

THE MICHIGAN FFA STATE OFFICER



SELECTION PROCESS GUIDEBOOK

REVISED JANUARY 2023

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being selected as one of the state officer candidates to potentially represent and serve the Michigan FFA Association throughout the upcoming year. If elected, we trust that your association with the Michigan FFA will be a pleasant, mutually beneficial and a challenging professional experience. We hope that you will find that the Michigan FFA provides you with the opportunity and incentive for personal and professional growth.

In order for you to best prepare you for your candidacy, this handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with our policies and procedures for the state FFA officer selection process. Please read it carefully. A handbook cannot answer all of your questions; it can only highlight certain key areas. After reviewing the handbook, please feel free to ask questions of the state staff or the Michigan State FFA Vice President for the selection process.

MICHIGAN FFA STATE OFFICER SELECTION HANDBOOK

To be a successful candidate, you need to know what the Michigan FFA Association expects from you and what you can expect from the Michigan FFA Association. In addition, an understanding of the selection processes will greatly improve your chances of success.

The intent of this handbook is to give you information about the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for Michigan State FFA Officers. It also contains information on suggestions on how to prepare for the selection process, and how the nominating committee is selected, prepared and conducts the selection process.

Each year, the contents of this handbook will be updated to reflect the materials used in the most recent Michigan FFA State Officer selection process.

THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

Date of Arrival

The Michigan FFA Association staff will make hotel reservations for all candidates with two-three candidates sharing a room. The Michigan FFA Association will pay for the candidates' lodging and meals during the selection process.

The Michigan FFA staff will plan for all candidates to arrive Friday, February 9, 2024 by 6:00 p.m. and depart Sunday, February 11, 2024 no later than 3:00 p.m. If you have questions about your hotel reservations, please contact Michelle Sidel at 517-353-9221.

Preparation/Studying

We recommend reading through this guide - particularly mandatory functions, responsibilities and policies, and the basic history and knowledge of the Michigan FFA Association and National FFA Organization. During the interviews, the committee may choose to draw questions or information from this handbook.

BEING A STATE FFA OFFICER

The primary responsibility of a state officer is to serve the Michigan FFA Association in local, state, national and international activities in a way that will inform, motivate, and inspire FFA members, advisors, state staff, teachers, and others to achieve the mission, strategies, and core goals of the organization.

Responsibilities

State officers serve under the supervision of state FFA staff of the Michigan FFA Association in accordance with official policy and budget limits. Responsibilities of state officers include (but are not limited to):

1. Participate in training, orientation, continual self-improvement, and evaluation of activities as directed by the Executive Secretary including, but not limited to Base Camp, State Officer Checkpoints, the Leadership Delegate Conference and all retreats.
2. Participate in making visits to business and industry as directed by the Executive Secretary working in cooperation with the Michigan FFA Foundation staff.
3. Participate in chapter visits and banquets as directed by the Executive Secretary and as scheduled by state FFA staff.
4. Represent the Michigan FFA Association at other local, state, national and international activities as scheduled by state FFA staff.
5. Participate in the planning and conducting of the State Leadership Conference for Chapter and Regional Officers, working under the direction of the Executive Secretary.
6. Participate in the planning and conducting of sessions and other activities at the Michigan FFA State Convention as assigned by state FFA staff.
7. Keep up to date with all correspondence — written, email, and verbal.
8. Plan, prepare, read, study, listen, review, and practice to continue improving public speaking, facilitation, and communication skills.
9. Stay up to date on facts and issues in FFA; agricultural education; and the agriculture, food, and natural resources industries.
10. Develop positive relationships with FFA members, advisors, staff, sponsors, and the general public.
11. Develop and exercise an awareness and sensitivity for the diverse geographic, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups represented in FFA membership and the general student population.
12. Maintain a positive attitude and enjoy your year of service with members, advisors, staff, sponsors, and others.
13. Follow the spirit and intent of the State Officer Code of Conduct (part of application process).
14. Perform other duties, processes, and procedures as instructed by the Executive Secretary.
15. Attend and participate in all executive meetings held throughout the year.

Policies That Guide State FFA Officer Operations

Webster's College Dictionary defines policy as “a definite course or method of action selected among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.” The Michigan FFA Association has established policies designed to chart the course of the daily operations of the organization. These policies, reviewed throughout the year, include policies that influence the management of State FFA Officers.

The following policies are excerpted from the Michigan FFA Association State Officer Code of Conduct. Please familiarize yourself with all of the policies including the following:

Michigan FFA State officers are committed to upholding a positive and professional image during their entire year of service. This includes communicating and representing the Michigan FFA Association appropriately 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during their time as an officer. To fulfill this role, an officer should strive to project a professional image, proper etiquette, positive media interaction, and promote diversity and inclusivity.

Michigan FFA State Officers will forego all alcohol, tobacco, and illegal substances at all times from the day the officer is selected until June 30th of the following year after their election. The Michigan FFA Association maintains a zero-tolerance policy on the use of these substances and not adhering to this policy will result in removal from office.

Attend all required meetings, activities and events as required by the Executive Secretary, State FFA Advisor, state FFA staff and/or Michigan FFA Board of Directors throughout their year of service. In the event an officer is not able to attend a required function due to an emergency or a legitimate, worthwhile conflict as agreed upon by the state officer team and state staff, they have the sole responsibility of contacting the appropriate state staff personnel to receive approval for their absence prior to missing the function.

Avoid inappropriate relationships or contact with other FFA members—including other current state officers or minors within the organization without parental approval.

Avoid places or activities that in any way would raise questions as to one's moral character or conduct.

Use wholesome and appropriate language in all speeches and informal conversations.

Failure to adhere to the above policies can lead to immediate dismissal from your state officer position and responsibilities. Please refer to your Code of Conduct form for additional rules and regulations.

Preplanning to Adapt Your College Experience

To successfully complete their year of service, State FFA Officers will be encouraged to take a lighter course load for their college studies during their term in office. Many candidates will be enrolled in high school during their run for office. If elected, the new officers will return home after the conclusion of the Michigan FFA State Convention. All newly elected officers are required to attend three trainings prior to July 1. The first mandatory State Officer training, State Officer Base Camp, is scheduled in March/April. The second phase of the training, State Officer Checkpoint #1 and SLCCO/SLCRO prep, will occur in June.

The Michigan FFA Association **cannot** require any university or college to release a newly elected officer from their studies nor require officers to take a year off of college. It is up to each candidate to arrange with their professors to make up any missed class assignments or projects throughout their year of service. That being said, the State FFA Office will provide excuse letters at the beginning of each semester and as needed for events such as National Convention to assist in making this process easier. The best way to make this as easy of a process as possible; however, is to talk to *all* of your professors prior to enrolling or attending a class. Seek their support and provide additional information about FFA and its mission. Building a relationship with each of your professors prior to the beginning a new class will increase the likelihood of them wanting to work cooperatively with you after your election.

A SUCCESSFUL STATE FFA OFFICER

What is a successful State FFA Officer? It certainly is more than surviving a yearlong term in office. A State FFA Officer wears a variety of hats. They are elected officials expected to represent the student membership throughout their year of service. They are teachers of leadership and teamwork to the general membership. They are motivational speakers who will inspire members and non-members to heights they did not think they could achieve. They are communicators and public relations specialists on behalf of the Michigan FFA Association, building positive relationships with each activity. They are teammates to the other 11 State FFA Officers and to the staff of the Michigan FFA Association. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, they are learners eager to absorb and grow to the fullest extent possible to fulfill the aforementioned roles of their office.

Each year, the state staff, current state officers and faculty review the election and training process for the Michigan FFA State Officers. The 2003-04 Michigan FFA State Officers participated in a pilot test of four enrichment trainings to provide the team with the needed tools and preparation to effectively serve the association and the members of Michigan FFA. Through each phase of the training, the state staff and the officers evaluated the process and provided feedback to improve the training and development of future state officer teams. After evaluating the process and the performance of the current state officer team, state staff identified certain essential traits and skills needed for a successful, effective officer.

For officers to achieve the maximum impact and development from the enrichment training, certain behavioral traits and basic knowledge is needed prior to a state officer's election to serve as an effective leader for the Michigan FFA Association. Based on our findings, the following is the process outlined for election procedures:

Interview Round Makeup

The state process will consist of the following components:

- Written Test (FFA History, State Structure & Programs, Officer Responsibilities, Basic Ag Facts) – To be administered on the first day of interviews
- 4 Interviews
 - Personal One-on-One
 - Team Dynamics
 - Agricultural Education/FFA/Agricultural Issues
 - Committee's Choice

State FFA Officer Behavioral Competencies & Definitions

Interviews will center on ten themes that the Michigan FFA State Staff and current officers identify as skills and traits needed to serve successfully in the role of a Michigan FFA State Officer. The following ten traits were identified as qualities needed to ensure a state officer team's maximum success. Therefore, these qualities are what nominating committee members should seek in next state officer team:

Connectedness

This person possesses the unique ability of making personal connections to audiences ranging from young people through adults, regardless of position or status. This trait allows the person to make an impact through relating to their audience – either through a group situation or personal one-on-one contact. These individuals are effective because of their ability to make others feel engaged.

Dedicated/Personal Drive

This person completes assigned responsibilities without constant monitoring and has the ability to follow-through. They strive to be trustworthy, dependable and confident about their work habits. Their world is best described by the order they create.

Desire for Personal Growth

This person recognizes the importance of learning and growing for themselves as well as for others. They seek opportunities to feel challenged on their beliefs and experiences with the ultimate goal for personal enlightenment and progress.

Heart to Serve

A person with the heart to serve seeks out extrinsic opportunities to give back to others. They are motivated by the desire to help others achieve, grow, and become better because of their personal interactions.

Integrity

A person who places value on living and staying committed to the high standards of the ethics required for the position. They strive to do the right thing even when out of the presence of others.

Maturity

As a young adult, this person exudes confidence to think through decisions, represent themselves professionally and respectfully, and be accountable for their own actions and team members.

Self-Awareness

This person routinely recognizes and analyzes their decisions, actions, value system, self-view, and personal biases. They seek constant improvement and self-improvement in their day-to-day interactions.

Task-Oriented

A person who can think through a process, create a plan, and follow through with responsibilities of a task or project. Others would consider this person responsible and reliable for completing their responsibilities and often going beyond the call of duty.

Value Personal/Cultural Differences

This person recognizes the need to accept, understand, and appreciate the personal and cultural differences of others. They seek out opportunities to learn and/or surround themselves with others who possess differences in experiences, viewpoints, heritages, and cultures. This person also seeks opportunities to relate and meet the needs of others who are traditionally underserved or under-recognized.

Professionalism

This person maintains an image and demeanor appropriate around others. They strive to present themselves as prepared and knowledgeable.

Relater

This person enjoys close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with others to achieve a goal.

WOO

A person strong in WOO (Winning Others Over) loves the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making a connection with another person.

Above all else, candidates are encouraged to focus on being themselves. The committee seeks to form a team with the right mix of qualifications, skills, and talents that enable them to serve the membership of the Michigan FFA Association effectively.

PREPARING FOR THE SELECTION PROCESS

How to prepare for the state FFA officer selection process will vary with each candidate. Some will prepare in isolation while others will engage others to help prepare.

The greatest key in a successful journey of preparing yourself for the state FFA officer selection process is the knowing the beginning and the end points. If you have an understanding of who you are (knowledge, skills, attitude, and talents) and your expectations as a state FFA officer candidate, then you can map your own plan for the preparation journey. This section will describe what knowledge and skill level is expected in a newly elected state FFA officer as well as providing a partial list of resources you may want to consider in creating your preparation strategy.

Suggested Preparation Material

- State Officer Candidate Handbook
- Most Recent Official FFA Manual
- FFA Student Handbook
- [2023 Trending Topics](#)
- [2023 Additional Resources and Study Guide](#)

What You Should Know

With all the roles that a state FFA officer must fulfill, it is imperative that state FFA officers enter their term with a high level of understanding of agricultural education; supervised agriculture experience; FFA; and the agriculture, food, and natural resources industries. This section will describe the minimum that each candidate should possess before the selection process begins.

FFA Knowledge

FFA is an intra-curricular organization having its origin and base in a definite part of the school curriculum — agricultural education. The close relationship facilitates each other's good points with FFA providing the “laboratory” for leadership, personal, and career development experiences that accompanies classroom instruction. Thus, a well-functioning FFA chapter, with a planned program of activities, a strong team of student and adult leaders and active "advisorship," enriches instruction in agriculture.

As with all well-run organizations, a strong mission and clear vision based on a set of core beliefs and values guides the National FFA Organization. Each of these elements is presented below, along with the organization’s strategic priority areas.

Vision Statement

FFA provides the next generation of leaders who will change the world.

Mission Statement

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for

premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

To accomplish its mission, FFA:

- Develops competent and assertive agricultural leadership.
- Increases awareness of the global and technological importance of agriculture and its contribution to our well-being.
- Strengthens the confidence of agriculture students in themselves and their work.
- Promotes the intelligent choice and establishment of an agricultural career.
- Encourages achievement in supervised agricultural experience programs.
- Encourages wise management of economic, environmental and human resources of the community.
- Develops interpersonal skills in teamwork, communications, human relations and social interaction.
- Builds character and promotes citizenship, volunteerism and patriotism.
- Promotes cooperation and cooperative attitudes among all people.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles.
- Encourages excellence in scholarship.

FFA Motto

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.

FFA Code of Ethics

FFA members conduct themselves at all times to be a credit to their organization, chapter, school, community and family. FFA members pledge to:

- Develop my potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.
- Make a positive difference in the lives of others.
- Dress neatly and appropriately for the occasion.
- Respect the rights of others and their property.
- Be courteous, honest and fair with others.
- Communicate in an appropriate, purposeful and positive manner.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by being modest in winning and generous in defeat.
- Make myself aware of FFA programs and activities and be an active participant.
- Conduct and value a supervised agricultural experience program.
- Strive to establish and enhance my skills through agricultural education in order to enter a successful career.
- Appreciate and promote diversity in our organization.

Fundamentals to Know About the Michigan FFA Association & the National FFA Organization

In addition to knowing and internalizing the above information, knowing the basics of FFA and the history of FFA is important. The following is a minimum of what each candidate should know about FFA.

1. What is the contribution of FFA within the program of agricultural education?
2. Why was FFA organized?
3. What are some unique features of FFA?
4. If a sponsor to FFA who was also a supporter of the 4-H asks you, *“What is the difference between the FFA and the 4-H,”* how would you respond?

5. What is the relationship of the state officers to:
 - a. The state advisor
 - b. The state executive secretary
 - c. The state FFA staff
6. What are the roles and responsibilities of a state officer?
7. What is the relationship of the National FFA Organization to the United States Department of Education (USDE)? Explain.
8. It is essential that you have a thorough knowledge the following:
 - a. The history of FFA
 - b. The purposes of FFA
 - c. How the organization operates
 - d. A program of activities and how it is developed
 - e. The essentials of good officer training on the local and state levels
 - f. FFA's programs, products and services offered to members and teachers
 - g. All ceremonies for FFA meetings and degrees
 - h. The purpose, structure and staff of the Michigan FFA Association
 - i. Parliamentary Procedure
 - j. National FFA Week and other public relations and brand awareness efforts
9. How is FFA financed?
10. What are the essentials of a successful chapter?
11. What are good guidelines for planning and conducting a program of activities?

Fundamentals to Know About the Michigan FFA & the National FFA Foundation

The National FFA Foundation greatly benefits FFA members. The following is the minimum that a candidate should know about the National & Michigan FFA Foundation.

1. When was the Michigan FFA Foundation organized?
2. What are the purposes of the Foundation?
3. How is the Foundation financed?
4. What would you as a state officer do to increase the understanding of the Foundation by local FFA members?
5. How would you increase the number of FFA award winners who would take the time to write thank you letters to sponsors?
6. If you had three minutes to explain the importance of FFA to a corporate president, what would you say?

Agricultural Education Knowledge

FFA provides students with many ways to learn more about agriculture as well as opportunities for self-improvement. The teacher of agriculture uses a shop to teach agricultural mechanics; they also use FFA as a "teaching tool" to teach leadership and to motivate students to set high goals and work to achieve them. With this comes pride and recognition for a "job well done."

The following is a minimum of what a candidate should know and be able to discuss:

1. The Smith-Hughes Act and its role in establishing agricultural education in the public schools.
2. The problem-solving approach to teaching and its influence on agricultural education,

SAE & FFA.

3. The evolution of the local agriculture program — from single-teacher, rural only to multiple types of locations and staffing patterns; from content focused only on production agriculture to today's programs of multiple career clusters being provided.
4. The history of Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) and its role in the local instructional program.
5. What are the strategic goals for agricultural education statewide (see *A New Era in Agriculture* report from The Council)?
6. What efforts are being done to recruit and retain agriculture teachers?
7. Understanding of current research findings in agricultural education.
8. Current student enrollment trends in agriculture.
9. Supply and demand of agriculture teachers.
10. Percentage of agriculture students with SAEs.
11. Percentage of agriculture students who are paid FFA members.
12. Influence of FFA membership on student performance (see Purdue/Horatio Alger study).

Agriculture Knowledge

The following is a minimum of what a candidate should know and be able to discuss about the agriculture industry.

1. Understanding of basic agriculture-related statistics (Agriculture Facts will serve as the base reference).
2. Understanding of the major issues being faced by the American agriculture industry.
3. Understanding of the influence of global agricultural trade on U.S. agriculture.
4. Knowledge of the top leaders in the Michigan agriculture industry.

PRACTICE SCENARIOS

Many candidates will prepare for the selection process by envisioning and even role-playing various scenarios they may encounter as a state FFA officer. This technique allows you to practice the knowledge and skills you have been gaining during your preparation process. To assist you in this technique, the following are questions asked or problems encountered by state FFA officers:

1. How can chapter officers develop more enthusiasm and interest among fellow chapter members?
2. Where and how should beginning members start their participation in FFA?
3. How can a member develop self-confidence?
4. Our chapter is located in an urban area. What are some SAE activities that can be done and have equal opportunities for attaining awards?
5. A member has just graduated from high school and suddenly realized the importance of leadership training. What can be done since the member will have fewer contacts with FFA?
6. What advice would you give a Greenhand who wants to become a state officer?
7. What activities do state officers participate in during their term of office?
8. Why should a member continue in FFA after graduation from high school?
9. How can a member become a good state officer candidate?
10. How did you get your start in FFA and eventually become a state officer candidate?
11. Explain your SAE program and how you began it. How does your SAE relate to your future career goals?
12. What are chapters doing for fundraising activities?
13. How have you benefited from serving the organization as an officer?
14. A member's parents does not want their son/daughter to enter into an agricultural career, but the student does. What advice do you give?
15. What should an officer, or member, do when they see an FFA member smoke in public while wearing the FFA jacket? When the jacket is improperly worn?
16. What are the characteristics of a good FFA officer? A good member?
17. Who can be an alumni member and what can they do for FFA?
18. What should you do after receiving a FFA Foundation-sponsored award?
19. How do chapter members get their advisor to utilize all the opportunities provided by FFA?
20. Our FFA advisor does not want to do or go to any FFA activities. How can we get them to do more?
21. What do chapters do that have the most successful chapter banquets?
22. A member has just been defeated in running for state office; what advice would you give them?
23. With the number of farms decreasing, why should agricultural education and FFA be offered in our local schools?
24. How would you describe the future of the agriculture industry? Of FFA?
25. Does every student need to have an SAE? Why or why not?
26. A freshman student sees no benefit from joining FFA.
27. What value does middle school agricultural instruction add to the local program?

KNOW YOURSELF

As stated at the start of this section, the greatest key in a successful journey of preparing yourself for the state FFA officer selection process is the knowing the beginning and the end points. The previous parts of this section (as well as the remainder of this handbook) have tried to illustrate the end point — what a state FFA officer needs to know and do to be successful. The beginning point is for you to determine. While many feel they know who they are, it does not hurt to get a “second opinion.” Can you answer all of these questions?

1. What is the first impression you make when you meet someone?
2. What are your beliefs? Can you convey them without offending others of different beliefs?
3. Can you write a letter or email that will influence the reader?
4. How are your individual speaking skills? Are you direct? Warm and friendly? Humorous?
5. Can you effectively relate your knowledge, skills and experiences to the topic being discussed?
6. How are you at speaking to groups?
7. How are your interviewing skills with various media?
8. How well do you work in a team situation?
9. Can you team-teach with someone?
10. Can you accept and grow from criticism?
11. Do you work better with students or with adults?
12. Can you present an argument persuasively?
13. Can you listen to and understand points made by another speaker?
14. What are your best talents and how do you use and grow them every day?
15. How well can you complete a behavior-based interview process?

The time to discover your abilities is not during the selection process. Spend time getting to know yourself better. Enlist the aid and support of others on this journey.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

There is a seemingly countless array of references that a candidate for state FFA office could use in their preparation. Each candidate must consider which are best for his or her preparation plan and processes. The following is a list of references to consider. You will find that some of the listings offer similar information but both sources were provided as they vary in the style used to convey the information.

FFA

The following is a partial listing of publications on FFA.

- [FFA.org \(home of the National FFA Organization\)](http://FFA.org)
- FFA Student Handbook (latest edition)
- Roberts Rules of Order (latest edition)
- Official FFA Manual (latest edition)
- [Michigan FFA Association Website](http://MichiganFFA.org)

Know Yourself

The following are a partial listing of books that relate to the roles and responsibilities of a state FFA officer and/or can help an individual discover their talents and passions.

- “Habitudes, The Art of Self-Leadership” by Tim Elmore
- “How Full is Your Bucket” by Tom Rath
- “Leadership 101” by John C. Maxwell
- “The Art of Leading Others” by Tim Elmore