



The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Commission on Schools Handbook

2025-2026

(January 25, 2026)

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Episcopal Schools

It has been said that Episcopal schools continue on Mondays what the worship and fellowship of the Episcopal Church offers on Sundays. Whether those schools are preschools or high schools, they accept the challenge of blending real life with a rich academic setting in a welcoming, faith-filled environment. The educators in Episcopal schools structure their schools to encourage learning, celebrate exploration, welcome inquiry, and address the hard questions their young students ask. These schools are friendly, serious, happy, exciting, and stimulating learning centers. Children and young people find common ground in the business of learning, presented with a unique balance of faith and reason, debate and discussion, respectful disagreement, and enthusiastic discovery.

Episcopal schools are complex institutions that promote academic excellence, recognize each learner's potential, expect personal accountability, and instill courage for new and lifelong learning. These schools seek parental understanding of both the work ethic and the instructional creativity employed by dedicated teaching professionals who bring expertise, varied life experiences, and their own diversity to their positions. The staff appreciates the inclusivity of Episcopal schools and the Church's historical commitment to excellence in education, and is passionately committed to providing the highest-quality educational programming available.

The common connections between these Episcopal schools include 4 key areas:

A school ministry that includes age-appropriate chapel services, an unapologetic religion curriculum that is respectful of the many faiths of the students, service learning experiences, and pastoral care.

An inclusive community that celebrates its cultural pluralism, works intentionally to welcome children from diverse and economically varied family situations, teaches civility and social justice, and rejects marginalization and bullying.

A governance system that includes an Episcopal presence on the school's board and a partnership with its parish or diocese.

A mission statement that guides decisions and applauds a strong commitment to educational excellence.

Episcopal schools in the Diocese of Texas are a thriving collection of **52** highly respected schools, serving approximately **12,612** students at the beginning of the 2024-2025 academic year. This is an important, successful ministry that deserves our ongoing support.

Prayer for Schools:

O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

School Structure

The vision of a parish or a founding board defines the scope of its Episcopal school, whether a small start-up preschool, a large college-prep high school, or a multi-grade school with extensive academic departments and hundreds of students. Within the Diocese of Texas, there are parish schools, diocesan schools, independent schools, and non-traditional schools. Below is a general description of the different programs:

Early Preschool: Enrolls infants, 1-year-olds, and/or 2-year-olds. **Preschool:** Enrolls 2-year-olds through kindergarten; may include Early Preschool **Primary, Intermediate, Secondary:** Enrolls elementary, middle school, and/or High School; may include Preschool and Early Preschool

Parish school: Controlled by a sponsoring parish or mission

Diocesan school: Controlled by the Diocese or a group of parishes.

Independent school: With Bishop's permission, organized without control by a parish, mission, or other ecclesiastical authority

Non-traditional school: Located on the property of an Episcopal parish, with a therapeutic or diagnostic educational program

Boarding school: Located on property separate from an Episcopal parish with facilities for residential living

School Governance

All Episcopal schools share common characteristics in their bylaws that distinguish them from other private or independent schools. First, they affirm that they practice the faith and worship of the Episcopal Church and will operate with the knowledge and written consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. Second, they acknowledge that they abide by the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese and will meet the Standards set forth by the Commission on Schools. Third, they operate as a Texas non-profit corporation with a governing board that comprises at least 60% Episcopalians.

Episcopal Boards of Trustees meet regularly and focus on policy approval, financial oversight, resource development, strategic planning for the future, and support for their sole employee, the Head of School (or Director). Episcopal boards frequently design their fiscal year to match the school's academic year to better monitor budgetary changes. Parish day schools must coordinate decision-making carefully with their church vestry for these two institutions to collaborate successfully.

Independent Episcopal schools are located separately from parish facilities and live their Episcopal identity in unique ways. Everything from partnering with local parishes to recruiting supportive board members and seeking counsel from local rectors may strengthen the school's connection to the Church. In some cases, the Bishop may allow or require priests to serve on an independent school's board.

Diocese of Texas, Canon on Schools, Audits, & Incorporation

The Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas are the rules by which the Diocese is governed. The Canon on Schools, shown below, requires that a parish have the Bishop's approval to operate a school. To receive that approval, schools must meet the published Standards endorsed by the Bishop-appointed Commission on Schools. The Commission will then certify to the Bishop that a school is in compliance with the required Standards and seek the Bishop's approval to continue the school. The complete list of Canons can be found on the Diocesan website at:

<https://www.epicenter.org/constitution--canons/>.

▪Title 111.11, Canon 11

Section 11.1 Relationship to the Diocese

All schools or other educational facilities providing secular education for young people equivalent to that provided by nursery schools or on the kindergarten, grade school, grammar school, or high school level, and located on any premises used for the benefit of or operated under the control, auspices, or approval of any Parish, Mission, organization, or institution of the Diocese, or any combination or group thereof, shall be an Episcopal School of the Diocese, and no such school shall be established, maintained, or operated without the written approval and consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. The Principal, Headmaster, or Headmistress of an Episcopal School of the Diocese shall be a confirmed communicant in good standing of a Parish or Mission of the Diocese. The Bishop may make an exception to the requirement set forth in the preceding sentence, within such limitations and conditions as the Bishop may prescribe. The Rector (or if the office of Rector is vacant, the Senior Warden) or Priest-in-Charge or Missionary of the sponsoring Parish or Mission (for the purpose of this sentence, the "Rector") shall be a member ex-officio and Chair of the governing board of the school; provided that, in the absence of or at the pleasure of the Rector, a designee of the Rector may serve from time to time as Chair.

Section 11.2 Standards of Compliance

- a. The Bishop shall establish a Diocesan Commission on Schools consisting of no less than 5 nor more than 12 communicants in good standing in the Diocese. It shall be the duty of the Commission to publish (subject to the Bishop's approval) standards for Episcopal Schools in this diocese, give general supervision to all such schools, and perform such other functions regarding such schools as the Bishop may require. All schools shall comply with such Standards as well as with the other provisions of the Canon.
- b. Each school shall comply with licensing, health, safety, fire, and sanitation standards required at any time by state, county, and municipal health, safety, fire, and sanitation codes for the locality in which such school is located.

Section 11.3 Failure of Compliance

Any such school that fails to comply with the provisions of this Canon shall not be entitled to be located on any property that is used for the benefit of any Parish, Mission, institution, or organization of the Diocese of Texas, and neither shall it be entitled to be operated under the control, auspices, or approval of any such Parish, Mission, institution, or organization of the Diocese of Texas.

Section 11.4 Reports and Inspections

The Bishop shall have the right at any time, and from time to time, to require and obtain such information and reports as may be deemed necessary by the Bishop to ensure compliance with this Canon, and the Bishop shall likewise have the right at any time, and from time to time, to inspect or cause to be inspected, each such school in order to monitor compliance with the provisions of this Canon. The Bishop shall have the right at any time to appoint one or more representatives to assist the Bishop in ensuring compliance with the Canon.

▪Title 1.4, Canon 4 Section 4.5 Audits

The accounts of all parishes, missions, and other church institutions and organizations in the Diocese relating to the receipts and expenditures or investments of money shall be audited annually at the end of each calendar year by an independent Certified Public Accountant, independent Licensed Public Accountant, or such audit committee as shall be authorized by the Executive Board [of the Diocese]. The reports of all such audits, including any memoranda issued by the auditing authority regarding internal controls or other accounting matters, shall be filed with the Bishop not later than thirty days following the date of such reports, but in any event prior to Sept. 1 of each year covering the financial reports of the previous calendar year.

*[Please note: The Executive Board of the Diocese currently allows institutions with annual operating income less than \$750,000 to conduct an internal financial review using published Diocesan guidelines in lieu of an external audit. **(In order to assist***

duly-appointed internal financial review committees in this volunteer work, the Commission on Schools has developed and offers, without warranty a set of procedures specific to schools. School board chairs may obtain a copy of these new procedures from the Chair of the Commission.) Our accredited schools must comply with the rules of their accrediting association(s), which may require an external audit or review regardless of annual income. Schools typically have a fiscal year aligned with the academic cycle and thus ending in a summer month. For schools, the audit or review should be performed at the close of the school's fiscal year and submitted by Dec. 31 to the Diocesan Treasurer's office.]

•Title III.1.6-1.8, Canon 9 Section 9.6 Incorporation

Any Diocesan entity, as defined herein, may incorporate or exist in any corporate form upon and subject to the terms and conditions of the Constitution and Canons. For the purpose of this Canon, the terms shall have the meanings set forth below: The term "Diocesan entity" shall mean the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, any Parish or Mission of the Diocese, any Episcopal school of the Diocese, as defined in the Canons, and any other Constitution and Canons as an instrumentality, or entity of the Diocese...(continues)

The Commission on Schools

In 1978, the Canon on Schools was approved by this Diocese. The Rev. A. Dean Calcote was appointed chairman of the Commission on Schools and, over the years until 2013, worked with bishops, priests, and heads of schools, helping to define the expectations for exemplary schools in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. The Commission's work has encouraged a new focus on the growing ministries of the many schools in this region.

Parishes and schools are encouraged to communicate with the Commission when seeking general resources, clarification of Standards, or information about opening a new school. Additionally, the Commission and Diocese must be informed of any event that poses a substantial challenge to the school's operations, such as a major financial or legal complication that could affect the school, parish, and/or Diocese, or that violates the Safeguarding program guidelines.

EDOT Commission on Schools: (as of February 21, 2026)

Scottie Clark, Chair, HOS, All Saints', Beaumont, sclark@allsaints-beaumont.org

Catherine Bohot, HOS, Calvary, Bastrop, headofschool@calvaryschool.net

Jan Lopez, HOS, Good Shepherd, Kingwood, gsschooljan@yahoo.com

Garhett Wagers, HOS, St. Mark's, Houston, gwagers@stmes.org

Beth Lawrence, HOS, St Thomas', College Station, bethlawrence@stthomaselc.org

The Annual Report & Episcopal Identity Addendum

The Commission on Schools contacts each school in early fall with an Annual Report form, which must be completed promptly and returned to the Commission. This information is then collated, returned to the schools, and reported to the Diocese. The information requested may include enrollment data, personnel distribution, tuition information, and general budgetary information. Schools may be required to affirm their compliance with the published Standards, such as accreditation status. Schools will also be encouraged to provide optional information on special projects, service learning, or successful joint ventures with parishes. Schools not accredited by SAES may also be asked to complete an additional form regarding Episcopal Identity.

The Standards for Schools

All Episcopal schools in the Diocese of Texas must abide by the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Texas and shall meet the following Standards set forth by the Diocesan Commission on Schools. These Standards may be amended or supplemented from time to time by the Commission.

Certification is determined by the Annual Report unless a further review is indicated. This review shall include a check of items on file for the school, including annual reports, organizational documents, and verification of accreditation status. For schools not accredited by SAES, a review may require completion of the Commission's Addendum on Episcopal Identity. Non-accredited schools eligible (due to size) for Basic Certification **may** be visited by a representative of the Commission on Schools. Based on the accreditation status, documentation submitted by the school, and the report from a representative of the Commission on Schools (if required), the Commission shall certify to the Bishop whether the school is in compliance with Diocesan Standards.

***Major Standards are noted with an asterisk.**

General Standards:

*1. The school shall be affiliated with the Episcopal Church as a parish day school, a school administered by the Diocese or a group of parishes, or a school that practices the faith and worship of the Episcopal Church and operates with the knowledge and written consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas. For a school beginning operations for the first time, it must be affiliated with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas and shall provide a written plan indicating how it will meet the Standards set forth by the Diocesan Schools Commission.

*2. The school shall operate in compliance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church, specifically Title III, Canon 11 (schools), Title I, Canon 4, Section 4.5 (annual audits) -The school must have an annual audit by an independent CPA (but an internal financial review may be allowed for schools with an annual operating income less

than \$750,000), and Title III, Canon 9 (incorporation of a diocesan entity). Should a school incorporate, it shall be a Texas non-profit corporation with a Certificate of Formation and Bylaws approved by the Bishop. Schools shall submit their audit or modified organizational documents to the Treasurer's office for approval.

*3. The school shall comply with the Safeguarding requirements. Safeguarding training shall be assigned based on roles within the school, and records must be maintained in the Safeguarding Records System (SRS) or another approved platform. Required screening, including background checks, shall be completed through SRS or by the school. Schools conducting their own screening must have an Independent Screening Agreement (ISA) in place. All Safeguarding training and background checks must be renewed every five (5) years.

4. The school shall submit to the Commission on Schools a written "records discontinuance plan" which outlines the procedures for placement and storage of certain types of records, including student records and faculty service records, if the school closes or ceases to exist. [Note: The Commission has developed guidelines for this policy, which have been provided to heads of school and directors.]

Program Standards:

(Note: Early Preschools do not usually include an extensive pre-academic or religious program but are expected to implement the current best educational practices in an appropriately stimulating, safe, and nurturing environment.)

1. The school shall have a developmental or challenging academic program set in a Christian environment that meets the diverse needs of its students academically, socially, and spiritually.

*2. The school shall include regular services of worship, designed to be age-appropriate, which follow the Book of Common Prayer or are approved by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

*3. The school shall include a religion component in its curriculum, designed with age-appropriate lessons that are more academically engaging for older students, respectfully acknowledge faith differences among students, and encourage service-learning or outreach activities.

*4. The school shall, insofar as possible, publish a non-discrimination admission policy that does not exclude students on the basis of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, family situation, or economic limitations, and shall make every effort to provide financial aid. The school shall file an IRS Form 5578 annually (Annual Certification of Racial Nondiscrimination for a Private School Exempt from Federal Income Tax).

5. The school shall have faculty qualified by college degrees and other training appropriate to their assignment and who hold a personal faith commitment consistent with and supportive of the spiritual mission and program of the school

*6. The school shall be an accredited school affiliated with a recognized educational accrediting agency. The following are recommended agencies:

Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES); www.swaes.org
Independent School Association of the Southwest (ISAS); www.isasw.org
National Association. for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
www.naeyc.org

American Montessori Society (AMS); www.amshq.org

National Accreditation Commission (NAC); www.earlylearningleaders.org

[Both SAES and ISAS are accrediting agencies recognized by the Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas through TEPSAC and the National Association of Independent Schools. Schools that are not accredited by SAES will be required to complete, when requested, the Commission addendum called, Episcopal Identity.]

[Schools with an enrollment of less than 50 students are exempt from the requirement of accreditation but must be in compliance with all other Standards and complete, when requested, the Commission addendum entitled, Episcopal Identity. If enrollment grows beyond the minimum of 50 students, in the second year of greater enrollment, the school shall begin the accreditation process.]

Administrative and Governance Standards:

*1. The school shall have a clearly stated mission and set of objectives adopted by the school's Board of Trustees and, in the case of a parish day school, approved by the Rector and Vestry, and communicated through school literature, handbooks, and other media.

*2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of no less than sixty percent (60%) confirmed communicants in good standing in Episcopal churches. In a parish day school, a good-faith effort should be made to recruit parishioners to serve on the Board of Trustees.

3. In a parish school, the Rector shall be the chairman of the school's Board of Trustees.

4. The Head of School shall be a communicant member of the Episcopal Church or shall apply for an exemption from the Bishop of the Diocese. A form for requesting this exemption is available from the Commission.

*5. The school shall meet all national, state, and local health and safety requirements, with confirmation of such compliance on file. The school shall meet the requirements of the Texas Department of Health and Human Services concerning child care licensing, if applicable. The school shall also **adopt** policies to address both security and emergency procedures appropriate to the campus.

*6. The school shall adopt an annual budget with anticipated revenue and expenses. The budget should include adequate insurance (general liability, Directors and Officers liability, sexual misconduct coverage, and other insurance as necessary), and

in parish day schools, evidence of a Memorandum of Understanding between the church and school addressing shared expenses and shared spaces shall be in place.

7. The school shall provide adequate compensation and benefits for personnel, including professional development funds and funding for benefits prescribed by the Diocese. There shall also be evaluation instruments for all employees.

8. The school shall provide counseling and pastoral care when needed.

9. In a parish day school, the Head of School and Rector shall establish a mutually supportive relationship and uphold each other's respective ministries in the church and school communities.

10. In an independent Episcopal school, the Board shall designate a permanent Committee on Episcopal Identity, and if the Head of School is not an Episcopal priest, the Head of School shall hire a chaplain for the school.

*11. The school shall complete and submit the Annual Report from the Commission on Schools and, if requested, the Episcopal Identity Addendum to the Chair of the Commission.

Accreditation of Episcopal Schools

One of the major requirements of a Fully Certified Episcopal school is accreditation by a recognized educational agency. Currently, there is only one Episcopal agency accrediting Episcopal schools in the U.S.: the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools. The other agencies listed in the Standards also provide a thorough accreditation process for many of our schools, but an Episcopal Identity form must be completed, if requested by the Commission Chair, at the time of the Annual Report for those schools.

The only exemption from accreditation is granted to our smallest schools with enrollments of fewer than 50 students. These may be "start-up" schools, schools with limited facilities that are small by circumstances, or schools in transition as they rebuild. While this exemption is available to the smallest schools, they are encouraged to consider participating in accreditation as a resource for professional growth and school improvement. The smallest schools must comply with all other Standards of the Commission and will be visited according to a schedule developed by the Commission on Schools.

Certification and Approval

A new Episcopal school must apply for Certification from the Commission on Schools within its first year of operation, which leads to Approval from the Bishop. The application will verify the school's compliance with the above Canons and Standards and will be followed by a visit from a member of the Commission. An application is available from the Chairman of the Commission.

Full Certification: A school meets all Standards and is accredited.

Basic Certification (applicable only for small schools with enrollment of <50 students): A school meets all Standards and completes the Episcopal Identity Form annually, but is exempt from the accreditation requirement.

Recognition (applicable only for Non-Traditional schools): A school meets all Standards, including accreditation by an approved agency, and may be exempt from religious requirements.

Loss of Certification, Loss of Approval

Under certain circumstances, a school may lose its Certification by the Commission on Schools and/or its Approval from the Bishop. The following are situations that could cause this:

1. The school withdraws its affiliation with the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas.
2. The school fails to meet any of the major Standards set forth by the Commission.
3. The school fails to show improvement of any other Standard(s) not yet fully met.
4. A school dishonors or defames its presence in the community, and in the Bishop's judgment, may not continue to represent the Episcopal community.

Under certain circumstances, recertification by the Commission and Renewed Approval by the Bishop may be granted once a problem has been resolved or a Standard has been met. A request for consideration of Re-Certification may be made to the Commission.

Policy in the Diocese of Texas Prohibiting Guns on Campus

Effective January, 2016, the State Legislature passed the Texas Open Carry Law, which addresses the public, concealed and non-concealed, carrying of many different sorts of guns – everywhere, including churches. Notice is now required that guns are forbidden on church campuses. This information should be included in Parent and Staff Handbooks, as well as in visible signage at all school entrances. The Bishop of our Diocese has reiterated that “our longstanding policy in the Diocese of Texas remains the same – guns have no place in our churches, schools, and institutions. Other than those carried by officers of the peace or security officers on duty, we adhere to our policy prohibiting guns on church and school property.” Under Texas law, our churches and schools have the right to forbid entry to someone carrying a gun; the State defines 'schools' as K-12, so those with preschools must be proactive in addressing this. This and other diocesan policies may be found via the following link:

<https://www.epicenter.org/resources/policies/gun-law-and-policy-clergy-manual-36/>.

Diocesan Gambling Policy

The Gambling policy, found in the EDOT Clergy Manual (9.1), is as follows:
"Gambling is defined as participation in any game or activity where money or objects of value may be won by chance. Gambling must not be a regular or frequent part of the activities of any congregation, school, or diocesan institution. Occasional special events or fundraisers that include bingo or a raffle are permissible, provided the value of any prize does not exceed the \$600 IRS reporting threshold. This policy applies to any event or activity of a diocesan institution, congregation, or church-related entity, such as a school, youth group, outreach ministry, and the like, regardless of the location of the event or activity. All congregations, diocesan institutions, schools, and church-related entities must comply with this policy if any form of gambling is permitted at all." (Note that diocesan policy is subject to change.)

Diocesan Alcohol Policy:

Schools are encouraged to develop local policies that reflect the local context while remaining consistent with the Diocesan Alcohol Policy. See the link referenced above or the following:

www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/policies-and-help-sheets/.

(To find the Alcohol Policy from this page, scroll down and look under the heading "Additional Policies for EDOT Organizations & Events.")

Note: for schools, guideline #11 should set forth the role of the head of school as follows: "In Schools, the groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the head of school (or from the school board if there is no head of school). In parish day schools, only the head of school (or board designee if there is no head of school), if in agreement, is the person designated to seek permission from the head of congregation on behalf of the school." (Note that diocesan policy is subject to change.)

Group Health Insurance:

The Medical Trust offers an array of group health plans that provide access to high-quality, consistent benefits. Episcopal Schools may participate in the health plans offered in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. School administrators may contact Zee Turnbull (Director of Human Resources) for more information at ZTurnbull@epicenter.org. For general documents, plan comparisons, monthly premiums, and available healthcare options, please visit www.epicenter.org/benefits.

Building and Property in Parishes and Parish Schools:

The Protestant Episcopal Church Council of the Diocese of Texas ("Church Corporation") holds title to all real estate property in the Diocese of Texas. Prior approval from the Church Corporation must be obtained regarding all proposed property transactions, including building projects, the sale or purchase of property, receipt of property in the form of a gift (either from someone living or as an estate gift), the leasing of property, and the use of property to secure a loan. David Fisher serves as the liaison with the Church Corporation, and he may be contacted via email at dfisher@epicenter.org.

NAIS Definition for Students of Color

In gauging student diversity, the Annual Report uses the NAIS definition for students of color: "Students who are U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents, and who belong to one of the following racial/ethnic groups: Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and Two or More Races."

Recommendations

The following is a list of suggestions offered by the Commission on Schools, the National Association of Episcopal Schools, and the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools. While primarily for parish day schools, many suggestions are applicable to independent schools as well. Recognizing that a parish that strives to reflect a model of Christian community can be a vital force for stability and moral centeredness, careful attention must be paid to ensuring good communication and understanding among the various constituencies of the parish family. When congregations and schools work effectively and communicate openly, their ministries will be strengthened.

1. Mutual Ministry

In a parish day school, the rector shall ultimately be responsible for the school's religious life, taking a leadership role in chapel services and collaborating with the head of school on the appointment and oversight of any chaplain, and on the selection and implementation of religious curricula for the school.

The rector, as the canonical chair of the school board, is expected to attend all board meetings and shall be invited to attend and participate in significant events in the life of the school. By canon, the rector may delegate the role of chair to an appointed or elected president of the board.

The head of school should be considered a member of the church staff, attending church staff meetings as necessary, regularly reporting to the vestry, and invited to attend and participate in special events in the life of the parish.

Regular opportunities should be scheduled for the rector and head of school to meet and establish a mutually supportive relationship.

Regular opportunities should be provided for the vestry and school board to meet together and to establish joint committees to consider mutual concerns. The parish and school should continually seek to share information and enhance communication.

2. Rector Search Process

When the office of rector is vacant, the diocesan guidelines for parishes with schools should be used to involve the school in the search process. Include a knowledgeable school board member who is a church member on the search committee. The head of school should not be asked to resign when there is a change in the office of the rector, to ensure continuity through the academic year and to honor any employment contract in force.

3. Head of School

Recognizing that the health and stability of the school are dependent on stable leadership, the head of school should have a contract of at least one academic year's duration, preferably multi-year, reviewed annually.

Create a policy statement that describes the hiring, evaluating, and termination procedures for the head of school, including the role of the rector as a member of the search committee and the one who approves the final selection.

Designate the head of school as the person with delegated responsibility for the operation of the school and for hiring, evaluating, and terminating school staff.

4. Bylaws and/or Policy Manuals

Include a policy about employment practices, such as, 'To avoid the appearance of favoritism and conflicts of interest, the employment of relatives (related by blood or marriage) of the Head of School that results in a direct or indirect supervisory, evaluation, or reporting relationship to the Head of School is strongly discouraged. Also, no current employee of the school, or any relative of a current employee of the school, shall serve on the school board, vestry, or Bishop's Committee. Include a statement that delineates the roles and responsibilities of the parents' association or any other group affiliated with the school, and clearly acknowledges the final authority of the school board.

Create a clear fundraising policy that specifies the board member responsible for approving such requests and for organizing the scheduling, planning, and implementation.

Write a statement of the grievance procedure for all personnel.

Include a statement regarding compliance with all Diocesan policies, especially that

on sexual misconduct. Detail the required training for Safeguarding God's Children for both staff and volunteers.

Write a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the rector, head of school, vestry, and school board, and the reporting relationship of each to the other.

5. Student Admissions

The school may give priority to Episcopal students in admissions. This prioritization and any others (such as those for siblings of currently enrolled students) shall be published in admissions documents.

6. Conflicts

When conflicts are not easily resolved, the church and the school are encouraged to seek a neutral third party to consult with them before problems escalate into a crisis. The Commission on Schools, as well as SAES and NAES, can offer assistance in this regard. Conflict resolution teams unaffiliated with the church may also be used.

7. Incorporation

The Commission on Schools strongly recommends that parish day schools be incorporated separately. (All organizational documents must be pre-approved and signed by the Bishop.)

8. Shared Use Agreements

As a best practice, Shared Use Agreements (also called Memoranda of Understanding) should be beneficial and equitable for both the church and the school. Such agreements should be based on actual expenses incurred by the parish that are attributable to its school, and on expenses incurred by the school that are attributable to its parish.

Additional Resources for Episcopal Schools

Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES) 1420 4th Avenue, Suite 29, Canyon, TX. 79015 866-655-7237 www.swaes.org

National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES) 815 Second Ave. Suite 313, New York, NY 10017 800-334-7626 www.episcopalschools.org

Effective Communications

The Episcopal schools of the Diocese of Texas use many resources to engage both their current parents and invite inquiries and interest from prospective parents. In an informal survey of the methods used to communicate with current parents, the following information was provided by those schools (note: please evaluate these resources for compatibility for each school):

Resources with current parents:

1. Most used electronic resources:

- Email – email blasts, links to parent portals on the school website, or individual notes to parents
- School website programs – i.e., Tadpole, ClassDojo, Mailchimp, Remind.com, HeadMaster, SignUpGenius, etc.
- Facebook - with private pages for each class or teacher
- E-newsletters – every other week to once a month; i.e., Constant Contact Monthly calendars posted on website
- Evites – to upcoming school events
- Texting – to individual parents

2. Most used print resources:

Daily or weekly folder that goes back and forth from home, “Monday folders”, Monday (or Friday) messages from the Head of School in take-home folders, Newsletters from Head and/or classroom teacher every other week

3. Personal contacts:

- Parent conferences
- Meet the Teachers gatherings prior to reenrollment; teachers present an overview of the new grade
- Coffee talks after morning drop-off; invitations to the chapel and coffee, phone voicemail message blasts
- Phone calls – private conversations most effective
- Encouraging positive word-of-mouth exchanges

4. Visual resources:

- Bulletin board reminders near classrooms and the office
- Event signs near the school and church signs
- TV “loops” are visible near the office for those waiting to view past school activities.

5. Resources with Prospective Parents:

- Word of mouth – encourage positive messages shared by current parents with friends, Social media, Mom’s Blogs, Facebook, updated website
- Interactive website so initial inquiries and contacts can be made; requires a campus visit
- A calendar of school visits; classroom observations
- Encourage referrals from current and former parents; add to admission materials

6. Participate in a community Private School Preview, if available

- Prospective parent lunch
- Offer coffee and workshops to highlight the school's programming areas. Email follow-up after inquiry and visits

Diocesan Journal Report

Submitted for Volume I of the 177th Annual Council (February 27-28, 2026)

The canonical duty of the Commission on Schools is to “publish Standards for Episcopal Schools in this Diocese, give general supervision to all such schools, and perform such other functions regarding such schools as the Bishop may require.” The **Standards for Schools** are published in the *Commission on Schools Handbook & Directory*, accessible via a link on the “About Our Schools” page of the Diocesan website.

During this reporting period, two Episcopal schools closed. Holy Comforter Episcopal School in Angleton closed on May 22, 2025, following several years of enrollment challenges that had become unsustainable. St. David’s Episcopal Day School closed in December 2025. Neither school is tracked by the Commission on Schools. The total number of schools in the EDOT is **52**.

In a Diocese as large as Texas, one can expect some leadership transitions each year. Among our schools, **4** new heads/directors have been named since last year’s report, as follows:

All Saints' Episcopal School of Fort Worth	Wallace Worden
Saint Thomas Episcopal School	Seraphim Danckaert
St. Christopher's Episcopal School	Becca Davis
St. Mark's Episcopal Day School	Whitney Zisman

Opening-day enrollment for schools in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas totaled 12,612 students. Of the Diocese’s schools, 28 serve infants through Kindergarten, 10 serve high school grades, and 14 serve students through elementary or middle school. Collectively, Episcopal schools in this Diocese employ 3,221 full and part-time staff members.

It is an honor to serve as Chair of the Commission on Schools and to witness the faithful and dedicated work taking place across our Episcopal schools. I am deeply grateful for the commitment of our school leaders, boards, faculty, and staff who, grounded in Episcopal identity and faith, serve students and families with care, purpose, and excellence throughout the Diocese of Texas.

Report submitted by Catherine “Scootie” Clark, Chair

SCHOOL SUMMARY, 2025-2026 REPORTING PERIOD

Schools by Highest Grade Level

Schools	Total	Change from last year
Preschool/Kinder (may include infant-kinder)	28	↓ (30)
Elementary (may include up to 5th gr.)	4	4
Middle School (may include up to 8th gr)	10	10
High School (may include up to 12th gr.)	10	10
Total Schools in the EDOT	52	54

Schools by Total Enrollment Groupings

Enrollment	Total	Change from last year
Schools up to 50 students	9	↓ (10)
Schools between 51-300 students	32	↓ (33)
Schools with more than 300 students	11	11
Total Schools in the EDOT	52	54

OTHER STATS

Students-Total Enrollment: 12,612

Color Enrollment: 3,066 (approx 24.31% of current enrollment), down from last year 3301

Financial Aid: 1,978 (approx 15.79% of enrollment), up from last year 1,895

Total # of Employees: 3,209, up from last year of 2,938

Accredited Schools: 44 (81.4%)

Schools Pending or not Accredited

- **Application submitted for accreditation: 1-** St. Michael's Episcopal Day School-Austin
- **Exempt (fewer than 50 students in 1st or 2nd year): 6-** St. Christopher's Episcopal Day School, Good Shepherd Episcopal School, St. Andrew's Academy, St. James Episcopal Preschool, St. James Episcopal Day School, Holy Cross Kids Preschool
- **Not accredited, not in compliance: 1-** Grace Episcopal School, Houston
 - *GES is in the process of becoming accredited and has been in contact with both the diocese and SAES. The accreditation process is expected to start soon.*

Location of Schools by City

Austin	All Saints Episcopal Day School Good Shepherd Episcopal School Hillside Early Childhood Center St. George's Episcopal School St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School St. Michael's Episcopal Day School St. Stephen's Episcopal School St. Andrew's Episcopal School St. Mark's Episcopal Day School Trinity Episcopal School
Bastrop	Calvary Episcopal School
Beaumont	All Saints Episcopal School
Bellaire	Episcopal High School
Bellville	St. Mary's Episcopal Day School
College Station	St. Thomas Early Learning Center
Conroe	St. James Episcopal Day School
Fort Worth	All Saints' Episcopal School of Fort Worth Trinity Episcopal School Fort Worth
Friendswood	Good Shepherd Episcopal School
Galveston	Trinity Episcopal School

Georgetown	Grace Episcopal School
Houston	Archway Academy Ascension Episcopal School Cathedral House Episcopal School First Steps Montessori School Grace Episcopal School Holy Spirit Episcopal School Saint Thomas Episcopal School St. Andrew's Episcopal School St. Christopher's Episcopal Day School St. Cuthbert School St. Francis Episcopal School St. Mark's Episcopal School St. Martin's Episcopal Preschool St. Stephen's Episcopal School - Houston
Killeen	St. Christopher's Episcopal School
Kingwood	Good Shepherd Episcopal School
La Grange	St. James Episcopal Preschool
Lindale	St. Luke's Episcopal School
Longview	Trinity School of Texas
Lufkin	St. Cyprian's Episcopal School
Marshall	Trinity Episcopal School
Missouri City	St. Catherine of Sienna Episcopal School
Nacogdoches	Christ Episcopal School
Pearland	St. Andrew's Academy - Pearland
Richmond	Calvary Episcopal Preparatory
Round Rock	St. Richard's Episcopal Preschool
Sugarland	Holy Cross Kids Preschool
Temple	St. Francis Episcopal School
Tyler	All Saints Episcopal School
Waco	Saint Paul's Episcopal School
The Woodlands	Trinity Episcopal Day School