

# SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (SSSC) CHARTER

TEC 37.109

## BACKGROUND

The Declaration of Beliefs and Visions for the Houston Independent School District (“HISD”, the “District”) states the primary goal of HISD is to increase student achievement. The District’s School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) impacts the District vision that exists to support the primary goal:

- District Vision - every child shall have equitable opportunities and equal access to an effective and personalized education in a nurturing and safe environment;

The School Safety and Security Committee plays a critical, strategic role in assisting the District while completing the vision.

## PURPOSE OF CHARTER

The District desires to make continual improvements to safety, security and existing programs. As a result, the School Safety and Security Committee Charter is adopted to explain the mission, purpose, structure, membership, duties, responsibilities, and expectations. This Charter aligns with Texas Education Code (TEC) 37.109, School Safety and Security Committee.

## COMMITTEE MISSION

The District, in response to TEC 37.109, School Safety and Security Committee, has established a Committee to ensure a safe and secure learning and work environment for all HISD students and employees.

The Committee’s charge is to review the District’s Safety and Security plans, goals, objectives, and makes districtwide recommendations as needed for improvement to programs. The Committee serves in an advisory role. The School Safety and Security Committee is to provide an open forum of dialogue between all Committee members regarding safety and security issues throughout the District.

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

- a) The Risk Management Department will coordinate the meeting and act as the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Formal action from the Committee requires a majority vote of the quorum present. Individual members of the Committee shall not exercise authority for the Committee as a whole and shall not act independently of the Committee.
- b) Representatives designated by the Superintendent will be appointed for a two-year term, unless replaced by the Superintendent. Representatives (committee members) required by TEC 37.109 will have no expiration, unless replaced by the Superintendent.
- c) Each Committee member shall appoint a Designee to attend and participate in committee meetings in his/her absence when he/she is not available to attend a duly scheduled meeting of the Committee. The appointed Designee will have all the rights of the Committee member they are representing based on a fully executed School Safety and Security Committee Proxy Committee Member form submitted by the Committee member
- d) The Committee will approve meeting minutes, review and approve the reasonableness of reports from the District, and approve the issuance of status reports and other communications from the Committee.
- e) The Committee members receive no direct or indirect compensation from the District for their services as members to the Committee.

- f) If a designated committee member resigns, violates the Ethics Policy contained herein, fails to attend two consecutive Committee meetings without reasonable excuse, or otherwise becomes unable to serve on the Committee, the Superintendent may declare the position on the Committee to be vacant and appoint another qualified person.
- g) All meetings will be open to the general public.
- h) The 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 the district is located;
  - (2) one or more representatives of the local police department or sheriff's office;
  - (3) one or more representatives of the District's police department, if applicable;
  - (4) the president of the District's board of trustees;
  - (5) a member of the District's board of trustees other than the president;
  - (6) the District's superintendent;
  - (7) one or more designees of the District's superintendent, one of whom must be a classroom teacher in the district;
    - a. Superintendent to designate classroom teacher
  - (8) if the District partners with an open-enrollment charter school to provide instruction to students, a member of the open-enrollment charter school's governing body or a designee of the governing body; and
    - a. Not applicable - The school District does not have open-enrollment charters
  - (9) two parents or guardians of students enrolled in the District
    - a. Superintendent to designate parents or guardians of students
  - (10) District personnel as designated by the Superintendent

### COMMITTEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee shall inform the Board, and general public concerning the District's overall safety and security.

The Committee shall:

- a) Report and provide updated information on safety and security topics affecting their area of expertise or district operations
- b) Assist with the review and revision of plans and procedures pertinent to safety and security
- c) Review safety and security incidents, acts of violence or threats, and recommend corrective action(s) to prevent recurrence
  - Assist in maintaining a system of reporting and evaluation to support and enhance safety and security district-wide
- d) Ensure that necessary training for safety and security program district-wide and that HISD students and personnel become familiar with safety and security procedures

- e) Collectively review and provide safety and security related information and/or recommendations to the Board of Education that will enhance safety and security awareness, prevent violence and create a safe learning/working environment

Sec. 37.109. School Safety and Security Committee Meeting (a) In accordance with guidelines established by the Texas School Safety Center, each school district shall establish a school safety and security Committee.

The Committee Shall:

- (1) participate on behalf of the District in developing and implementing emergency plans consistent with the district multihazard emergency operations plan required by Section 37.108(a) to ensure that the plans reflect specific campus, facility, or support services needs;
- (2) periodically provide recommendations to the District's Board of Trustees and district administrators regarding updating the district multihazard emergency operations plan required by Section 37.108(a) in accordance with best practices identified by the agency, the Texas School Safety Center, or a person included in the registry established by the Texas School Safety Center under Section 37.2091;
- (3) provide the District with any campus, facility, or support services information required in connection with a safety and security audit required by Section 37.108(b), a safety and security audit report required by Section 37.108(c), or another report required to be submitted by the District to the Texas School Safety Center;
- (4) review each report required to be submitted by the District to the Texas School Safety Center to ensure that the report contains accurate and complete information regarding each campus, facility, or support service in accordance with criteria established by the center; and
- (5) consult with local law enforcement agencies on methods to increase law enforcement presence near district campuses.

Committee Meetings:

- a) The Committee shall meet at least three times a year (one meeting per semester and one in the summer) to review the District's safety and security status and related information, and to perform other duties as provided herein. The Chairperson or Vice Chairperson may convene additional meetings, if necessary.
- b) All Committee meetings shall be held within the District's geographic boundaries.
- c) Minutes will be prepared by a representative of the District and will be distributed to the Committee. The minutes will be voted upon for the record at the next scheduled Committee meeting.
- d) Committee may meet in executive session as provided by Chapter 551, Government Code. HISD General Counsel should be present to advise participants. Some topics can only be discussed in closed session.
- e) Results and recommendations of each safety committee meeting will be communicated to District/Campus administration within [3 days] of each meeting. A District communication plan will be developed to facilitate the sharing of appropriate district/campus safety and security information and/or activities of the committee.

District Duties and Responsibilities:

- a) A representative from the Risk Management department shall act as the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson.
- b) The Risk Management Department shall oversee management's action plan to respond to any written report from the Committee with findings or suggestions for improvement within 15 business days. All recommendations and management action plans from inception to date will be tracked and made

available to the Committee and Board. The District's website and other communication avenues will also publicize the Committee's report and management action plan for use by the general public.

- c) The Risk Management Department shall provide open communication, and provide necessary technical and administrative assistance in a timely manner as follows:
  - 1. Provisions of a meeting room, including any necessary audio/visual equipment
  - 2. Preparation and copies of any documentary meeting materials, such as agendas and reports, and distribution of those materials to the Committee in a timely manner
  - 3. Retention of all committee meeting records
  - 4. Public notification of committee meeting times and locations. The meetings are open to the public.
- d) The District acknowledges that the Committee may request certain information that is sensitive or legally privileged. The District will use the counsel of its legal advisors to comply with such requests within the limits of Texas law and the best interest of the District.
- e) Committee may meet in executive session as provided by Chapter 551, Government Code. HISD General Counsel shall be present to advise participants. Some topics can only be discussed in closed session.

## ETHICS POLICY

This Ethics Policy provides general guidelines for Committee members to follow in carrying out their roles. Not all ethical issues that Committee members face are covered in this Policy. However, this statement captures some of the critical areas that help define ethical and professional conduct for Committee members. The provisions of this statement were developed from existing laws, rules, policies and procedures as well as from concepts that define generally accepted good business practices. Committee members are expected to strictly adhere to the provisions of this ethics statement.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** A Committee member shall not make or influence a District decision related to: (1) any contract funded by general revenue or (2) any district effort which will benefit the Committee member's outside employment, business, or provide a financial benefit to a family member, such as a spouse, child, parent, or sibling.

**OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT.** A Committee member shall not use his or her authority over a particular matter to negotiate future employment with any person or organization that relates to: (1) any contract funded by general revenue; or (2) any district effort. A Committee member shall not make or influence a District decision related to any district effort involving the interest of a person with whom the member has an agreement concerning current or future employment, or remuneration of any kind. For a period of one (1) year after leaving the Committee, a former Committee member may not represent any person or organization for compensation in connection with any matter pending before the District that, as a Committee member, he or she participated in personally and substantially. Specifically, for a period of one (1) year after leaving the Committee, a former Committee member and the companies and businesses for which the member works shall be prohibited from contracting with the District with respect to: (1) bidding or proposing to provide services on projects funded by general funds; and/or (2) any safety project funded by the District.

**COMMITMENT TO UPHOLD LAW.** A Committee member shall uphold the federal and Texas Constitutions, the laws and regulations of the United States and the State of Texas, and the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Houston Independent School District.

**COMMITMENT TO DISTRICT.** A Committee member shall place the interests of the District above any personal or business interest of the member.

**MEMBER CERTIFICATION.** A Committee member shall certify his or her understanding of Committee's Ethics Policy and disclose and sign an annual conflict of interest statement for existing conflicts and re-submit if any conflicts arise during their tenure.