

SBTC executive director announces plans to step down

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The founding executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention—a group that broke away from the Baptist General Convention of Texas 22 years ago—announced plans to step down from leadership at the end of next year.

Jim Richards, age 68, intends to transition from his role with the convention effective Dec. 31, 2021, according to an article from the *Southern Baptist Texan* and distributed by [Baptist Press](#).

Baptist Press reported the SBTC board approved a succession plan and established a transition/search team that will include the board's executive committee plus two at-large appointees.

The transition plan calls for Richards to help orient his successor for a time period determined by the transition team and then continue serving for some duration as assistant to the new executive director.

Richards reportedly told the board he had planned to begin his transition in April but delayed it due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Southern Baptists of Texas originally formed as a dissident group within the BGCT. Its members wanted the historic state convention to align more closely with positions taken by the national Southern Baptist Convention.

After the 1997 BGCT annual meeting in Austin, some leaders of the Southern Baptists of Texas announced their intention to form their own state convention, which they did one year later.

At that point, Richards—then an associational director of missions in Arkansas—was hired as the new convention’s executive director.

In the years that followed, Richards served on several SBC committees and boards, and he was elected first vice president of the SBC in 2007.