

Leadership Team Times

August 2011

Nine copies of this publication will be mailed monthly to the superintendent secretary to be included in the board packets.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR BOARD?

Every school board wants, first and foremost, to ensure that students in the district succeed at the highest levels possible. Every decision the board makes and all the resources it marshals for the district are ultimately intended to promote this end.

To be successful over the long haul in promoting increased student achievement, the board must govern with vision, knowledge, and consistency. All boards embody these characteristics in some measure. Truly effective boards—those that have positioned themselves to contribute consistently to increased student achievement—have institutionalized certain practices to make sure the tasks that promote improvement are performed regularly, consistently, and effectively.

Effective Board Practices: An Inventory for School Boards, a new tool that replaces the *TASB Board Effectiveness Audit*, examines how fully the board currently embraces characteristics of effectiveness. It lists practices in four areas that are the foundations for embodying effectiveness. If a board ignores the practices or performs them only perfunctorily, its capacity for leadership and the district's capacity for sustained improvement are left to chance and haphazard action. If it embraces them fully, the board will be positioned to make a consistent and sustained contribution to increased student achievement.

The Inventory is intended in large measure as a planning tool for boards that want to move to a higher level of effectiveness. It includes many of the same features as the audit and also contains some improvements that will make it easier for your board-superintendent team to become more successful. Go to LTS.tasb.org to access the new tool, or call us at **800.580.8272**, extension 6161, if you'd like to schedule a consultant to assist you with the process.

FOUNDATION COURSES ROLL OUT

Designed to complement TASB ISD (Institute for School Trustee Development), the new Foundation Courses are intended for new board members and for experienced board members who want a refresher. TASB presenters include Catherine Clark, Amy Kadlecek, and David Koempel, who collectively have more than 50 years of experience working with local school boards.

The free courses are available through the Online Learning Center (OLC), so you can complete the courses at your own pace, at your convenience, and earn continuing education credit while you do it. Available Foundation Courses are the following:

- Quick Tips for New School Board Members
- Foundations of the Texas Accountability System
- Introduction to Parliamentary Procedures
- Foundations of Board Policy

Go to onlinelearning.tasb.org for more details.



A publication of **TASB Leadership Team Services**

Training & Events

CONVENTION:

September 30–October 2,
Austin

FAQ: CEC HOURS OFFERED AT CONVENTION

Q. *How many continuing education credit (CEC) hours can I earn at Convention, and before I go, how do I find out how many hours I already have?*

A. Convention attendees can earn up to 17 hours of CEC training. To find out how many training hours you have to date, ask your district record keeper, or access TASB's Continuing Education Credit Reporting Service. Remember that your district is your official record keeper, but TASB provides a supplemental service designed to help the district keep your information updated.

TIMELY RESOURCE

In addition to the New Board Member and Board President's *Leadership to Go* publication packages, which may be especially helpful this time of year, check the Online Learning Center frequently for new offerings and information at onlinelearning.tasb.org.

For a complete list of training and events, or to access more details on any of the information referenced in this issue, go to LTS.tasb.org.

PLAN CONVENTION SESSIONS TO ATTEND BEFORE YOU GET TO AUSTIN

Whatever the hot issues are for your leadership team, we have an easy-to-use tool to help meet your needs. Beginning in early August, use the Personal Convention Scheduler (PCS) to locate specific session titles or speakers, or type in key words to find sessions that focus on your specific needs.

Remember Convention registration fees are waived this year for board members and administrators of districts and ESCs. Go to tasa.tasb.org for PCS details and more.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN

by Kay Douglas, LTS senior consultant

We talk so much about the Team of Eight that we sometimes forget the invisible, indispensable member of the team: the superintendent's secretary. Not so in Trinity ISD where there is a great wailing and gnashing of teeth over the departure of its beloved Frances Thornton.

Frances graduated from Trinity High School, went on to Massey Business College, married Jimmy Thornton, and gave birth to a daughter and two sons. She went to work at the school district when she was 32 and has served faithfully for 37 years, 30 of those as secretary to the superintendent. During that time, she has served with a total of nine superintendents and 40 school board members.



Frances Thornton

Here are just a few things that board members past and present shared about Frances:

- "Her contributions to the district have been exemplary. Her devotion to her job and to those she serves has been very beneficial to our district and community, and has enhanced our board's performance."
- "Frances was not only a qualified and informed employee, she was a friend, respected by the board members, and her fellow employees. She was never too busy to stop her work to help you with whatever you needed. She will be missed."
- "Frances is smart, kind, and always thinks of other people first. There were some pretty hard years in which Frances was, in some ways, managing the school. She has been a success in her job as well as a mother, wife, sister, grandmother, and friend."
- "Frances made me feel welcome and patiently guided me when I was first appointed to the board. Years later she still graciously helps with all duties asked of her and those she takes upon herself to do."

In summing up her work, Frances said, "It has been my good fortune to have had the opportunity to work with just an amazing group of so many wonderful people through the past 37 years. The district has been good to me, and I am happy to say I have had and still do have a personal relationship with my board members and superintendents, past and present."

Here's to the irreplaceable Frances Thornton and all of the other wonderful superintendent secretaries out there without whom the Team of Eight would be lost.

Reminders

ITEMS TO CONSIDER FOR NEXT MONTH'S AGENDA

- Update goals.
- Call for November elections.
- Review continuing education credit hours before attending Convention.
- Select Delegate Assembly representatives (due September 9).

DATES/ACTIVITIES TO REMEMBER

- **TASA/TASB CONVENTION:** Housing and registration open at tasa.tasb.org. Hotel deposits due August 26. Preregistration ends September 16.
- **WINTER GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SEMINAR (WGLS):** Program submissions accepted through November 1 at LTS.tasb.org.

Contact Us

Leadership Team Times is produced by the TASB Leadership Team Services (LTS) Division. For more information about LTS and its training opportunities and services, go to LTS.tasb.org, or contact Lisa Carothers at lisa.carothers@tasb.org with questions or comments.