ARREST

The Superintendent or designee shall develop safety procedures for school employees or students to follow in responding to a medical emergency involving cardiac arrest, including the appropriate response time in administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation, using an AED, or calling a local emergency medical services provider. *Education Code 38.018.*

Sec. 1. THREAT ASSESSMENTS

a) *Definitions*

“Harmful, threatening, or violent behavior” includes behaviors, such as verbal threats, threats of self-harm, bullying, cyberbullying, fighting, the use or possession of a weapon, sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, stalking, or assault, by a student that could result in:

1. Specific interventions, including mental health or behavioral supports;
2. In-school suspension;
3. Out-of-school suspension; or
4. The student’s expulsion.

“Team” means a threat assessment and safe and supportive school team established by the Board.

b) *Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team*

The Board shall establish a threat assessment and safe and supportive school team at each campus, and shall adopt policies and procedures for the teams. The team is responsible for developing and implementing the safe and supportive school program under Education Code 37.115(b). Policies and procedures concerning the team must:

1. Be consistent with the model policies and procedures developed by the Texas School Safety Center;
2. Require each team to complete training provided by the Texas School Safety Center or a regional education service center regarding evidence-based threat assessment programs; and
3. Require each team established under this section to report the information required under Education Code 37.115(k) regarding the team’s activities to the TEA.

c) *Team Membership*

The Superintendent shall ensure that the members appointed to each team have expertise in counseling, behavior management, mental health and substance use, classroom instruction, special education, school administration, school safety and security, emergency management, and law enforcement. A team may serve more than one campus, provided that each Priority Charter Schools campus is assigned a team.

d) *Team Responsibilities*

Each team shall:

1. Conduct a threat assessment that includes:

- a. Assessing and reporting individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted under this policy; and
- b. Gathering and analyzing data to determine the level of risk and appropriate intervention, including:
 - i. Referring a student for mental health assessment; and
 - ii. Implementing an escalation procedure, if appropriate based on the team's assessment, in accordance with Priority Charter Schools policy;
2. Provide guidance to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, school, or individual; and
3. Support Priority Charter Schools in implementing its multihazard emergency operations plan.

e) *Providing Mental Health Care Services*

A team may not a mental health care service to a student who is under 18 years of age unless the team obtains written consent from the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student before providing the mental health care service. The consent must be submitted on a form developed by Priority Charter Schools that complies with all applicable state and federal law. The student's parent or person standing in parental relation to the student may give consent for a student to receive ongoing services or may limit consent to one or more services provided on a single occasion.

f) *Determination of Risk*

i. Risk of Violence to Self or Others

On determination that a student or other individual poses a serious risk of violence to self or others, a team shall immediately report the determination to the Superintendent. If the individual is a student, the Superintendent shall immediately attempt to inform the parent or person standing in parental relation to the student. This notice requirement does not prevent an employee from acting immediately to prevent an imminent threat or respond to an emergency.

ii. Risk of Suicide

A team identifying a student at risk of suicide shall act in accordance with Priority Charter Schools' suicide prevention program. If the student at risk of suicide also makes a threat of violence to others, the team shall conduct a threat assessment in addition to actions taken in accordance with Priority Charter Schools's suicide prevention program.

iii. *Risk of Possessing Tobacco, Drugs or Alcohol*

A team identifying a student using or possessing tobacco, drugs, or alcohol shall act in accordance with Priority Charter Schools' policies and procedures related to substance use prevention and intervention.

g) *Oversight Responsibility*

The Superintendent may establish a committee, or assign to an existing committee, the duty to oversee the operations of teams established for Priority Charter Schools. A committee with oversight responsibility must include members with expertise in human resources, education, special education, counseling, behavior management, school administration, mental health and substance abuse, school safety and security, emergency management, and law enforcement.

h) *Reports to TEA*

A team must report to TEA the following information regarding the team's activities and other information for each campus the team serves:

1. The occupation of each person appointed to the team;
2. The number of threats and a description of the type of the threats reported to the team;
3. The outcome of each assessment made by the team, including:
 - a. Any disciplinary action taken, including a change in school placement;
 - b. Any action taken by law enforcement; or
 - c. A referral to or change in counseling, mental health, special education, or other services;
4. The total number, disaggregated by student gender, race, and status as receiving special education services, being at risk of dropping out of school, being in foster care, experiencing homelessness, being a dependent of military personnel, being pregnant or a parent, having limited English proficiency, or being a migratory child, of, in connection with an assessment or reported threat by the team:
 - a. Citations issued for Class C misdemeanor offenses;
 - b. Arrests;
 - c. Incidents of uses of restraint;
 - d. Changes in school placement, including placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program or disciplinary alternative education program, if applicable;
 - e. Referrals to or changes in counseling, mental health, special education, or other services;
 - f. Placements in in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension and incidents of expulsion;
 - g. Unexcused absences of 15 or more days during the school year; and
 - h. Referrals to juvenile court for truancy; and
5. The number and percentage of school personnel trained in:

- a. A best-practices program or research-based practice under Section 161.325, Health and Safety Code, including the number and percentage of school personnel trained in:
 - i. Suicide prevention; or
 - ii. Grief and trauma-informed practices;
- b. Mental health or psychological first aid for schools;
- c. Training relating to the safe and supportive school program established under Education Code 37.115(b); or
- d. Any other program relating to safety identified by the Commissioner.

Education Code 37.115.

Sec. 2. TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PLAN

a) *Plan Requirements*

Priority Charter Schools shall adopt and implement a plan requiring the integration of trauma-informed practices in each school environment. The plan must address:

1. Using resources developed by TEA, methods for:
 - a. Increasing staff and parent awareness of trauma-informed care; and
 - b. Implementation of trauma-informed care practices and care by school staff; and
2. Available counseling options for students affected by trauma or grief.

b) *Training Requirements*

Methods for increasing awareness and implementation of trauma-informed care must be discussed in training provided:

1. Through a program selected from the list of recommended best practice-based programs and research-based practices established under Health & Safety Code 161.325;
2. As part of any new employee orientation for all new educators; and
3. To existing educators on a schedule adopted by the TEA at intervals necessary to keep educators informed of developments in the field.

Priority Charter Schools shall keep records of each training conducted, to include the name of each staff member who participated in the training.

c) *Reports to TEA*

Priority Charter Schools shall report annually to TEA the following information for the school as a whole and for each school campus:

1. The number of teachers, principals, and counselors employed by Priority Charter Schools who have completed the required training; and
2. The total number of teachers, principals, and counselors employed by Priority Charter Schools.

Education Code 38.036.

Sec. 1. SCOPE OF POLICY

The requirements in this policy shall apply to:

- a. The members of the governing body of Priority Charter Schools;
- b. The employees and agents of Priority Charter Schools; and
- c. Any management company under contract with Priority Charter Schools.

19 TAC § 100.1049(a).

Sec. 2. DEFINITIONS

a) *“Person, corporation, or other legal entity”*

This term includes:

- a. Any individual who would have a substantial interest in the person, corporation, or other legal entity as that term is defined in Texas Government Code § 572.005(1)-(6);
- b. An attorney, representative, registered lobbyist, employee, or other agent who receives payment for representing the interests of the person, firm, or corporation before the school board or its members, or whose duties are directly related to the contract, grant, or charter; or
- c. An individual related within the first degree by affinity or consanguinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to the person covered by item 2(a) above.

b) *“Contract, grant, or charter”*

This term means any application to enter into a contractual relationship with or otherwise receive funding from the State Board of Education, including without limitation contracts for investment advisors, consultants, or investment managers for the Permanent School Fund and applicants for charters to operate open-enrollment charter schools.

c) *“Campaign contribution”*

This term means a contribution to a candidate or political committee that is offered or given with the intent that it be used in connection with a campaign for elective office or on a measure. Whether a contribution is made before, during, or after an election does not affect its status as a campaign contribution.

d) “Benefit”

This term means anything reasonably regarded as pecuniary gain or pecuniary advantage, including benefit to any other person in whose welfare the beneficiary has a direct and substantial interest.

e) “Candidate for or a member of the State Board of Education”

This term includes a person related within the first degree of affinity or consanguinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to a candidate for or a member of the State Board of Education.

f) “Political advertising”

This term means a communication supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party, a political party, a public officer, or a measure that:

1. In return for consideration, is published in a newspaper, magazine, or other periodical or is broadcast by radio or television; or
2. Appears (i) in a pamphlet, circular, flier, billboard or other sign, bumper sticker, or similar form of written communication, or (ii) on an Internet website.

State Board of Education Operating Rule § 4.3.

Sec. 3. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

a) *Disclosing Campaign Contributions*

Any person, corporation, or other legal entity associated with Priority Charter Schools which proposes to enter into a contract with or applies for a grant, contract, or charter which may be granted by the State Board of Education shall disclose whether, at any time in the preceding four years, the person, corporation, or other legal entity has made a campaign contribution to a candidate for or member of the State Board of Education. This disclosure shall be made in writing to the Commissioner of Education at least 14 days prior to consideration by the applicable board or committee of a contract, grant, or charter.

b) *Disclosing Gifts*

A person, corporation, or other legal entity associated with Priority Charter Schools which proposes to enter into a contract with or applies for a grant, contract, or charter which may be granted by the State Board of Education shall disclose in the same manner any benefit conferred on a candidate for or member of the State Board of Education during the preceding four years. A benefit need not be disclosed if the aggregate value of benefits conferred on a candidate for or a

member of the State Board of Education during the preceding four years does not exceed \$250, or a different limit set by Texas Government Code § 572.023(b)(7). This requirement applies whether or not the person, corporation, or other legal entity is required to report the expenditure to the Texas Ethics Commission.

For purposes of this section, a benefit is not conferred if the candidate for or a member of the State Board of Education has paid for the member's own participation, as well as any participation by other persons for the direct benefit of any business in which the member has a substantial interest as defined under Texas Government Code § 572.005 (1) - (7).

c) *Continued Duty of Reporting*

A person, corporation, or other legal entity has a continuing duty to report contributions or expenditures made through the term of a contract, grant, or charter and shall, within 21 calendar days, notify the Commissioner of Education and Priority Charter Schools board chair upon making a contribution or expenditure covered by this policy.

State Board of Education Operating Rule § 4.3.

Sec. 4. PROHIBITION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Priority Charter Schools prohibits the expenditure by the charter holder, charter school, or its management company (if any) for any political advertising as defined above, and as interpreted by the advisory opinions of the Texas Ethics Commission. *19 TAC § 100.1049(c)*.

Sec. 1. SCOPE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to state the circumstances under which a firearm or weapon may be possessed or used on the premises of Priority Charter Schools.

Sec. 2. DEFINITIONS

1. Firearm. "Firearm" means any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use. Firearm does not include a firearm that may have, as an integral part, a folding knife blade or other characteristics of weapons made illegal by this chapter and that is: (A) an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899; or (B) a replica of an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899, but only if the replica does not use rim fire or center fire ammunition. *Penal Code § 46.01(3)(A)-(B)*
2. Handgun. "Handgun" means any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand. *Penal Code § 46.01(5)*
3. Location-restricted knife. "Location-restricted knife" means a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches. *Penal Code § 46.01(6)*
4. Club. "Club" means an instrument that is specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, and includes but is not limited to the following:
 - (A) blackjack;
 - (B) nightstick;
 - (C) mace;
 - (D) tomahawk.*Penal Code § 46.01(1)(A)-(D)*
5. Prohibited Weapon. A "prohibited weapon" shall include
 - (1) any of the following items, unless the item is registered in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record maintained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the United States Department of Justice:
 - (A) an explosive weapon;
 - (B) a machine gun; or
 - (C) a short-barrel firearm;
 - (2) armor-piercing ammunition;
 - (3) a chemical dispensing device;

- (4) a zip gun;
- (5) a tire deflation device; or
- (6) an improvised explosive device.

Penal Code § 46.05(a)(1)-(4)

- 6. School Premises. "Premises" means a building or a portion of a building owned or leased by the School. The term does not include any public or private driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area. *See, Penal Code § 46.03(c)(4).*

Sec. 3. Prohibition of Firearms and Weapons Per School Policy

- A. On School Premises. Priority Charter Schools prohibits the use, display or possession of firearms, handguns, location-restricted knives, clubs, and prohibited weapons on School Premises unless explicitly permitted in this policy or unless otherwise permitted by applicable federal or state law. This prohibition and related exceptions apply to all individuals on School Premises including but not limited to charter holder board members, charter school board members, employees, students, parents, vendors, contractors, and visitors.
- B. At School Board Meetings. Firearms are prohibited in the room or rooms where a public meeting of the governing body of the Priority Systems, Inc. is being held pursuant to a properly noticed meeting under the open meetings law. *Penal Code § 46.03 (a)(14).*

Sec. 4. Prohibition of Firearms in a School Zone Under Federal Law and Exceptions

- A. Prohibition of Firearms under Federal Law. Per the federal Gun Free School Zones Act, Priority Charter Systems prohibits the possession of firearms on or near school property. Thus, an individual may not knowingly possess a firearm in a school zone. For purposes of this federal law, the term "school zone" means property in, or on the grounds of, or within 1,000 feet from the grounds of a public, parochial, or private school.
- B. Exception to the Federal Prohibition: The federal prohibition does not apply to the possession of a firearm:
 - a. When the carrier is licensed to carry under state law;
 - b. When the firearm is unloaded and stored in a locked container or a locked firearms rack that is in a vehicle;
 - c. If the firearm is carried for use in a program approved by the school;
 - d. If the firearm is carried as allowed by a written contract between the school and the licensed individual; or
 - e. If the firearm is carried by a law enforcement officer acting in his or her official capacity.

Sec 5. Prohibition of Firearms and Weapons Under State Law

- A. It is a criminal offense for an individual to exhibit or threaten to use a firearm on school property or in a school vehicle in a manner intended to cause alarm or personal injury to another person or to damage school property. *Education Code § 37.125(a)*.
- B. It is a criminal offense for an individual to intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly possesses or go with a firearm, location-restricted knife, club, or prohibited weapon on the physical premises of the school, on any grounds or building on which an activity sponsored by the school is being conducted, on a passenger transportation vehicle of the school, or on the premises where a high school or interscholastic event is taking place, unless the person is a participant in the event and a firearm, location-restricted knife, club, or prohibited weapon is used in the event. *Penal Code § 46.03*.

Sec 6. Exceptions to Prohibition of Firearms and Weapons Under State Law

- A. Federal and State Officials Permitted Firearms Under State Law. Per state law, it is not a violation of this policy or state law for the following individuals to carry a firearm on the premises of Priority Charter Schools.
 - a. A member of the armed forces or national guard, a guard employed by a penal institution, or an officer of the court, while in the conduct of official duties;
 - b. On or off duty peace officers or special criminal investigators;
 - c. Authorized and on-duty parole officers;
 - d. Authorized and on-duty community supervision and corrections department officers;
 - e. Active judicial officers licensed to carry handguns;
 - f. Honorably retired peace officers, qualified retired law enforcement officers, federal criminal investigators, or former reserve law enforcement officers, with proper identification;
 - g. U.S. attorneys and assistant U.S. attorneys, district attorneys and assistant district attorneys, criminal district attorneys, county attorneys, the attorney general and assistant attorneys general, or municipal attorneys licensed to carry handguns;
 - h. Bailiffs designated to escort active judicial officers and licensed to carry handguns;
 - i. Juvenile probation officers authorized to carry firearms; and

- j. Volunteer emergency services personnel if the person is carrying a handgun under the authority of his or her license and is engaged in providing emergency services. *Penal Code § 46.15(a).*
- B. Individuals Permitted to Carry Firearms Per State Law. No violation of this policy or state law occurs when:
 - a. a Texas handgun license holder stores a handgun or other firearm in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area on School Premises if the handgun or other firearm is not in plain sight. *Education Code § 37.0815*;
 - b. the use, possession, or display of an otherwise prohibited weapon takes place as part of a school-approved activity or sports competition supervised by proper authorities; or
 - c. a firearm is possessed by a licensed campus school marshal who is appointed by the governing body of the charter school and approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, provided that the campus school marshal's possession and use of the firearm is in accordance with written board regulations *Education Code §§ 37.0811; 37 TAC 227.1 – 227.9.*
- C. Conduct by Persons Permitted to Carry Firearms. Any individual permitted to carry a firearm on school premises under this policy or state law must not possess, transport, or store a handgun, a firearm, or ammunition in violation of Section [37.125](#), Texas Education Code (i.e., to exhibit or threaten to use a firearm on school property or in a school vehicle in a manner intended to cause alarm or personal injury to another person or to damage school property) or otherwise in violation of Section [46.03, Texas](#) Penal Code, or other law. *Education Code § 37.081.*

Sec. 8. Signs Providing Notice of Prohibited Firearms

The Superintendent must provide notice that firearms are prohibited on school premises by posting a sign at each entrance to the premises as indicated below. The Superintendent may also produce a card or other document to disseminate the requirements of this policy as indicated below:

| <i>Prohibiting Concealed Carry¹</i> | <i>Prohibiting Open Carry²</i> |
|--|---|
| <p>Card or other document that includes the following language:</p> <p>“Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.”</p> <p>This notice may be given orally or in writing.</p> | <p>Card or other document that includes the following language:</p> <p>“Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.”</p> <p>This notice may be given orally or in writing.</p> |
| <p>Sign posted on school premises that includes the following language:</p> <p>“Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.”</p> <p>The sign must include the quoted language in English and Spanish, appear in contrasting colors with block letters at least one inch in height, and be displayed in a conspicuous manner clearly visible to the public.</p> | <p>Sign posted on premises that includes the following language:</p> <p>“Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.”</p> <p>The sign must include the quoted language in English and Spanish, appear in contrasting colors with block letters at least one inch in height, and be displayed in a conspicuous manner clearly visible to the public at each entrance to the property.</p> |

¹ Penal Code § 30.06

² Penal Code § 30.07

Sec. 1. SCOPE OF POLICY

The scope of this policy is to state the circumstances under which a firearm may be possessed and used by Designated School Guardians on the premises of any open-enrollment charter school campus operated by Priority Charter Schools.

Sec. 2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- Whereas the highest aim of the Priority Charter Schools Board of Directors (“Board of Directors”) is to ensure the physical safety of students enrolled in and staff employed by Priority Charter Schools; and
- Whereas the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Superintendent and the organization’s legal counsel, has considered options under federal and state law for the placement of competent and qualified armed security personnel at each campus within the charter holder network; and
- Whereas the Board of Directors endeavors to prevent any physical injury or loss of life resulting from an active shooter incident or similar tragedy such as recently experienced in public schools, hospitals, and churches within the State of Texas and beyond; and
- Whereas the Board of Directors has determined that the expense for armed security guards is necessary in the conduct of the public schools for the hardening of the public schools within its jurisdiction for the protection of human life;

The purpose of this policy is to authorize Designated School Guardians to possess and use firearms on the premises of school property as set forth below and as permitted by state law in Texas Penal Code § 46.03 (a)(1) and by federal law in 18 U.S.C. § 922 (q)(2)(B)(v).

Sec. 3. DEFINITIONS

1. Firearm. “Firearm” means any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use. Firearm does not include a firearm that may have, as an integral part, a folding knife blade or other characteristics of weapons made illegal by this chapter and that is: (A) an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899; or (B) a replica of an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899, but only if the replica does not use rim fire or center fire ammunition. *Penal Code § 46.01(3)(A)-(B)*
2. Handgun. “Handgun” means any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand. *Penal Code § 46.01(5)*

3. School Premises. “School Premises” means a building or a portion of a building owned or leased by the School. The term does not include any public or private driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area. *See Penal Code § 46.03(c)(4).*
4. School Property. “School Property” means any personal property on School Premises including, but not limited to, a motor vehicle, construction equipment, HVAC equipment, signage, furniture, computers, cell phones, smart boards, and tablets.
5. Designated School Guardians. “Designated School Guardians” means those qualified individuals who are employed by Priority Charter Schools as regular employees or pursuant to an agreement for security services with a provider of private security services.
6. Qualified Individual. “Qualified Individual” means an individual who, at minimum, (1) possesses a current and valid handgun license issued in accordance with applicable Texas laws and regulations; (2) has completed school safety training provided by a qualified handgun instructor certified in school safety under Section 411.1901, Government Code; and (3) meets any other qualifications required by law or administrative rule. The Board may establish additional qualifications for a Qualified Individual required by the Board for eligibility to serve as a Designated School Guardian.

Sec. 4. AUTHORIZATION TO POSSESS AND USE FIREARMS ON SCHOOL PREMISES

- A. Authorization to Possess Firearms. Designated School Guardians are authorized to possess firearms and handguns on School Premises in a manner consistent with their professional license and certifications as issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, or other licensing agency or authority.
- B. Authorization to Deploy Firearms. Designated School Guardians are authorized to deploy a firearm or handgun on School Premises in a manner in keeping with their professional license and training and only as necessary to dissipate a viable threat to the physical safety of school staff, students, visitors, volunteers, or other persons. Designated School Guardians are not authorized to deploy a firearm or handgun on School Premises solely as means of protecting School Property.

Sec. 5. SCOPE OF SERVICE FOR DESIGNATED SCHOOL GUARDIANS

- A. Cooperation and Coordination on School Safety. Designated School Guardians are expected to perform duties relating to the protection of (1) human safety and welfare of all persons on School Premises, and (2) School Property. To these ends, and in addition to other duties that may be assigned, Designated School Guardians are expected to cooperate and coordinate with school officials in the implementation of the school’s Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan (“MEOP”). This may require the regular participation of

Designated School Guardians in training sessions and drills organized by school officials to prevent and prepare for emergencies on School Premises.

- B. No Routine Law Enforcement Duties. Designated School Guardians are not peace officers and may not perform the routine law enforcement duties of a peace officer unless the duty is performed in response to an emergency that poses a threat of death or serious bodily injury to a student, school employee, or other individual on School Property.
- C. Student Discipline and School Administration. Designated School Guardians, in this role, are not expected to perform duties relating to routine student discipline or to tasks generally associated with school administration. The tasks of student discipline and school administration will be separately handled by the Campus Safety Coordinators and Principals assigned to each campus. This policy does not prevent Designated School Guardians from having informal contact with students unrelated to the security duties of the Designated School Guardians, student discipline, or law enforcement so long as the Designated School Guardians does not pursue a relationship with the student outside of school or directly interact with students on social media.

Sec. 6. COMPLAINTS

Any person with a complaint against the performance of a Designated School Guardian under this policy shall direct their concerns to the Priority Charter Schools Campus Principal.