TAFE
Texas Association of Future Educators

Area Conference FAQ

This is a live document being constantly updated. Please READ all emails sent regarding Area Conferences, FAQ pages and Event pages before contacting our office.

Before Registration Begins:

- Pay TAFE 2026-2027 membership dues by October 31st to be eligible to compete at Area.
- Register all students competing with Educators Rising. Visit Educators Rising Membership page for more information.
- Take a look at our Area Conference Registration Checklist.
- Review Conference Registration Steps in advance
    - Movie Format
    - Slides Format
- Review Competitive Event Registration Steps
    - Movie Format
    - Slides Format

Registration and Conference:

1. **When does registration begin?**Registration opens at **8:00 AM (CST) on October 1, 2026** and closes at **5:00 PM (CST) on October 16, 2026**.
2. **Where do I go on the website to register for my area conference?**
    a. Each area has its own registration form. Please ensure you are visiting your specific **area page** to access the correct registration link.
3. **What information will I need to provide during registration?**
    a. You will be required to provide the following information:
    b. Your cell phone number
    c. The quantity of each t-shirt size needed (for paid attendees only)
    d. Judge's name and email address
    e. Number and type of vehicles you will be bringing
4. **My students only want to take the ELF test and not attending the conference. How do I register them?**
    a. Please contact **Monica Shaw** directly for more information.
5. **What is the cancellation policy?**
    a. To receive a **full refund**, cancellations must be submitted via email to **Safie Gaye** no later than **Friday, October 30, 2026**.
        i. **No refunds or credits** will be issued after this date.
        ii. Refunds will **not** be provided for no-shows
6. **Can I substitute a student after registering?**

a. Yes. You may request a substitution by emailing Safie Gaye. Changes to attendee names and t-shirt sizes are permitted **through October 16, 2026** (registration deadline only).
b. Please note:
    i. Substitutions for **competitive events** are addressed separately in the Competitive Events section.
    ii. No name changes or substitutions will be accepted after **October 16, 2026**.

7. **Do I need to register judges, chaperones, or bus drivers?**
    a. No. These individuals do not need to be registered or paid unless they plan to attend any portion of the conference as participants.
8. **Do I need to register middle/high school student helpers?**
    a. Yes. Student helpers must be registered as **paid attendees**. They will not be permitted to participate or attend without registration.
9. **Do students need to submit competition materials by October 16?**
    a. No. Materials are **not submitted** during the area conference or competitive event registration process.
10. **When is payment due for the conference invoice?**
    a. Payment must be completed **by the date of your conference**, or a valid **purchase order (PO)** must be on file in order to participate.

Conference Logistics:

1. **Is lunch provided at the conference?**
    a. Yes. Lunch is provided for all **paid attendees**. Volunteer judges will also receive lunch if they are scheduled to judge during the lunch period.
2. **Can I bring outside food?**
    a. No. Outside food is **not permitted** in the conference center or conference rooms.
3. **Can parents attend the closing general session?**
    a. No. For safety and security reasons, **only paid attendees** are allowed to participate in any portion of the conference
4. **Do judges receive a conference t-shirt?**
    a. No. Conference t-shirts are provided **only to paid attendees**.

Dress Code and Competition Attire:

1. **When are students required to follow the dress code?**
    a. Students must adhere to the official dress code at **all times** during the conference. Please refer to: **Dress Code (tafeonline.org)**.
    b. Students are **not permitted** to walk around in slippers or with blankets.
2. **Can competitors wear costumes?**
    a. Costumes are permitted **only for specific events** and **only during the student's presentation**. After presenting, students must immediately return to the official TAFE dress code.

b. The following events allow limited use of costumes:
   i. **Children's Literature (Pre-K, Pre-K Spanish, K–3, K–3 Spanish):** Competitors may wear character costumes relevant to the book. **No additional props** may be used during the presentation.
   ii. **Project Visualize (TRAFLE):** Contestants may wear costumes that were part of their original project. For example, if students dressed as characters for a themed reading event, those same costumes may be worn during the presentation.
   iii. No other events permit costumes.

Judges Requirements:

1. **What are the judging requirements for TAFE competitive events?**
   a. Each chapter participating in competitive events is required to **serve as a judge or provide qualified judges**.
   b. Chapters that do not meet this requirement will be assessed a fee based on the number of competitors entered:
      i. **1–4 competitors:** Provide 1 judge *or* pay a $200 fee
      ii. **5–14 competitors:** Provide 2 judges *or* pay a $400 fee
      iii. **15 or more competitors:** Provide 3 judges *or* pay a $600 fee
   c. Chapters may earn a **$50 credit for each additional judge** provided beyond the required number, up to a maximum credit of **$200**. All earned credits must be used by **August 31, 2027**.
   d. **Additional requirements:**
      i. Judges must be available for the **entire day**.
      ii. **Partial-day judging is not permitted.**
2. **Do I receive credit for providing additional judges?**
   a. Yes. Chapters will receive a **$50 credit per additional judge**, up to a maximum of **$200**. Credits must be used by **August 31, 2027**.
3. **If students drop after registration, does that change my judging requirements?**
   a. No. Judge requirements are based on the number of competitors at the time schedules are finalized.
   b. These requirements are **locked in after October 30, 2026** (the final date for full refunds).
4. **If I am required to provide two judges but can only provide one, will I be charged for both?**
   a. No. You will only be charged for the **number of judges not provided**.
5. **Can schools within the same district share judges?**
   a. Yes, but **only two schools may share one judge**.
   b. Example: If two schools are each required to provide **two judges** (four total), they may share and provide a **minimum of three judges** combined.
6. **Can I bring more judges than required?**

   a. Yes. Chapters are encouraged to provide additional judges and can earn up to **$200 in credit**. Credits must be used by **August 31, 2027**.

7. **Who is eligible to serve as a judge?**
   a. Judges must be **18 years or older** and may include:
      i. Current or former TAFE Teacher Leaders
      ii. TAFE alumni
      iii. College students
      iv. Teachers, counselors, or administrators
      v. Parents or other qualified adults
8. **Do I need to register judges, chaperones, or bus drivers?**
   a. No. These individuals do not need to be registered or paid unless they plan to attend conference sessions as participants.
9. **How can I change a judge after registration?**
   a. **Before October 16, 2026:** Email Monica Shaw with the judge's name, title, and email address.
   b. **After October 16, 2026:** Submit changes to your **area coordinator**.
10. **When will judges receive sign-up instructions?**
    a. Judges will be contacted by your **area coordinator** once sign-up information becomes available.

Student Helper Requirements:

1. **What are the student helper requirements?**
   a. Schools will be assigned specific **student volunteer shifts**. Advisors should be prepared to rotate students as needed to ensure all assigned shifts are fully covered.
2. **Do I need to register middle/high school student helpers?**
   a. Yes. Student helpers must be registered as **paid attendees**. They will not be permitted to participate in any conference activities without being registered.

Competitive Events:

1. **When do I register my students for events?**
   a. After completing your **conference registration**, you will receive an email with links to register for competitive events.
   Please review the **Competitive Event Registration Steps** in advance to understand the process.
2. **When registering for a team or dual event, do I need to register each student?**
   a. No. You only need to register **one student**. During registration, you will be prompted to list their partner(s) or team members, which will register all participants for that event.
3. **When is the deadline to register for competitive events?**
   a. All competitors must be registered by **October 16, 2026 at 5:00 PM (CST)**.
4. **How will we know when our students are scheduled to compete?**
   a. Instructions for selecting competitive event times will be emailed once your area's schedule is available.

   b. Time selection windows will be open **from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM** on the designated dates for your area:
      i. **Areas 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11:** October 27–29
      ii. **Areas 3, 6, 7:** November 17–19
   c. Sign-up links will be available on your **area page**.

5. **My students' time to compete overlaps with another event they are in. Can I change it?**
   a. No, once your time is selected we are unable to change it. You will need to report to the competition room with your competitor and see if there is an open spot they can swap with.
6. **My student's name is misspelled in their event registration. What should I do?**
   a. If an error was made during registration, please edit the information in the School event portal for your area.
7. **Can I make changes after competitive event registration closes?**
   a. After registration closes, only the following changes are permitted:
      i. Drops
      ii. Substitutions within team or dual events
8. **How do I make competitive event changes?**
   a. For drops prior to **October 16, 2026**, email the TAFE office directly.
   b. After October 16, changes must be made through your **school event portal** (used for time slot selection).
   c. Access to make changes in the database will open **the day before your conference**.
9. **What should I do if a student can no longer compete?**
   a. Submit a drop using the **school event portal, once it becomes** available.
10. **How is the ELF test administered?**
    a. The ELF test is administered **prior to Area Conferences**
11. **I have a time conflict on two of my students' events, am I able to change times?**
    a. Unfortunately, once event times are selected, we do not change them.. We recommend reporting to the event room on the day of the conference to see whether a vacant time slot becomes available. We ensure all students have the opportunity to compete, so if no alternate time is available, it is acceptable to arrive late to your second event.

Prescored and Materials:

1. **When do I submit prescored materials?**
   a. Prescoring is conducted **only for competitions at the state conference**. There is **no prescoring for area conferences**, with the exception of **Breakout Session**.
   b. All other materials must be **presented and evaluated onsite** at your area conference.
2. **How are materials like videos, lesson plans, etc., evaluated without prescoring?**
   a. Students must bring **all required materials** to their competition. Judges will review and score all materials **onsite during the event**.

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Originality Pre-Submission:

1. **What is an originality pre-submission?**
    a. Originality pre-submissions are **not scored**. These materials are collected only in the event of a **score discrepancy after judging** for the following events:
        i. Interactive Bulletin Board
        ii. Project Visualize
        iii. Teacher Created Materials
    b. There is **no penalty** for choosing not to submit these materials.
2. **What items need to be submitted in advance?**
    a. If submitting, you must include:
        i. A **photo of the tri-fold/materials**
        ii. A **PDF copy of the summary sheet**
        iii. All files must be clearly labeled with the student's **FORM ID**, which can be found in your **Area Database**.
3. **When are originality pre-submissions due?**
    a. All materials must be submitted **no later than the day before your conference**, based on your area:
        i. **Area 1:** November 6
        ii. **Area 2:** November 13
        iii. **Area 3:** December 3
        iv. **Area 4:** November 12
        v. **Area 5:** November 1
        vi. **Area 6:** December 3
        vii. **Area 7:** December 3
        viii. **Area 8:** November 6
        ix. **Area 9:** November 6
        x. **Area 10:** November 13
        xi. **Area 11:** November 13