



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 21-0611

PUBLIC ADMONITION

**HONORABLE MANUEL VALDEZ
FORMER MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE¹
NEW FAIRVIEW, WISE COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on August 11-13, 2021, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Manuel Valdez, Former Municipal Court Judge, New Fairview, Wise County, Texas. Judge Valdez was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns, but failed to provide a written response. Judge Valdez appeared before the Commission on October 27, 2021, and gave testimony. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following findings and conclusions:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Manuel Valdez, was judge of the New Fairview Municipal Court, New Fairview, Wise County, Texas.
2. Judge Valdez did not complete any of his 16 hours of judicial education for the 2018-2019 Academic Year.
3. Judge Valdez did not complete any of his 16 hours of judicial education for the 2019-2020 Academic Year.
4. Judge Valdez did not seek, nor was he granted, a waiver for his educational requirements for either the 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 Academic Years.
5. Judge Valdez was contacted by the Texas Municipal Court Education Center ("TMCEC") concerning his judicial education non-compliance several times.

¹ The Commission's investigation into this matter revealed that Judge Valdez appeared to have resigned from the bench in late March 2021 or after. While the timing of his resignation is not clear, it appears the City of New Fairview had replaced him as Municipal Court Judge, at the latest, by mid-April 2021.

6. On September 30, 2020, TMCEC staff had a conversation with Judge Valdez concerning his judicial education non-compliance and Judge Valdez said he might have to “let it ride”.
7. On January 4, 2021, TMCEC staff filed a complaint with the Commission regarding Judge Valdez’s judicial education non-compliance for the 2018-2019 & 2019-2020 Academic Years.
8. On March 11, 2021, Commission Staff sent Judge Valdez a Letter of Inquiry concerning his judicial education non-compliance with his response to the Letter of Inquiry due on March 29, 2021.
9. Judge Valdez did not respond to the Commission’s Letter of Inquiry.
10. At no time after March 26, 2018, did Judge Valdez obtain relevant judicial education.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides that a judge shall comply with the law and should act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.
2. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct states, in pertinent part: “A judge...shall maintain professional competence in [the law].”
3. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, that a judge shall not engage in “willful or persistent conduct” that “is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary...”
4. Rule 5a(2) of the Texas Rules of Judicial Education states, in pertinent part: “Each municipal court judge will, as an official duty: each fiscal year thereafter, complete a minimum of 16 hours of instruction from the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center in the performance of the duties of office.” After the first two years of judicial education is taken, a judge must complete at least eight continuous hours at a live TMCEC Judge Seminar and the remaining eight hours either approved live events or online education.²
5. Rule 5a(3) of the Texas Rules of Judicial Education states, in pertinent part: “Each municipal court judge will, as an official duty: in every fiscal year that ends in 0 or 5, complete two hours of course instruction related to understanding relevant issues of child welfare and the Individuals with Educational Disabilities Act....”

CONCLUSION

Based on the evidentiary record before it and the factual findings recited above, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that the Honorable Manuel Valdez, Former Municipal Court Judge, New Fairview, Wise County, Texas, should be publicly admonished for his failure to complete his judicial education for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Academic Years. Judge Valdez’s failures in this respect constituted willful failures to comply with the law and to maintain professional

² On March 30, 2020, the Court of Criminal Appeals issued an emergency order suspending all sections of the Rules of Judicial Education that required live, continuous hours of judicial education that would prevent a judge from completing his or her hours during the COVID-19 disaster.

competence in the law, and willful conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties and cast public discredit upon the judiciary or the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 2A and 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, §1-a of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to protect the public and promote public confidence in the judicial system.

Issued this the 29th day of October, 2021.



David Hall
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct