



# Board Briefs

*Report on the July 2011 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors • Austin, Texas*

## **With Session over, What's Next?**

In coming weeks and months, board members and superintendents must explain the new realities of school finance to their local communities. State budget cuts have forced many districts to reduce staff and eliminate programs, and more will struggle in the future. TASB urges district leaders to share information about the impact of funding cuts locally and underscore that Texas' school finance system remains both inequitable and inadequately funded.

At the Association level, the Legislative Advisory Council (LAC) met in June to review TASB's Advocacy Agenda in light of legislation passed by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature. Refinements, based on LAC and TASB Legislative Committee recommendations, were approved by the Board, and the following proposed priorities will be passed on to the Delegate Assembly for consideration in October.

## **2010–12 TASB Advocacy Agenda**

TASB believes Texas public schools do more than educate students for tomorrow's workforce; the role of Texas school districts is to prepare all students for success in life. TASB believes school districts most effectively and efficiently serve students when school boards have local control over resources to address student, staff, and community needs.

TASB supports a simpler, sustainable school finance system that:

- Provides districts with adequate amounts of state and local funds to prepare students to achieve rigorous academic goals, cover annual enrollment growth and rising operating costs, and fund state and federal mandates;
- Gives school boards access to more golden pennies and additional taxing authority without voter approval;
- Provides formula-funding that closes the equity gap among districts as soon as possible; and
- Attributes statewide property value growth back to the school finance system.

TASB supports state funding that includes, but is not limited to:

- Career and technology courses, beginning in middle school, that allow students to meet the state's graduation requirements;
- Free prekindergarten programs for either a full day or for more student groups, at local district option;
- Curricular interventions and programs to help at-risk students; and
- Construction and renovation of public school district facilities to meet the state's growing student population.

TASB opposes the diversion of taxpayer dollars to private schools, including vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other such programs funded with public tax dollars.

TASB opposes the use of the Permanent School Fund for open enrollment charter school facilities.

TASB supports the creation of a measure to credit districts with growth in the accountability ratings.

TASB supports legislation to correct the state's structural deficit, which perpetuates the underfunding of public education.

These priorities frame TASB's legislative efforts and form the high-commitment, high-profile action plan for the Association. They combine with advocacy resolutions submitted by individual districts and the TASB Resolutions Committee, which were recommended for approval by the Board and will be presented to the Delegate Assembly for consideration.

In addition to the resolutions proposed by individual districts, the TASB Resolutions Committee suggested the following resolution for consideration by the Delegate Assembly:

TASB shall support legislation to give all districts the resources necessary to vertically align their elementary, middle, and high school curricula to prepare all students to succeed.

An update on education-related issues that passed during the recent special session was compiled by TASB Governmental Relations. This presentation is available to all TASB members using myTASB. A complete *Legislative Summary* covering the regular and special sessions also will be on line soon.

## Nominations Report Approved

A slate of TASB officers was recommended by the Nominations Committee and adopted by the Board for submission to the Delegate Assembly. At the conclusion of Convention, current President Sylvester Vasquez, Jr., of Southwest ISD will become immediate past president; current President-Elect Gary Inmon of Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD will become president.

Four other officers will be elected by the 2011 Assembly and take their positions at the end of Convention. For those seats, the TASB Board recommends the following:

President-Elect: Viola Garcia, Aldine ISD  
Vice-President: Faye Beaulieu, Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD  
Vice-President: Andra Self, Lufkin ISD  
Secretary-Treasurer: Bret Begert, Fort Elliott CISD

## Convention Update

Preparations are in high gear for the upcoming TASA/TASB Convention, being held in Austin September 30–October 2. Registration fees have been waived for board members and administrators of ISDs and education service centers, and most downtown hotels are almost sold out.

Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia, will kick off this year's first general session. He will discuss how information delivery is changing and what policymakers need to consider. Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, the real-life couple chronicled in the movie *The Blind Side*, will speak on Saturday about overcoming obstacles in the face of adversity. Phil Schlechty, author and CEO of the Schlechty Center, will present the closing general session on Sunday. His focus will be the new roles for school boards in transforming public education.

A new campaign this year, Food 4 Thought, is a collaborative effort between TASA/TASB and the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). Attendees are asked to bring a canned food item to donate or stop by the CAFB marketplace to make an online donation. CAFB serves nearly 300,000 people each year, and 41 percent of them are children.

Again this year, the Small District Seminar is being offered for districts with ADA of 750 or below. With a theme of "rules of engagement," the program will help attendees determine when, where, and how to leverage benefits of the small community and to strengthen instruction, school community ties, and influence with state policymakers.

Three field trips include a tour of the Texas Capitol and a legislator's view of board members' and administrators' roles in the legislative process. Cedar Ridge High School in Round Rock ISD will be a second option. Attendees will tour this new academy model and learn how the school was designed and constructed to maximize students' learning experience. The last option is a trip to the Capital Area Food Bank. Attendees will learn first-hand about community-enhanced school programs that are effective in reducing the prevalence of childhood hunger and obesity in low-income student populations.

## Federal Relations

Stipends again are available to pay for registration to the Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference in Washington, D.C., next February. FRN allows board members to learn more about federal issues impacting school districts and to meet with federal legislators and staff. The goal is to have one trustee from each of the 32 congressional districts in attendance at the annual conference, sponsored by the National School Boards Association.

Selection of stipend recipients will be based on:

- Previous attendance at FRN
- Participation in and/or graduation from Leadership TASB
- Participation in regional grassroots meetings
- Service on the TASB Legislative Advisory Council, TASB Legislative Committee, TASB Board of Directors, or any affiliated entity board

In addition, the selection committee will review the applicant's rationale for attending the FRN conference and the need for the stipend.

To be considered for the stipend program, interested board members can download and complete the application at [www.gr.tasb.org](http://www.gr.tasb.org) and return it to TASB Governmental Relations on or before close of business **Friday, September 16**. An e-mail explaining the stipend program was sent to school board presidents, superintendents, and School Board Advocacy Network members.

## Leadership TASB Class

This year's Convention will be the first meeting for members of the new Leadership TASB (LTASB) class, which was announced at the Board meeting. LTASB is specialized leadership training for Texas board members. Graduates of the yearlong program who attend the program meetings and complete assigned projects receive statewide recognition for their efforts.

Tuition fees for the upcoming class have been waived, and a number of scholarships will be awarded to offset travel and hotel costs. Trustees selected to participate in the 2011–12 class have been notified by TASB.

## Superintendent of the Year

Nineteen regional winners were named in TASB's annual Superintendent of the Year (SOTY) award. For more than 25 years, the program has recognized superintendents for excellence in leadership and commitment to educational quality. Eighteen of the finalists will move on to the state level. The winner for ESC 18, Johnny Tubb, recently retired, making him ineligible to continue in the selection process.

Regional SOTY winners and nominating education service centers (ESC) are:

- Eduardo Infante, Lyford CISD, ESC 1
- D. Scott Elliff, Corpus Christi ISD, ESC 2
- Bob Moore, Victoria ISD, ESC 3
- Wanda Bamberg, Aldine ISD, ESC 4
- Shannon Holmes, Hardin-Jefferson ISD, ESC 5
- Thomas Price, Jr., Splendora ISD, ESC 6
- Coy Holcombe, Eustace ISD, ESC 7
- Rick Ogden, Hughes Springs ISD, ESC 8
- Dennis Bennett, Jacksboro ISD, ESC 9
- Randy Hancock, Royse City ISD, ESC 10
- Gayle Stinson, Lake Dallas ISD, ESC 11
- Sharon Shields, La Vega ISD, ESC 12
- Jesus Chavez, Round Rock ISD, ESC 13
- Max Thompson, Rising Star ISD, ESC 14
- Michael Steck, Veribest ISD, ESC 15
- Kelli Moulton, Hereford ISD, ESC 16
- Johnny Tubb, Grady ISD, ESC 18 (*now retired*)
- Jose Franco, Fort Hancock ISD, ESC 19
- John Folks, Northside ISD, ESC 20

In August, the state selection committee will interview regional winners and select five state finalists. The Superintendent of the Year will be announced October 1 at the TASA/TASB Convention in Austin.

## Effective Board Practices

For many years, the TASB Good Governance Recognition Program has honored boards that hit all the marks in effective leadership and district achievement. A refined tool, *Effective Board Practices: An Inventory for School Boards*, has been incorporated to streamline the process districts use to assess their work structures and governance practices.

Requirements of the recognition program are that a board must complete the inventory components of *Effective Board Practices* and notify the Leadership Team Services staff. Staff will then check to make sure all board members have completed required board training credit and that the district's academic and financial ratings are acceptable or higher for a period of three years.

Once the district meets these requirements, the nomination for recognition comes to the TASB Member Services Committee. If the committee grants approval, an award is created and a TASB director will present it to the district. In addition, the *Texas Lone Star* profiles the district to highlight the board members' application of effective practices. To date, 10 districts have received Good Governance Recognition.

## Cash Back Program

The Association is continuing a pilot program that provides cash back to school districts for purchases parents and community members make through online retailers. Free to districts and users, the program provides a Web link to hundreds of online retailers such as Walmart, Target, Amazon.com, and iTunes.

When parents or others click through the Furtal Web Site to do their regular online shopping, a portion of whatever they buy from the retailer is sent as a "cash back" bonus to the campus or district. Local retailers are welcome to advertise and provide coupons and other incentives on the Web site as well. Districts interested in Furtal can contact [marie.jones@tasb.org](mailto:marie.jones@tasb.org).

## Purchasing Cooperative Update

With more than 2,300 members, The Local Government Purchasing Cooperative continues to thrive. That membership total includes 1,022 Texas school districts, 596 Texas municipalities, 232 Texas counties, 91 public universities and community colleges, and 364 other Texas governmental agencies.

Purchasing volume for September 2009 through August 2010 was \$592 million, and more than 81,000 purchase orders were processed from approximately 1,600 members. The most recent annual rebate to members was \$2.5 million to 1,114 members, with rebates totaling \$8.1 million since 2006.

All of the commodities and services awarded on the BuyBoard have been competitively procured according to Texas law so members can meet all their purchasing needs in one place, receive competitively priced products and services, and forego the time-consuming bid process. The Cooperative is endorsed by the Texas Municipal League, Texas Association of Counties, and Texas Association of School Administrators.

### Energy Cooperative Report

TASB's Energy Cooperative offers a fixed-rate transportation fuel program and an electricity aggregation program to help districts better budget their energy costs. Through the Cooperative, administered by TASB OnSite Energy Services, districts can forego the RFP process for electricity providers, receiving ongoing pricing information and saving valuable staff time. By locking in a fixed kWh rate, schools have budget certainty. The fuel program allows districts to lock in a fixed per-gallon cost for gasoline and diesel over the term of the contract and maximize buying power by pooling with other entities.

Recently the Energy board has taken action on a Retail Electricity Provider Services Agreement, the Transportation Fuel program, endorsements and sponsorships, and awarding vendors. Checks totaling \$234,708 were sent to 22 electricity members earlier this month. Currently, 13 districts and one city participate in the Transportation Fuel Program.

### Upcoming Training

HR Services will present Staffing Controls for Public Schools on September 9 and Wage and Hour Rules for Public Schools on September 14. These training sessions are developed for human resource professionals working in school districts. Both sessions will be held at TASB offices in Austin.

### In Other Action, the Board Approved:

- TASB 2011–12 budget
- Proposed bylaws amendment for Delegate Assembly consideration and an amendment to TASB Board policy on nominations committee operational guidelines conditioned on passage of the bylaws amendment
- Amendments to TASB Board policy on expense reimbursement

- Amendments to TASB Board policy on Leadership TASB selection of class participants
- Revisions to TASB Board policy on retirement plan administration and investments for TASB staff
- TASB Board policy on executive director incentive compensation plan guidelines
- Legal Assistance Fund Board policy on record retention
- TASB Risk Management Fund service agreement and 2011–12 fee addendum
- Texas Center for Educational Research service agreement and 2011–12 fee addendum
- Executive director's 2010–11 performance evaluation, 2011–12 employment agreement, and deferred compensation agreement
- TASB Legal Assistance Fund 2011–12 fee addendum to service agreement
- TASB Risk Management Fund affinity and license agreement
- Lone Star Investment Pool affinity and license agreement
- The Local Government Purchasing Cooperative sponsorship and license agreement
- Minutes of the April 2011 Board meeting

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is September 30 in Austin.

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