



# Board Briefs

*A report on the July 2009 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors  
Grapevine, Texas*

## **Advocacy Agenda Advances**

Refinements to the 2008–10 Advocacy Agenda were approved by the Board, based on recommendations from the TASB Legislative Advisory Council. The following proposed priorities will be passed on to the Delegate Assembly for consideration in October. Each year the Assembly brings together board members from across the state to provide critical direction to TASB leaders and staff.

### **Adequacy**

The current education system is not adequately funded. TASB supports an inflation-indexed educational funding structure that provides increased state funding commensurate with the escalating cost of education, including the rising costs of utilities and transportation, the ever-increasing standards for student performance, and the cost of technology to help students achieve at higher levels.

### **Alignment of the State and Federal Accountability Systems**

TASB supports a single, less complex accountability system that recognizes individual student progress, reduces state testing, and implements constructive measures before sanctions.

### **Career and Technology Education Programs**

TASB shall support expanding the “4x4” curriculum to include career and technology courses with credit and funding beginning in middle school; promoting multi-district cooperatives reflective of the local workforce; and seeking funding to implement career and technology programs and funding for certification exams.

### **Dropout Rates**

TASB supports increased funding for the implementation of programs in public schools that identify and provide interventions and curricular opportunities for at-risk students beginning at the kindergarten level to decrease dropout rates.

### **Equity**

TASB supports an equitable formula-funded school finance system that allows community access to equal amounts of total revenue per local tax effort, allows the public school system to capture fully the benefit of increasing property values, and recognizes communities’ unique challenges arising from differences in student populations.

### **Facilities Funding**

TASB shall support legislation that would increase equalized facilities funding for both the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) and Existing Debt Allotment (EDA).

### **Prekindergarten**

TASB supports educational opportunities for Texas students through an expanded prekindergarten program at local district option, including funding for expanded eligibility or a full class day.

### **Unfunded Mandates**

TASB supports funding the actual cost of any required programs and services implemented by laws, rules, and regulations, and opposes the imposition of any new unfunded or underfunded mandates.

### **Vouchers**

TASB opposes private school vouchers, tuition tax credits, scholarships, and other such programs funded with public tax dollars.

Priorities, identified through the grassroots process, frame TASB’s legislative efforts and form the high-commitment, high-profile action plan for the Association. These combine with advocacy resolutions submitted by individual districts, which also are presented to the Assembly for consideration following Board approval.

## Nominations Report Approved

A slate of TASB officers was recommended by the Nominations Committee and elected by the Board for submission to the Delegate Assembly. At the conclusion of the TASA/TASB Convention in Houston, current President Robert Seward of Mesquite ISD will become immediate past president; current President-Elect Sarah Winkler of Alief ISD will become president.

Four other officers will be elected by the 2009 Assembly and take their positions at the end of Convention. For those seats, the TASB Board is recommending the following:

- President-Elect: Sylvester Vasquez Jr., Southwest ISD
- Vice-President: Gary Inmon, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD
- Vice-President: Viola Garcia, Aldine ISD
- Secretary-Treasurer: Faye Beaulieu, Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD

The Board also elected Sonal Bhuchar of Fort Bend ISD to fill an interim large district position, Region 4G. She has served on her local board since 2006 and held the positions of secretary and president. Long active in her community, Bhuchar has served on various PTOs and PTAs and district-level committees, including the advisory committees for gifted and talented parents, school health, and community relations and partnerships.

She also served on the district accountability task force, audit and finance committee, and the discipline management committee. In addition, she led formation of Fort Bend ISD's student leadership and legislative advocacy programs. Bhuchar is in her own private practice as a physical therapist at Sugar Land Therapeutic Concepts.

## Convention Highlights

The countdown is on for the October 2–4 TASA/TASB Convention at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. Friday's general session will feature Alan November, a technology specialist and futurist, speaking about technology and education in coming years. Alfred Quinones-Hinojosa, M.D., director of brain tumor surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, is slated at the second general session on Saturday. He is a former laborer who rose to become a professor of neurosurgery and his story has been featured on the *NBC Today Show* and ABC News.

Debbie Allen will speak at the third general session. She is an internationally recognized director, choreographer, and author, and has served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities. Another Convention highlight is the classroom of the future, a collaboration of Apple Computer, Smart Technologies, SHW, and TASB to allow exhibit hall visitors to learn how digital technology is transforming learning.

## Special Events

A special seminar at Convention for small school districts on October 2 will focus on forging high expectations and creating a viable foundation for districts with 750 or fewer students. No additional fee is required to attend the half-day session on October 2, but registration in advance is necessary and participation is limited to paid registrants.

Again this year, Convention-goers can sign up for a field trip, riding by bus to meet with experts on hot topics. Participants will visit the World Flight Tracking Center of Houston-based Continental Airlines or the University of Houston Hilton Program in Hotel Management. The field trips are free to paid registrants, and space is limited.

## School Design Institute

With a focus on large districts, TASB is again teaming with the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) and its Great Schools by Design program to offer a school design institute. First offered last year, the event was so popular that AAF decided to return to Texas September 10–12 in Austin. The institute will provide a forum for several districts to engage in conversation with architects and designers about improving the schools where students learn.

Each of the 50 largest schools was invited to submit a facilities project for study at the institute. AAF chose four projects, and each district will send a team of board members and staff to Austin. Districts selected for this year's institute are Amarillo, Irving, Keller, and Ysleta ISDs. AAF will prepare a report of the work of the institute after the fact so that other districts can benefit from the experience.

## Community Surveys

In coming months, TASB will pilot a survey service that would enable districts to obtain feedback from their communities. The program could gauge support for facilities programs and potential bond issues, gather a better understanding of attitudes and perceptions about the district and its leadership

team, and develop stakeholder feedback for district goal setting and planning. The pilot will help TASB evaluate demand and feasibility of offering community, parent, special purpose, and custom surveys in the future.

### Federal Relations

Stipends are available to pay for registration to the Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference in Washington, D.C., next February. The Board’s goal is to have one trustee from each of the 31 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, or TASB Board of Directors or any affiliated entity board

In addition, the selection committee will review the applicants’ 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 [gr.tasb.org](http://gr.tasb.org) and return it to TASB Governmental Relations on or before close of business Friday, September 18. An e-mail explaining the stipend program was sent to all 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 class, which was announced at the Board meeting. LTASB is a specialized leadership training program for Texas board members. Graduates of the year-long program who complete assigned projects receive statewide recognition for their efforts. Trustees who will participate in the 2009–10 class have been notified by TASB staff.

### Regional SOTY Winners

Since 1984, TASB has honored outstanding Texas administrators for achievement and excellence in district leadership. This year 16 education service center regions received nominations

from local school districts for the Association’s annual Superintendent of the Year (SOTY) award program. A state selection committee, comprised of TASB Directors, will interview the following superintendents August 21-22 in Austin.

- Region 1..... Oscar Rodriguez Jr., Mission CISD
- Region 2..... Charley McMath, London ISD
- Region 3..... Michael Lanier, Rice CISD
- Region 4..... Mark Henry, Galena Park ISD
- Region 6..... Clay Webb, New Waverly ISD
- Region 7..... James Wilcox, Longview ISD
- Region 10..... Linda Henrie, Mesquite ISD
- Region 11..... Ray Braswell, Denton ISD
- Region 12..... Rose Cameron, Copperas Cove ISD
- Region 13..... Jesus Chavez, Round Rock ISD
- Region 14..... Guy Nelson, Highland ISD
- Region 15..... Robert Gibson, Miles ISD
- Region 16..... Bill Mayfield, Highland Park ISD
- Region 17..... Larry McClenny, Patton Springs ISD
- Region 19..... Paul Vranish, Tornillo ISD
- Region 20..... Thomas Harvey Jr., La Vernia ISD

This group will be narrowed to five finalists who will be interviewed again at Convention. The statewide winner will be announced Saturday, October 3, at the second general session in Houston; all regional winners and state finalists also will receive recognition at that time.

### Upcoming Training

As a fall tradition, the TASB Risk Management Fund will host education seminars for Fund members across the state. Five seminars, which offer free preregistration to Fund members, are slated on various risk management issues such as legislative changes; safety, security and emergency management; auto liability; unemployment compensation; and workers’ compensation claim reporting.

Seminar locations include Austin—September 17, Lubbock—September 22, Tyler—October 13, Katy—October 20, and Arlington—October 28.

### Energy Cooperative Report

Currently TASB’s electricity aggregation program has 183 members that collectively use more than 574,000 megawatt-hours of power each year. Six districts also participated in a pilot fixed-rate transportation fuel program to aggregate a portion of their annual usage in diesel and regular unleaded gasoline. The Energy Cooperative Board will discuss the feasibility of making fuel a permanent program.

Two free energy seminars are slated on September 8 and December 8 at the Omni Fort Worth Hotel. Special guest speakers will provide information on performance contracting, current energy markets, alternative energy sources, and energy management tools. Go to [tasb.org](http://tasb.org) OnSite Energy for details.

### **Purchasing Cooperative Update**

The Texas Local Government Purchasing Cooperative continues to grow since its establishment 10 years ago. Current membership is more than 2,800 members, and includes public school districts, municipalities, counties, other governmental entities, and colleges and universities.

The total volume through June 2009 was \$440 million, and more than 52,000 purchase orders were made last year compared to 2,500 the first year. Currently there are more than 900 awarded vendors in 27 general commodity groups.

All of the commodities 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 forgo the time-consuming bid process. The purchasing cooperative is endorsed by the Texas Municipal League, Texas Association of Counties, and Texas Association of School Administrators.

### **In Other Action, the Board Approved:**

- 2009–10 TASB budget
- Engagement of investment consultant
- 2009–10 TASB Risk Management Fund service agreement fee addendum and sponsorship and license agreement
- TASB Legal Assistance Fund service agreement fee addendum
- Texas Center for Educational Research 2009–10 service agreement fee addendum
- Legal Assistance Fund board policies and policy amendments
- Amendment to the TASB Board expense reimbursement policy
- Federal Relations Network stipend program policy
- Amendments to the First Public Governance Committee operational guidelines
- The 2009–10 executive director compensation, employment contract, and deferred compensation agreement
- A staff recommendation that TASB not become involved in political activity such as political action committees

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is October 1 in Houston.

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