



# Board Briefs

*A report on the April 2009 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors Meeting  
TASB Headquarters, Austin*

## Legislative Overview

With the Legislature in full swing, members are urged to be responsive to action alerts from TASB. Governmental Relations staff is tracking more than 3,000 bills, and many important decisions are being made that could significantly impact public schools. A weekly *Legislative Report* and daily updates can help keep board members up to the minute on legislative activity. Check these resources regularly for the latest information on critical issues surfacing at the Capitol. Lawmakers will be in session until June 1.

TASB's Legislative Advisory Council (LAC) will meet June 13 immediately after the conclusion of Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) in San Antonio. LAC members will receive a status report on the progress made toward accomplishing the Association's advocacy goals and have an opportunity to suggest revisions to the 2008–2010 Advocacy Agenda priorities. School boards are encouraged to submit new advocacy resolutions and suggest revisions or additions to resolutions in the current Advocacy Agenda. Proposed resolutions can be submitted until July 1.

Advocacy priorities, arising from TASB's grassroots process, are the defined set of proactive legislative goals for the Association. Resolutions guide the TASB Board and staff to respond to other issues that might arise before the Legislature and other governmental entities.

## Post-Legislative Recap

Two post-legislative conferences are planned in conjunction with the TASB Summer Leadership Institutes in San Antonio and Fort Worth. The San Antonio session will be at the Marriott Rivercenter June 10, while the Fort Worth conference is set at the Renaissance Worthington June 17.

TASB staff will provide a recap of the 81st legislative session, highlighting new laws and their effect on local communities and schools. Briefings will include, school finance, tax-

ation and fiscal accountability; school choice and charters; elections—board and bond; and district governance and operations. Registration, including dinner, can be found on the TASB Web site under the registration links for SLI. This training will meet the board training requirements to receive an update on the Texas Education Code following a regular legislative session.

## Stimulus Package

Another important topic of Board discussion was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The federal economic stimulus package will send significant federal funding to Texas for public education, among other priorities. State lawmakers are currently evaluating the incoming funds to identify how to funnel the federal monies to Texas school districts.

TASB Legal Services prepared an overview of the stimulus, which is available on the TASB Web site. The Texas Education Agency also posted information on ARRA funding uses and more guidance will be forthcoming once the U.S. Department of Education has approved TEA's state application. Governor Perry is not expected to formalize application for state funds until the Texas Legislature adjourns.

## Summer Leadership Institutes

New and experienced board members have two choices for in-depth training on every facet of effective board governance. The always popular TASB Summer Leadership Institute is being held twice: in San Antonio June 11–13 and June 18–20 in Fort Worth.

Keynoters include Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He will speak on creating a climate of success for all students and examine how rapid and dramatic demographic and technological changes present our nation's schools with enormous challenges. His

research and publications focus on science and math education, with special emphasis on minority participation and performance.

Also featured is David Warlick, an educator, author, and leader in education technology. He will share his view of a brand new world of teaching, addressing the global marketplace and what students will need to compete in the 21st century. He passionately believes that a different kind of classroom, teaching, and learning experience are required for our children's future success.

### **Convention Report**

The 2009 TASA/TASB Convention is set October 2-4 in Houston. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been invited to speak at the first general session and Dr. Alfred Quinones-Hinojosa, director of the brain tumor program at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, will present at the second general session. Dr. Quinones was a migrant worker whose story has been featured on the *NBC Today Show* ("The Surgeon Who Overcame the Odds) and *ABC News* ("Migrant Worker to Miracle Worker").

Debbie Allen, renowned director, choreographer, and producer, will speak at the third general session. She has served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and is a proud product of Texas public schools. Allen has received three Emmy awards honoring her choreography, and two Emmys and one Golden Globe for her role in the hit television series, *Fame*.

Again this year, field trips are being scheduled. One will be to the World Flight Tracking Center of Houston-based Continental Airlines. Participants will tour the center and learn about the range of jobs students need to be prepared for in the high-tech airline industry. In addition, a small district seminar will include breakouts and networking time on Friday.

### **Good Governance Award**

Devine ISD joins a select cadre of public school districts that has earned distinction from TASB for good governance. The district met specific criteria to be recognized in the Association's Good Governance Program and will be featured in the TASB magazine, *Texas Lone Star*.

To be considered for recognition, a school district must meet six criteria: undertake the TASB governance audit, notify TASB when the audit is complete, be rated acceptable or higher in the accountability system two of the four most recent years,

have rising assessment participation, achieve acceptable or higher in the FIRST rating system, and demonstrate that all board members have met training requirements. Recent honorees include Hurst-Euleless-Bedford, Pampa, Northside (Bexar County), and Castleberry ISDs.

### **Tax Ratification Elections**

Resources are available to school districts that are contemplating increasing the tax rate and seeking voter ratification of the higher tax rate through a Tax Ratification Election (TRE). The April and May issues of *Texas Lone Star* featured stories on this subject and additional information is posted on the TASB Web site. Look for the Resource Center under the Issues and Advocacy section.

The TASB Legal Services division will send a letter to school districts to guide them through budget and tax rate adoption and, if needed, the election process. Staff attorneys will finalize this information in August.

### **School Design Institute**

TASB is hosting another design institute in September with the American Architecture Foundation (AAF). The Foundation conducts such institutes all over the country, but TASB's first institute last November was the first to involve a single state only. Four districts worked with a cadre of nationally known architects and designers on a project in the planning or early design stage.

Because of the positive feedback from participating districts, a second institute will be held September 10-12 in Austin. Invitations to submit a project were sent to the 50 largest districts in early April. Project applications are due in mid-May.

### **Great Place to Work**

Recently, the *Austin Business Journal* named the Association as one of this year's Best Places to Work in Central Texas. TASB, one of 50 companies selected out of more than 140 nominations, will be recognized May 21 at an awards luncheon and profiled in the May 22 issue of the magazine.

### **First Public/Lone Star Update**

Investment balances for the Lone Star Investment Pool reached a record high of \$10.5 billion in February of this year. This growth enabled Lone Star to lower the fee charged to participants for the third time in five years. Current membership

includes about 500 school districts and 100 local governmental entities. Lone Star is administered by First Public, which also assists districts with underwriting services. After its first full year, First Public has participated in 20 transactions totaling more than \$850 million in issuance.

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

- Engagement of auditors for 2008–09
- Amendments to the 2008–09 TASB budget
- Amended TASB Energy Cooperative service agreement
- Amended TASB Energy Cooperative sponsorship and license agreement
- 2008–09 TASB Risk Management Fund amended service agreement fee addendum
- Proposed TASB bylaws amendments on clean-up changes for presentation to the 2009 Delegate Assembly
- Proposed amendments to NSBA Southern Region bylaws
- Amendments to Planning and Development Committee approvals and accountabilities policy
- Executive compensation policy
- Amendments to Board policy on conflict of interest, including adoption of an annual statement of disclosure form for TASB Directors
- Creation of a special committee to study the method used to appoint members to TASB's affiliated entity boards
- Participation in a NSBA program and financial review of TASB operations

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is July 25 in Grapevine.

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**When you need help...**

