

STL NEWS

STATES TOP LEADING NEWS

TEXAS GOVERNOR APPOINTS FOUR TO VIRTUAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

By Maryam Shah

STL News

November 3, 2021

Austin, TX (STL.News) Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Rex Gore, Bernie Francis, Hannah Smith, and Josue Tamarez Torres to the Texas Commission on Virtual Education for terms at the pleasure of the Governor. Additionally, Gore was named chair of the commission. The commission was established to develop and make recommendations regarding the delivery of virtual education in the public school system and state funding for virtual education under the Foundation School Program.

Rex Gore of Austin is President of PJS of Texas and co-founder of CleanScapes. He is a member of the State Board for Educator Certification and a former board member of Building Owners and Managers Association, Real Estate Council of Austin, Austin Chamber of Commerce, and the Boy Scouts of America. He is a regional board member for IDEA Public Schools and a member of the **Texas Business Leadership Council** Education Task Force. He is the co-founder and board member of PelotonU and former board chair of TCSA – Charter Schools Now C4 and Regents School of Austin. Gore received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Economics and a Master of Business Administration from Kansas State University.

Bernie Francis of Carrollton is CEO of Business Control Systems. He is a member of the Texas Western Governor's University Advisory Board, former vice chair and former board member of the Texas Mutual Insurance Company, and former councilman and mayor pro tem for the City of Carrollton. He is a former gubernatorial appointee to the Texas State University System Board of Regents, Texas State Technical College System Board of Regents, Task Force on Higher Education Incentive Funding, and Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness. Additionally, he is a former board member of the North Central Texas Workforce Board and former member of the Texas Institute for Education Reform. Francis received a Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems from The University of Texas at Dallas, and served in the United States Air Force.

Hannah Smith of Southlake is Counsel for Schaerr Jaffe LLP, an appellate law firm in Washington, D.C., and is a Trustee for the Carroll Independent School District. She previously was Senior Counsel and Fellow for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and clerked for both

U.S. Supreme Court Justices Alito and Thomas. She is a board member of the Religious Freedom Institute and the DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom and a Senior Fellow for the International Center for Law & Religious Studies. Smith received an AB in Public and International Affairs, focusing on education reform policy, from Princeton University and a Juris Doctor degree from Brigham Young University Law School.

Josue Tamarez Torres of Forney is a veteran classroom teacher, Dallas ISD Master Teacher, Mentor Teacher, and Campus Instructional Leadership Team member for the Dallas Independent School District, where he has worked for over 10 years. Additionally, he has a Master Teacher designation under the Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment. He is a math coach with the Texas Math and Science Coaches Association, former education fellow and professional development facilitator for Teaching Trust, and a former policy fellow for Teach Plus. He has received many teaching awards in the last few years including Dallas ISD and South East Dallas Chamber of Commerce Teacher of the Year, Campus Teacher of the Year, Maverick Award: Top Scoring Teacher, Hall of Fame: Top Team Award, and STAAR Playmaker Award. He is a former corps member, mentor, and ambassador for Teach for America and a former member of Home Visit Project. Torres received a Bachelor of Business Administration from Baruch College.