**Section 13**

 **Area Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning Procedures**

**13.1 *Constitutional Authority – Article X: Area Officers and Procedures for Election***

 (a) The elected officers of the Area XII Association will be selected at the district convention using the district level adopted election policy. The two Area Officer candidates selected by each district, to server, will complete the Area XII officer election process. The Area Officer Coordinator will use the written application to determine the eligibility of each Area Officer Candidate. Each of these officers will have an opportunity to demonstrate FFA, agricultural education, parliamentary procedure and agricultural industry knowledge via a written exam, present their qualifications to an interview committee and appear before the area convention body of delegates and deliver a campaign speech.

(b) Area officers shall be elected from the Area Officer Candidates by a combination of the written prompt, 10 percent; exam score, 10 percent; interview score, 40 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 40 percent.

 (c) The Area Elections Committee shall consist of two teacher representative from each district to serve as writing prompt judges and interview committee. There will be seven teacher judges on the interview committee and 3 teacher judges on the writing prompt committee. There will also be 7 student officers that will interview the candidates. Two student officers will grade the writing prompt, and one student officer will facilitate the interview questions. The question facilitator is a flexible position and may fill in if there is a vacancy left by the other 9 officers. The two Area Officer Selection Coordinators will oversee the writing prompt and test. This process will be done prior to the Area XII Convention where the voting delegates will elect the President and First Vice President. The chairpersons of the elections committee shall be the two Area Officer Selection Coordinators that were selected at the VATAT Conference by the governing body. These two committees (Writing and Interview Committees) will work in conjunction with each other on all decisions concerning the candidates.

(d) The winner of the final runoff election shall be declared President of the Area XII Association, and the candidate receiving the second highest score total in the final runoff election shall be declared the First Vice-President. The remaining officers shall be called Vice-Presidents, and shall assume the stations of the various other FFA offices for ceremonial purpose at the annual convention and other meetings throughout the year.

(e) The officers for ceremonial purposes of the Area shall be President, First Vice President, two Secretaries, two Treasurers, two Reporters, and two Sentinels.

Officer rankings which will be determined based on the total scores from the election will be used to determine the officer positions:

1st President

2nd Vice President

3rd & 4th Secretary

5th &6th Treasurer

7th & 8th Reporter

9th & 10th Sentinel

The Area Advisor will be the newly-elected Area XII President's Chapter Advisor.

 **13.2 *Officer Vacancies***

If for any reason a student officer becomes vacant, the district from which the vacancy occurs shall elect another student officer. If for any reason the office of President should become vacant, the First Vice President shall become the President.

**13.3 *Candidate Eligibility***

Pursuant to the provisions of the national and state constitutions, all Area Officer Candidates shall have attained the Chapter FFA Degree and be concluding their junior year of high school when their respective District Association nominates them. The term of office shall be served during the student's senior year of high school.

**13.4 *Candidate Evaluation***

(a) Candidates shall be evaluated and scored on a 100-point scale which includes a written exam score, interview committee score, writing prompt score and a popular vote score.

(b) Area officers must consistently demonstrate a command of key issues related to agriculture, FFA and the Texas education system. While some of this knowledge may be demonstrated by asking quality questions and carrying on informed conversations rather than “knowing facts,” it is still important that officers come in with a base understanding of core issues and facts related to these three areas of knowledge. Thus, a written exam consisting multiple choice questions (the ten-percent portion of the process) and writing prompt (the ten-percent portion of the process) will be administered to allow candidates to demonstrate evidence of this desired knowledge set. Candidates will complete the exam as part of Phase 1 of the selection process. Ninety minutes will be allowed for students to complete each portion of the exam. Study materials will not be allowed in the examination room.

(1) The exam shall comprise 10% of the candidate’s score. All candidates will have 90 minutes to complete a written exam with multiple choice questions. The composition of the exam will have 100 questions: 30 parliamentary, 25 Manual, 25 Leadership Guide, 20 Farm Facts/Current Events-Issues The Area Coordinators and the two Area Officer Selection Committee Coordinators will ensure the authoring of the exam by an unbiased party, and will submit the exam to the Selection Process Supervisor for administration prior to the commencement of the officer selection process. The exam score will be scaled to a factor of 0.1. The exam score (not the written test) may be given to the advisor.

(2) All candidates shall have 90 minutes to complete a written essay on a topic relevant to agriculture, FFA or the Texas education system. The purpose of the essay is focused on student’s ability to convey knowledge and understanding in a different way than allowed through multiple-choice questions. Each year a theme of the writing prompt will be identified (agriculture, FFA or Texas education). The theme and a list of potential topics will be published on the Texas FFA website for all candidates (we will utilize the same theme and potential topics that the state officer selection process will use each year). Candidates are encouraged to understand each topic very well. However, the essay will also require candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how that particular topic relates to the other themes, not reflected in that particular year (i.e., if agriculture is the theme during the current year then the essay question will require students to demonstrate understanding of the topic as well as the relationship that topic shares with FFA and/or the American education system.) Each of the writing samples will be reviewed by Area Officer Selection Coordinators. These Writing Prompt Committee will review the samples and rate them on each of the three competency builders (chosen and identified by the state) identified for this portion of the essay. Scoring for each builder will be based upon a scale of one to five with five representing strong evidence the skill is present and one representing strong evidence the skill is not present. The written essay will not be returned.

(3) Area officer candidates will be evaluated based on seven competencies, their builders and indicators required for fulfilling the job description of an Area FFA officer. A competency is a defined behavior, in combination with skills and knowledge that enables evaluation of the candidates. Example: competency #1 – Communication. A competency builder identifies specific attributes or skills to further define the behaviors of that competency. Example: 1.1 – Demonstrates nonverbal skills. Finally, indicators are a description of how someone might demonstrate the competency builder. Example: Uses appropriate tone; gives full attention (eye contact); refrains from distracting mannerisms; uses effective and purposeful gestures (hand signals, facial expressions, body language).

(4) The competencies by which Area FFA Officer Candidates will be evaluated are as follows: (1) Communication, (2) Team Player, (3) Areas of Knowledge, (4) Organization, (5) Character, (6) Passion for Success, (7) Influence,. A complete list of competency, builder and indicator descriptions can be found in the State Officer Selection Handbook.

(5) 100% of each candidate’s interview score shall be derived through scores received by the interview committee during interview. The interview section is scored on a 100-point scale and multiplied by a factor of 0.4. The numerical value that is the difference between the top indexed interview score and the number 40 shall be added to all scores.

(d) Each candidate will be given opportunity to present a campaign speech before the Area XII Association’s delegation in accordance to the provisions of this policy and give an impromptu response to a thought question developed and asked in accordance to the provisions of this policy. The popular vote of the delegate body shall comprise 40% of the candidate’s score.

(1) Each delegate shall cast two votes in the preliminary round of voting, followed by one vote in the runoff. The total number of votes received by a candidate shall be divided by the total number of votes cast and multiplied by 40 to derive the vote score factor. The numerical difference between the percentage of the top vote-getter and the number 40 shall be added to all vote total percentages.

(e) In the event of a tie, the tied shall be broken by the following means. If the tie is unbroken by a tie breaker, the committee shall consider the next tie breaker until all means are exhausted.

(1) Popular Vote. The candidate with the highest vote factor shall win the tie. Vote factors shall be carried out to the nearest one-thousandth of a point.

(2) Total Interview Section. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest total interview factor shall win the tie. Interview factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.

(3) Exam Score. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest exam score factor shall win the tie. Exam factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.

(4) Writing Exercise. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest writing exercise score shall win the tie.

(5) Run-Off Speech and Vote. Should the above tie breaks fail to break the tie, each of the tied candidates shall present a one-minute run-off speech and the delegates shall cast ballots. The winner of said run-off election shall win the tie.

**13.5 *Area Officer Campaign Rules Prior to Area Convention***

(a) Statewide mail outs or publicity by any person or entity mentioning candidacy outside of a candidate’s home area prior to the convention is not permitted. Candidates should be aware that many districts and areas have the same rule. Any media, electronic or hard copy which solicits support for or promotes a candidacy is prohibited by this policy.

(b) Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes.

(c) Business cards may only bear the candidates name, address, phone number and e-mail address and only indicate that the candidate is an “officer candidate” from his or her respective District.

(d) Officer candidates may not attend District conventions or degree checks other than their own District, in fairness to all candidates.

(e) Officer candidates may not attend any area leadership camps or conferences other than those events held within their own area.

(f) In compliance with the state constitution, each candidate shall sign the Area Officer’s commitment pledge and complete the Area Officer’s application. These documents must be submitted to the Area Coordinator by the deadline stated in the application.

(g) Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the Area Officer election. Serious violations which constitute issues of integrity or ethics may be addressed by the Area Coordinator under the provisions of the officer discipline policy.

 **13.6 *Officer Candidate Convention Speeches***

(a) Initial speeches will be a maximum of three minutes in length followed with a thought question that was developed by the Area Officer Election Committee. Time will be called at the end of three minutes and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted for the thought question.

(b) The run-off speeches will be a maximum of one minute in length. Time will be called and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.

(c) Candidates will not use any props or other materials. Audience participation by the general corporate audience without reference to any individual is not considered use of a prop. Having a specific member or group of members identified by proper name participate is considered to be use of a prop.

(d) Candidates may use a podium or walk the stage area but may not leave the stage during their candidate speech. Candidates must remain standing during the entire duration of the campaign speech. The entire presentation must begin and end on stage.

(e) During the convention cell phones must be turned into the Area Advisor until the election process is complete.

**13.7 *Candidate Testing Procedures***

(a) Candidates may use references from the Senior Quiz material or other material that is published on the Texas FFA website in preparation for the Area Officer exam and interview. The exam shall be proctored at a time set by the Area Officer Selection Coordinators.

 (b) Questions may be multiple choice and/or true/false and may be administered on hard copy or electronically.

 (c) The exam shall be formulated by a party with no vested interest in the outcome of the election. No party with an interest in the outcome of the election shall have access to the exam.

(d) Candidates will have 90 minutes to complete the exam.

(e) Scores will be reported on a percentage basis and entered into the officer selection scoring formula.

(f) All hard-copy testing materials shall be returned to the Area XII Coordinator. Exams may not be taken from the test areas or photocopied. Violation of this provision shall result in disciplinary action. Copies of the test will not be returned.

(g) During the Exam time the candidates will not be in possession of their cell phones or other electronic devices. **20.8 *Questioning Procedures***

(a) Thought questions are important to allow the delegates to see the officer candidate’s ability to speak extemporaneously. One thought questions will be asked during the candidate forum following the initial speeches for the District delegations.

(b) The selected question will be placed in envelope and sealed by the Area Officer Selection Coordinator until immediately prior to the election. Only the Area President is allowed to handle the envelopes containing the question.

(c) The Area President conducting the election will open the envelope on stage and read the question to the delegate body immediately prior to the election.

(d) The question will be read to the candidates in the same manner, exactly as written, and may be repeated if requested by the candidates.

**13.9 Other election Procedures**

1. Candidates will draw for speaking order upon arrival for the interview and test. This order will also be the order in which speeches will be delivered. Candidates unable to attend the draw will have a proxy draw by the area election coordinator to determine their number.

2. On the writing prompt the only identifying marks will be the candidate number. The candidate may add a title. Word count will only apply to the written essay not including the candidate number or the optional title. If essay must be saved it will be saved by candidate number only. Five copies of the essay will be printed one for each of the 5 graders.

3. During Phase One of the election process after drawing for order all candidates will begin the test. Following the test the candidate will then begin the writing prompt. As candidates complete the writing prompt interviews will begin. The two Area officer selection coordinators will oversee this process. The election committee will tabulate the scores.

4. During Phase Two of the election process that will consist of the speeches at Area Convention. No cell phones are allowed to be possessed by the candidates. The Area Leadership Coordinator will run the election. The executive committee along with the Area Officer Selection Coordinotors will tally votes, time speeches and monitor candidates to insure the integrity of the process.

5. In events where limited numbers of area officers can participate, officer ranking from their years election process will be utilized to determine which officer(s) will participate in that event. Highest ranking will take precedence. Activities will include but not limited to (National Convention Delegates, Area Officers elections, and other events as they arise.)