



Board Briefs

*A report on the September 2008 meeting of the TASB Board of Directors • Hyatt Regency, Dallas
Plus highlights of the 2008 Delegate Assembly, Dallas Convention Center*

Advocacy Agenda Approved

With lawmakers returning to Austin in a few months, the Association is sharpening its focus on legislative issues. The 2008 TASB Delegate Assembly met in Dallas September 27 and approved the 2008–10 TASB Advocacy Agenda. Delegates adopted 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 from member districts.

The Assembly approved 11 Association priorities, which are the high-profile, high-commitment objectives that will guide advocacy efforts. One priority on Students—Career and Technology Education Programs was modified by delegates to include funding for courses. As amended, it now reads:

"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 certification exams."

The 10 other priorities remained as recommended by the TASB Board of Directors and presented in the July issue of *Board Briefs*. In addition, the Assembly approved all but one of the 52 resolutions recommended for adoption by the TASB Board. Delegates did not approve one resolution supporting exemption of certain students from physical fitness assessments. Another resolution was amended to read:

"TASB shall support increasing the adjustment to the basic allotment to provide relief for all small and mid-size school districts, regardless of Chapter 41 status, due to diseconomy of scale."

The complete Advocacy Agenda is on line, along with tips and tools for school board members' local efforts. In addition, delegates reaffirmed the Association's cornerstone principles underpinning TASB's Advocacy Agenda and organizational conduct. The following concepts have received support of school board members at grassroots meetings across the state and the Delegate Assembly:

- Excellence in student achievement for all Texas students
- Locally governed and locally controlled public schools
- Rigorous accountability for academic progress
- Adequate funding levels to provide exceptional education leadership programs
- Efficient and effective school management
- Working with parents to create optimal opportunities for each child

Gearing up for Session

In preparation for the start of another regular session in January, board members and administrators should make plans to attend the December 5 TASA/TASB Pre-Legislative Seminar. A full day of activities at the Austin Downtown Hilton Hotel will feature legislators, state agency leaders, and political pundits.

Two advocacy resources are available to help empower board members for the upcoming session. The revised *Unfunded Mandates* booklet explains the major state mandates affecting Texas school districts and provides information to help board members calculate the cost of complying with the mandates that are most burdensome for their school districts.

The *Legislative Briefing Book* contains one-page summaries of the legislative issues of greatest importance to Texas school boards. Each summary ends with questions eliciting local data. School board members should use these resources to collect and share with their legislators local data that will be important during session.

In addition, TASB Governmental Relations (GR) staff will hold an Advocacy Boot Camp on December 4, the night before the Pre-Legislative Seminar, at the Texas Capitol. It will begin with dinner and a presentation on the advocacy process and end with a mock committee hearing featuring current and former legislators to help prepare board members to testify during session. Registration is free, but limited due to capacity constraints of the committee hearing room.

Delegates Elect TASB Leadership

Association officers and directors were approved by delegates to lead TASB in the coming year. With the exception of the president and immediate past president, which are automatic succession offices, the following officers' slate, as presented by the TASB Nominations Committee and TASB Board, was elected by the 2008 Assembly. All assumed their positions at the close of convention.

President: Robert Seward, Mesquite ISD
President-Elect: Sarah Winkler, Alief ISD
Vice-President: Sylvester Vasquez Jr., Southwest ISD
Vice-President: Gary Inmon, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD
Secretary-Treasurer: Viola Garcia, Aldine ISD
Immediate Past President: Renard Thomas, Angleton ISD

Directors Elected by Actions of the Regions

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

Elected to three-year terms (2008–11) filling expired terms:
Region 4, Position D: Manuel Rodriquez Jr., Houston ISD, large district member
Region 4, Position G: Steve Smelley, Fort Bend ISD, large district member
Region 8: Robert Sheppard, Pleasant Grove ISD
Region 11, Position B: Judy Needham, Fort Worth ISD, large district member
Region 15: Fred Contreras, Grape Creek ISD
Region 19, Position A: Patricia Hughes, El Paso ISD, large district member
Region 20, Position B: Bobby Blount Jr., Northside ISD-Bexar County, large district member
Region 20, Position C: Carlos Villarreal, San Antonio ISD, large district member

Elected to one-year terms (2008–09) filling unexpired terms:
Region 11, Position C: Gloria Pena, Arlington ISD, large district member
Region 19, Position B: Marty Reyes, Ysleta ISD

Nominated by the Nominations Committee

Elected to three-year terms, filling expired terms:
Region 4, Position B: Manuel Guajardo Jr., Texas City ISD
Region 14: Melinda Harrington, Gorman ISD

Elected to two-year term, filling unexpired term:
Region 10, Position B: James Goode, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD

Filling vacancies for one-year terms:
Region 13, Position C: Vernagene Mott, Pflugerville ISD
Region 17: Wes Naron, Plainview ISD
Region 18: Vanessa Simmons, Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD

FRN Stipend Program

In the hope of increasing involvement at the national level, TASB is again providing stipends to help more trustees participate in the Federal Relations Network (FRN) conference held each winter in Washington, D.C. The goal is to have at least one trustee from each of the 32 U.S. congressional districts in Texas attend the conference, which is sponsored by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). The stipend is paid by TASB to NSBA for registration costs.

A committee will review and approve all applications; the selection will be made on the merits of the applicant, and those board members with a history of school district advocacy will be given priority in the selection process. Among the criteria considered: whether applicants are members of the School Board Advocacy Network, have participated in the TASB grassroots meetings, have completed at least 30 hours of training, and have previously attended an FRN conference. In addition, applicants are asked to provide a brief paragraph explaining their motivation for and expectation of attending the 2009 FRN conference.

Applications will be distributed to all school districts and available through the TASB GR division. Completed applications must be postmarked or e-mailed on or before Friday, October 31, 2008.

Pre-Kindergarten Project

TASB has agreed to participate in a project with NSBA that focuses on pre-kindergarten. The work comes from funds provided to NSBA from the Pew Charitable Trusts to support dissemination of information about the benefits of high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten education to school boards. TASB, the Kansas Association of School Boards, Kentucky School Boards Association, and the Alabama Association of School

Boards will partner with NSBA for a two-year project ending September 2010.

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, Dan Troxell of Kerrville ISD, was announced September 28 at the TASA/TASB convention in Dallas.

Serving approximately 4,000 students, Troxell has led Kerrville ISD for six years and has more than 18 years of experience in education administration. He serves on the TASA Legislative Committee, UIL Legislative Council, Commissioner of Education Committee for Gifted and Talented Education, and ESC 20 Regional Advisory Executive Committee.

Superintendent Troxell received a monetary award for professional development, which he has donated back to the district, and a Superintendent of the Year ring from Balfour, program sponsor. State finalists included Ted Moore, Lovejoy ISD, ESC 10; Stephen Waddell, Birdville ISD, ESC 11; Dennis Hill, Llano ISD, ESC 13; and Doug Harriman, Seminole ISD, ESC 17.

SOTY candidates are chosen for their dedication to improving educational quality, board-superintendent relations, student achievement, and commitment to community support and involvement in public education.

College/Workforce Barriers Report

TASB is finalizing a report that examines the legal and policy barriers to postsecondary success and workforce readiness in Texas. TASB received funding in November 2007 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to analyze legal and practical impediments to the successful transition of Texas students from high school to college or the workplace.

The overall goal of the project is to help improve high school graduation rates and post-graduation success in Texas. Findings will be provided to Texas school districts and policymakers in a printed report and at information sessions in various locations across the state.

School Design Institute

As part of its large-district initiative, TASB has been working with the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) to conduct a School Design Institute. The first institute will be held in Austin November 6–8, and four of the 50 largest districts

in Texas will participate. District teams will work intensively with a group of leading architects, designers, and educators from across the country to answer design questions raised by the four districts in a project proposal. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in conversation with architects and designers about improving the design of schools.

Each of the 50 largest districts in Texas was invited to submit a project, with the understanding that AAF would select four to participate. Those four selected were:

1. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD—Multi-Campus Master Planned Site, Hegar Property
2. Fort Worth ISD—Paschal Relief Elementary School
3. Klein ISD—Early Childhood/Pre-K Center
4. Northeast ISD—Middle School Prototype Environmental Revision

TASB, AAF, and the Committee on Architecture in Education of the Texas Society of Architects are working to find the best ways of sharing the ideas and lessons from the institute with other Texas districts. The entire cost of participation, including housing and meals, will be covered by Target, the corporate sponsor of Great Schools by Design.

Because of the level of interest expressed by large Texas districts and the quality and appropriateness of the projects submitted, AAF has indicated a wish to conduct another institute in the future.

TCER Update

The Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) conducted interviews with a wide range of policymakers and educational practitioners in Texas as part of TASB's Gates Foundation project on college and workforce readiness. Interviews focused on the barriers to preparing students for college and the workforce as well as strategies for overcoming these barriers.

TCER staff has begun a three-year evaluation of new Texas charter schools, focusing on these schools' planning and implementation processes as well as the new schools' use of federal Charter School Program grant funds. In other work, the Center will be evaluating the Texas Rural Technology Pilot, which has a goal of providing technology-based supplemental instruction to such schools.

Mark Your Calendar

TASB Risk Management Fund Fall Seminars

The Fund is offering free seminars to Fund members. Session topics include workers' compensation return-to-work

and claim reporting; property casualty disaster recovery procedures; and an update on Senate Bill 9 requirements for criminal background checks.

- October 30, Lubbock
- November 5, Corpus Christi
- December 2, Houston

OnSite Training

Ongoing training from OnSite covers environmental topics. (All at TASB offices)

- October 14, Asbestos Designated Person
- October 15, Integrated Pest Management Coordinator
- October 16, Indoor Air Quality Coordinator
- October 28–29 Asbestos O&M Contractor

OnSite Energy Seminar

This free event will feature speakers on current energy markets, alternative energy sources, performance contracting, and energy efficiency.

October 30, TASB offices, Austin

Superintendent Secretaries Training Conference

Secretaries from districts of all sizes and geographic locations will find sessions on meeting preparations and documentation, policies, HR records, criminal background checks, school finance, and other pertinent topics.

October 23–24, TASB offices, Austin
(Repeated February 12–13)

Fall Legal Seminars

TASB attorneys will be hitting the road to provide one-day regional training seminars at six locations. Topics will include student searches and drug testing, school district liability issues, policy decisions for employee leaves and absences, and legal updates.

- November 8, San Antonio
- November 12, Commerce
- November 13, Nacogdoches
- November 18, Amarillo
- November 20, Abilene
- November 21–22 South Padre Island

In Other Action, the Board Approved:

- Amendments to the committee operational guidelines for the Budget and Finance, Member Services, and Nominations committees
- Amendment to Board policy on program participation
- New Board policy on appointments
- Amendments to Board policies on TASB and director insurance, investments, and retirement plan investments

- New Board policies on internal control review and Board expenses
- Executive director evaluation document

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is November 22 in Austin.

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When you need help...

