

**MEETING NOTES**  
**SURVEYING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**

**February 3, 2023**  
**10a.m. – Noon**

**Via Zoom**

**Discuss and Possibly Act on the Following Agenda Items:**

- Call to Order
- Introductions / Agenda -Attendees
  - Jon Hodde, RPLS – SAC Chair
  - Manny Carrizales, RPLS - SAC Member
  - Vasileios Kalogirou, RPLS - SAC Member
  - Paul Kwan, RPLS - SAC Member
  - David McDow, RPLS, LSLs - SAC Member
  - Stan Piper, RPLS, LSLs - SAC Member
  - Dorothy Taylor, RPLS - SAC Member
  - Heather Welch-Westfall, RPLS - SAC Member
  - Coleen Johnson, RPLS – TPBELS Board Member Liaison
  - Mark Neugebauer, RPLS, LSLs – TBPELS Board Member Liaison
  - Lance Kinney, PhD, PE – TBPELS Executive Director
  - Ed Brannan, PE – TBPELS Licensing Technical Specialist
  - Michael Sims, PE – TBPELS Director of Compliance & Enforcement
  - Rick Strong, PE – TBPELS Director of Licensing and Registration
- Exam Update
  - Current Exam Update – Mr. Strong reviewed exam statistics from the September 30, 2022, RPLS, Reciprocal, and LSLs exam. The April 2023 RPLS exam will be the last on in the current format. The QA/QC workgroup has reviewed and approved this exam and it is ready for delivery.
  - State Specific Exams Update – Mr. Strong reported on the progress of the development of the Texas Specific Surveying Exam (TSSE). A workgroup of exam developers are reviewing the exam content and sample exams pulled by staff. Meetings were held in January and another is scheduled for March. The target is to have several exams developed and ready by summer for the first exam in October 2023. Rules for the TSSE are in progress and will be presented for proposal at the upcoming February Board meeting.

At the previous SAC meeting it was recommended to allow applicants to start taking the NCEES PS exam in May 2023. Staff asked if it would be reasonable to allow Texas

applicants to take the PS exam earlier than May. Some applicants have been asking if this is a possibility. The SAC agreed that this is a reasonable option. Dr. Kinney said he would speak with NCEES about the process to authorize Texas applicants to take the PS exam and will report back to the SAC.

- The committee also discussed adding new items to the item bank. They recommended that all new questions be reviewed by the exam workgroups. Also, it was suggested that the TSSE have several unscored pre-test items to gather question performance data before being added to the item bank. This is standard procedure for other exams.

- NCEES PS Exam Module Discussion and Recommendation –

NCEES has been collecting data and doing research to possibly transition the current PS single exam format to a modular format. The idea is that there could be different modules to cover different aspects of surveying practice as different states may have different requirements for licensure or their license covers different areas of professional practice. After completing their analysis, NCEES Committee on Examinations for Professional Surveyors (EPS) has made a recommendation to revise the core PS exam to cover core surveying content and boundary topics (Core and Boundary) and to create an optional exam that covers the Public Land Surveying System (PLSS). Each state will determine which exams would be required for licensure or registration in that state. NCEES sent forward a draft exam specification for each exam which was provided to SAC members. This recommendation would not impact the exam process or conversion to the TSSE at this time. The exam conversion is slated to be implemented in 2027. Since Texas would only use one exam the exam prices would remain the same as the current NCEES PS exam.

After review and discussion of the new exam format and content, a review of the current exam content, and discussion about the applicability to the requirements for practice in Texas, the SAC recommended that TBPELS would require the revised PS Core and Boundary exam for registration as an RPLS and not require the PLSS module. This recommendation will be made to the Board for approval and then reporting to NCEES.

- Draft Rules for Texas Specific Surveying Exam – Discussion and Recommendations

TBPELS staff has been working on draft rule changes needed to implement the NCEES PS exam and TSSE exam conversion. Most rule changes are straightforward but one issue came up regarding the limits / number of retakes to be allowed. Currently, an applicant is allowed to take the RPLS exam 3 times within 4 years and if they do not pass, they must gain an additional year of experience or get additional education prior to re-applying. With the current two exam model, the question came up about how to best approach this. Are the limits still reasonable? Is the number of attempts and the timeframe reasonable?

After much discussion of different options, the SAC recommends the following format for exam retakes:

- Applicants can take the PS exam after becoming an SIT. They can have up to 3 attempts within four years. If an SIT cannot pass the PS exam during this time, they will get additional attempts once they apply and are approved through the RPLS application process.
- Applicants who are approved via the RPLS application process are eligible to sit for the TSSE and the PS exam (if they have not completed it already). They will have 3 attempts at the

TSSE within 4 years, and if they do not pass the TSSE during this time, they will have to gain a minimum of one additional year of surveying experience or 6 additional hours of college level surveying courses before re-applying. Same if they do not pass the PS exam with 3 attempts within 4 years.

- Once an applicant has passed the PS exam or TSSE they will NOT have to retake the exam.
- The applicant will not be approved as an RPLS until they have passed BOTH exams.

TBPELS staff will take this recommendation and craft draft rules to present to the Board at the February meeting.

- 32 Hour Course Guideline Update

At the last SAC meeting, the SAC discussed the procedure to review the current guidelines for the 32 hour requirement for non-surveying associates and bachelor degrees. TBPELS staff has begun the process of collecting information from stakeholders. TBPELS has engaged with educators from the various 2 year and 4 year programs in Texas to gather their input on courses that are normally in programs, course content, names of courses, and recommendations on ways to adjust and improve the 32 hour guideline. The first round of input from educators is due Feb 3 and will be compiled and shared on Basecamp. The next step is to convene a sample workgroup of practitioners and surveying industry representatives to get their input. Once this information is gathered, it will be compiled and shared with the SAC for analysis and recommendation.

- Legislative Update

- TSPS Surveying Bill – TSPS is in the process of developing language for a potential bill to be filed this legislative session. Drafts are in progress and the latest version was shared with the SAC. This bill has not been filed at this time. The legislative process is long and may result in changes. The current topics covered in the bill are allowing the FS exam to be taken once an individual has completed the minimum education for an SIT. Once the education, experience, and FS exam are complete, then they may apply for an SIT. Additionally, there are draft provisions concerning reporting from the SAC and regarding formal surveying policy advisory opinions. This was a report only as the SAC and TPBELS are not part of the legislative process.

- Murdough Center – Surveying Ethics Program

TBPELS is working with the Murdough Center for professional ethics to develop an ethics program for surveyors. This would parallel the format of the current program by TBPELS and many states for engineering. A first draft has been prepared and now needs review. Staff will be reviewing and asked for volunteers from the SAC. Mr. McDow and Ms. Taylor said they would help review.

- Other Items from Committee Members – the SAC agreed that the next meeting should be in person at the TBPELS offices in Austin.

- Adjourn