



Board Briefs

*A report on the January 2011 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors
TASB Headquarters, Austin, Texas*

Spotlight on Austin

Districts across Texas are bracing for the impact of a formidable budget deficit and asked to be vigilant in their support of public education. TASB has given its wholehearted support to the “Make Education a Priority” campaign, which is gaining momentum daily. Launched in Aledo ISD last summer, the campaign encourages school boards to pass a resolution urging the legislature to address problems in the school finance system.

School leaders also are urged to communicate to their legislators in concrete terms what cuts in state funding would mean for local districts. TASB developed a “No Cuts” issue brief that can be used to give specific examples of what effect state funding cuts will have on our students and schools. In addition, TASB and the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) completed a series of editorial board meetings with the state’s major newspapers echoing the need to protect state funding for public schools. Small teams composed of one or two TASB Directors and an equal number of superintendents met with editorial boards in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Amarillo, San Antonio, and El Paso.

A joint press conference will be held at the upcoming TASA Midwinter Conference to further spotlight the “Make Education a Priority—No Cuts” initiative. TASB also is forming a working group of business officials and other administrators who can provide information on how proposed legislation would financially affect local districts. As the session progresses, members should be on the alert for legislative updates and calls for action from TASB Governmental Relations.

TASA/TASB Legislative Conference

Legislators and Capitol insiders will update board members and superintendents March 30 on lawmakers’ activities and how education may be affected by proposed legislation. The new TASA/TASB Legislative Conference includes an afternoon visit to the Capitol, where attendees can meet with their representatives and staff to discuss education legislation and its impact on local districts. There is no charge for the conference, which includes complimentary breakfast and lunch, and free transportation to and from the Capitol. The event will reduce district travel costs by combining two former meetings, TASA/TASB Pre-Legislative Seminar and TASB Capitol Conference, into the one meeting at the Downtown Austin Hilton Hotel.

Directors Join Board

Three directors were elected to fill vacancies in interim positions on the TASB Board. Joe Adams, Katy ISD, will represent Region 4, position A; Bob Payton, Wichita Falls ISD, is the new director for Region 9; and Desiree Cornelius-Fisher, Manor ISD, fills the slot in Region 13, position B.

Adams has served on his local board 21 years, holding every position at least twice and the role of board president three times. A Gulf Coast Area Association of School Boards director since 1992, he also chairs the board of the Southern Federal Credit Union in Houston. Owner of Budget Blinds/Bluebonnet Painting and Renovation in Katy, he previously spent 30 years in the

oil and gas business working for several service-related companies in New Orleans, Dallas, London, and Cairo. In addition, he has been a member of the International Association of Drilling Contractors since 1980. Adams earned a bachelor's degree in marketing at Texas A&M University.

Payton, chief executive officer of the Sharp Iron Group, has been on his local board six years. Currently serving as vice-president and member of the Audit Committee, he previously held the positions of president and secretary. In his community, he has been active with the Wichita Falls ISD Foundation, Downtown Rotary, and Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce. Payton and his wife Lori have a son who is a student at McNiel Junior High.

Cornelius-Fisher, president of the Manor ISD board, has served the district 11 years and also held the positions of vice-president and secretary. A graduate of Leadership TASB and Leadership Austin, she earned a bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences from Concordia University. Active in the Central Texas School Board Association, she is former vice-president of the Manor Education Foundation and was a key member of a negotiation team that worked with Samsung and the governor's office to benefit the district.

Salary Survey Highlights

Average superintendent salary for 2010–11 is \$120,689, a 2.8 percent increase from 2009–10. Average superintendent salaries range from \$83,729 in districts with fewer than 500 students to \$276,545 in districts with more than 50,000 students. Half of reported salaries are less than \$105,000. Ninety percent of respondents had a returning superintendent for 2010–11. Thirty percent of returning superintendents did not receive a pay increase this year. This is the smallest average increase for superintendents in more than 10 years.

Every fall, TASB and TASA release results of a survey of district trends in superintendent pay and benefits. Conducted by the TASB HR Services Division, the survey is the first of a series of four reports that is the most definitive study of compensation and benefits practices in Texas.

The second survey on teacher salaries was released in December. Average teacher salaries are up by 1.4 percent. Weighted average teacher salary in responding districts was \$48,950 for 2010–11, up from the 2009–10 average salary of \$48,263. Weighted average salaries by enrollment range from \$41,459 in districts with fewer than 500 students to \$51,224 in districts with more than 50,000 students. Complete highlights of both surveys can be found at www.hrservices.tasb.org.

Winter Governance and Legal Seminar

School reformer and futurist Steven Barkley will discuss classroom learning in a global world at the TASB Winter Governance and Legal Seminar February 24–26 in Corpus Christi. The annual event is now incorporating some of the more popular features from the Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Students of All Cultures Conference, including a student panel and student performances.

In keeping with the theme of TASB Leadership Team Services conferences this year—From One Room to One World—the first general session will feature a debate between “Thomas Jefferson” and “Patrick Henry” on the purpose of education in a democracy and what values we need to preserve from the one-room schoolhouse of the past.

In addition, the Leadership TASB class members, meeting in conjunction with the event, have invited registrants to join them to view and later discuss the documentary *Two Million Minutes*. It explores how high school students in different parts of the world spend the 2 million minutes

that transpire between the time they enter ninth grade and the time they graduate. Online registration for the seminar ends February 18.

Convention Moving to Austin

For the first time in more than 30 years, Austin will host the annual TASA/TASB Convention September 30–October 2. New activities and options are being explored, including expanded field trips, extended exhibit hours, and mini-classes related to the digital learning exhibit. Districts wishing to present can submit program proposals to TASA for consideration through March 18. Applications are available at www.tasa.tasb.org, but note that presentations are limited to three per school district or organization.

Community College Services

TASB Policy Service has worked with the Texas Association of Community Colleges and a number of individual community colleges since 1983. Rules and regulations specific to community colleges have increased over the years, and TASB is exploring revisions to services available to them and development of additional expertise to best support their efforts in the future.

Online Learning Center

Recent amendments to the State Board of Education’s rule on school board member continuing education spurred a flurry of activity in the TASB Online Learning Center. The amended rule moved the definitive announcement on compliance with board training requirements from February to December. Course enrollments included new registrants in all 18 of the courses currently available, with the most heavily subscribed being those designed specifically for board presidents. All board members should take a look at what the site offers.

Cash-Back Program

About 30 districts have explored a pilot cash-back online shopping program that can generate funds for participating schools. Parents and other district supporters are encouraged to make their usual online purchases through the Furtal Web site. A small percentage then is credited back to the campus or district for its use locally. Details can be found at www.tx.furtal.com.

Energy Efficiency Services

TASB OnSite Services is involved in a pilot program to assist school districts in reducing energy consumption and costs. Under the program, a district’s goals to reduce energy usage and costs would be developed and implemented through a detailed energy efficiency and conservation plan. The plan would offer ways to save through changes in behavior and upgrading aging and/or inefficient infrastructure. These upgrades could include items such as HVAC, lighting, controls, boilers, chillers, and solar screens. OnSite is working with an energy efficiency service company and several districts to help TASB further evaluate and develop the potential new service.

First Public Update®

The Board received a progress report on First Public, a wholly owned subsidiary of TASB that provides school districts with a variety of flexible financing and investment options. Since becoming a registered broker/dealer and member of FINRA/SIPC, First Public has expanded its services to include fixed-income investing and municipal bond underwriting.

First Public administers Lone Star Investment Pool, a public funds investment pool available to governmental entities. Lone Star’s objective is to maintain safety of principal while providing the highest rate of return. Lone Star has \$7 billion in average annual assets and offers three diverse funds with overnight liquidity.

Upcoming Training

Superintendent Secretaries

February 10–11

TASB Headquarters, Austin

OnSite Services

- February 15, asbestos designated person
- February 16, IPM coordinator
- February 17, indoor air quality coordinator

All at Region 5 Education Service Center, Beaumont

- April 5, asbestos designated person
- April 6, IPM coordinator

Both at Alpine ISD

Legal Services

- February 17

Cattleman's Restaurant, Fabens (El Paso)

- February 22

Holiday Inn, Tyler

Winter Governance and Legal Seminar

February 24–26

Omni Bayfront Hotel, Corpus Christi

TASA/TASB Legislative Conference

March 30

Hilton Hotel, Austin

In Other Action, the Board Approved:

- Minutes of the November 13, 2010, TASB Board meeting
- 2009–10 Financial Statement and Audit
- Board policy on record retention
- Amendments to Board policy on Nominations Committee Operational Guidelines and Budget and Finance Committee Accountabilities and Approvals
- Amendments to Board policy on investments
- Supporting changes to the Supplemental Benefits Program governance structure

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is April 16 in Austin.

Editor: Barbara Williams

Public Information Office

When you need help...



tasb.org