



Board Briefs

*A report on the September 2010 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors, Houston, Texas
Plus highlights of the 2010 Delegate Assembly, George R. Brown Convention Center*

School Finance Plan Adopted

Board takes action to replace the state's system for funding schools

Acting on a recommendation by the TASB Legislative Committee, the TASB Board unanimously approved a school finance plan that will improve funding equity and adequacy. The TASB plan is a single-tier, guaranteed-yield approach that would replace the revenue targets and two-tiered formula systems in place today.

Under the plan, adequacy is improved by ensuring every district a minimum annual gain in revenue. But the plan also assures that no district loses general fund revenue. The plan improves equity by allocating greater gains to districts with low property wealth, low revenue targets, and high percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

TASB's strategic plan recognizes that districts across the state have grappled with school finance for decades. An advocacy goal in the 2009-12 plan addresses the issue and directs staff to "Develop and propose a school finance model that meets legal adequacy and equity requirements."

The TASB Board approved proposing the plan to the Legislature while the Association continues to investigate improvement in weights, allotments, and adjustments. A document to help board members understand the proposed system is now available at gr.tasb.org. Additional resources on TASB Governmental Relations' landing page will become available in the weeks ahead and will be updated frequently to answer any questions.

Advocacy Agenda Approved

With lawmakers returning to Austin in a few months, the Association has sharpened its focus on other legislative issues in addition to school finance. The 2010 Delegate Assembly met in Houston September 25 and approved the 2010-12 Advocacy Agenda. Delegates approved priorities, which guide the

Association's advocacy activities during the legislative biennium, and resolutions, which help TASB respond to legislative and regulatory issues that may arise. This legislative plan of action was developed through grassroots and Legislative Advisory Council meetings and resolutions submitted by member districts. The complete Advocacy Agenda is posted at gr.tasb.org.

Members should note that a TASA/TASB Pre-Legislative Seminar will not be held prior to the start of the 82nd legislative session in January. A new event, the TASA/TASB Legislative Conference, will be held March 30, 2011, in Austin. This event also replaces the February TASB Capitol Conference and Legislative Reception held in past years.

Delegates Elect TASB Leadership

Association officers and directors were approved by delegates to lead TASB in the coming year. President Sylvester Vasquez Jr., Southwest ISD, and Immediate Past President Sarah Winkler, Alief ISD, are automatic succession offices. The remaining slate of officers, as presented by the TASB Nominations Committee and TASB Board, was elected by the 2010 Delegate Assembly. All assumed their positions at the close of convention.

President-Elect: Gary Inmon, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD

Vice-President: Viola Garcia, Aldine ISD

Vice-President: Faye Beaulieu, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD

Secretary-Treasurer: Andra Self, Lufkin ISD

Directors elected by action of the regions

The following were elected by receiving endorsements from a majority of the active members in their regions. These directors took office at the end of convention.

Elected to three-year terms (2010–13) filling expired terms:

Region 1, Position B: Maria Leal, South Texas ISD

Region 2: Teresa Flores, Ingleside ISD

Region 10, Position C: Carla Ranger, Dallas ISD,
large district member

Region 10, Position E: Linda Griffin, Garland ISD,
large district member

Region 13, Position A: Lori Moya, Austin ISD,
large district member

Nominated by the Nominations Committee

Elected to three-year terms (2010–13) filling expiring terms:

Region 7: Andra Self, Lufkin ISD

Region 10, Position B: James Goode, Carrollton-Farmers
Branch ISD

Region 11, Position A: Charles Stafford, Denton ISD

Region 16: Bret Begert, Fort Elliott CISD

Filling unexpired one-year term (2010–11)

Region 14: Richard Chambers, Snyder ISD

Elected by action of the delegates

Filling vacancy for three-year term (2010–13)

Region 10, Position D: Keith Foisey, Kemp ISD

Filling expired term for three-year term (2010–13)

Region 20, Position D: Joshua Cerna, Harlandale ISD

Perceptions of Public Schools

TASB conducted a poll in July, which surveyed 1,000 adult Texans by telephone in a random sample statewide. Among the findings:

- 59 percent say Texas public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students to succeed.
- 60 percent agree that Texas public schools are better than those in other states.
- 63 percent agree that Texas public schools are doing a good job educating a challenging student population.
- 81 percent agree that Texas public schools are burdened by federal requirements.
- 88 percent agree that Texas public schools need more money, a 12-point increase from a comparable poll conducted in March 2004.

On the national level, Phi Delta Kappa and the Gallup Poll conducted their annual “Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.” Their findings, released in August, are based on 1,008 completed telephone interviews with a national sample of adults age 18 and older. This year’s findings include:

- 77 percent gave an A or B to the school their oldest child attends, the highest grade since the poll began.
- 36 percent said school funding tops the list of the biggest problems facing schools, up 4 percent from last year.
- 68 percent support the idea of charter schools, up from 42 percent in 2000.

Superintendent of the Year Named

TASB’s Member Services Committee conducted interviews with the five state finalists for the annual Superintendent of the Year (SOTY) award. The winner, Arturo Almendarez of Calallen ISD, was announced September 26 at the TASA/TASB Convention. Other state finalists included Eddie Coulson, College Station ISD, ESC 6; Greg Wright, Hallsville ISD, ESC 7; Shane Fields, Albany ISD, ESC 14; and Larry Appel, Dumas ISD, ESC 16.

Serving approximately 3,800 students, Almendarez has been superintendent of Calallen ISD since January 2005, and previously held that position from 1992 to 2000. He has 36 years of experience in education administration. Almendarez earned a bachelor’s degree at Sam Houston State College, a master’s degree at Texas A&I University, and doctorate at Texas A&M University. Serving on the board of directors of Citizens for Educational Excellence, he also is a member of the Corpus Christi Northwest Rotary International, alternative certification board member at Texas A&M University, and advisory board member of the Corpus Christi Junior League.

Federal Relations Network

A total of 32 board members will receive stipends to participate in the Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference in Washington, D.C., February 6–8. The TASB Board created the FRN stipend program to help boost participation at the annual conference and pay registration costs for selected applicants. This year TASB received 44 applications representing 21 congressional districts. The goal is to select a board member from each of the 32 congressional districts in Texas to attend the event, coordinated each year by the National School Boards Association.

TASB Legal Seminars

Each year TASB attorneys travel the state to provide regional training on legal issues. These one-day seminars offer five hours of continuing education credit and will cover such topics as the Open Meetings Act, grievances, student discipline, and employee social networking. Locations include Austin, November 5; Commerce, November 10; Nacogdoches, November 11; Abilene, November 16; and Amarillo, November 18. In South Padre, a three-hour School Law Basics preconference will be held November 19, followed by a full-day seminar November 20. Closing out the schedule are El Paso, February 17, and Tyler, February 22.

Leadership TASB

For several years, Leadership TASB graduates have discussed their desire to form an alumni organization to support the program and contribute to the scholarship fund. Graduates drew up bylaws for consideration, and the Board subsequently approved creation of a new Leadership TASB Alumni Association. This action was announced at the LTASB reunion and silent auction event held during convention.

The Class of 2011 also met for the first time in Houston. In addition to attending convention sessions and Delegate Assembly, they heard keynote speakers and organized teams for extended learning assignments during the coming year.

Online Learning Center

Two courses have been added to the Online Learning Center catalog. Presented by Catherine Clark, "Overview of the Texas Property Tax System" provides board members with a clear and comprehensive overview of the property tax system. Clark is the TASB associate executive director of Governance Services. "Outside the Board Room," produced by TASB Communications, is an online version of the division's popular course for board members on how to interact with the public in their daily lives.

In addition, a course for board candidates has been revised and includes interviews with current Texas board members. A new version of "Preparing for Superintendent Evaluation" also will be on line soon.

Secretaries' Training Conference

Online registration is open for training conferences especially designed for superintendents' secretaries on October 21–22 and February 10–11 at TASB headquarters in Austin. Identical in format and presenters, the conferences feature brand new sessions and an improved schedule of activities.

Topic experts will address legal matters, policy, and personnel issues, and other need-to-know information. Specific topics include board member records, Texas' school finance system, effective board meeting management, customer service, and community relations, among others.

TCER Report

The Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) shared results of several evaluation projects and updates on work for the coming year. TCER has contracted with Region 1 ESC to document the High School Redesign Project implemented in six South Texas high schools across four school years. The report will focus on what educational policymakers and practitioners can learn and how those lessons learned might help improve American high schools.

Directors were updated on key findings from the evaluations of new Texas charter schools and the Texas Rural Technology pilot. The Board also heard highlights of the year-three report of the Students Training for Academic Readiness Project with the Texas Education Agency.

Mark Your Calendar

TASB Risk Management Fund Fall Seminars

- October 7, Richardson
- October 28, Houston (Katy)

Topics will focus on certificates of insurance and required coverage from contractors, special auto liability coverage issues, such as rentals, traveling out-of-state, volunteers, and the inside line on workers' compensation with sessions on internal injury investigations and tools for mitigating the cost of high-dollar claims. Fund members can preregister free for the day-long seminars with complimentary meals.

HR Services

This fall at TASB headquarters:

- October 5, Fundamentals of Pay Systems
- October 6, Controlling Complex Pay Systems
- November 19, Staffing Controls for Public Schools

Also, in cooperation with the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators, HR Services will conduct a Texas School HR Administrators Academy at the Austin Marriott North in Round Rock on November 1-2. It is geared to assist new HR administrators.

OnSite Services training

- October 12-14, Asbestos, Integrated Pest Management and Environmental/Facilities Regulatory Compliance, Region 9 ESC, Wichita Falls
- October 26-27, Asbestos O&M Contractor Class, TASB headquarters, Austin
- November 2-4, Asbestos, Energy Management and Integrated Pest Management, McAllen ISD

In Other Action the Board Approved:

- Minutes of the July 2010 Board meeting
- Election of the 2010-11 Nominations Committee
- Board policy on the director mentor program

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is November 13 in Austin.

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When you need help...

