

**April 2017***A report on the April 2017 TASB Board of Directors Meeting  
TASB Headquarters, Austin***2016–17 TASB Officers****Charles R. Stafford**  
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## Advocacy Initiatives Heating Up

Outreach through social media has triggered more and more Texans to urge the Legislature to support our public schools. TASB's public affairs firm continues to work with staff to fine-tune messages for the Texans for Strong Public Schools campaign and develop digital content for distribution across social media channels. The hub of the campaign is a [central advocacy website](#) that allows individuals to learn about and take action on school privatization and funding issues with their own legislators.

To date, almost 9,000 people have registered on the [Texans for Strong Public Schools site](#). In recent weeks, the primary focus of the Association's legislative advertising project has been on ads opposing vouchers. In response to these efforts, about 18,200 letters addressing that issue have been sent through the advocacy website, while approximately 3,800 letters addressed school funding. Distribution of Facebook advertising has been broadened from the originally targeted legislative districts to a statewide advertising effort.

The ads, along with other outreach efforts, have generated more than 22,000 letters to Texas lawmakers as of April 1. Information also is being shared through regular communication vehicles, such as the School Board Advocacy

Network, *Legislative Report*, [The Star e-newsletter](#), and the TASB [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. In addition, the Association continues to work with other statewide groups to develop consistent messaging that can be shared with their members and the general public.

## TASB Talks Podcast Launched

The first episode of TASB's new podcast, [TASB Talks](#), was released in March. Episodes will be released regularly and cover subjects that are of importance to trustees, school administrators, and public education enthusiasts.

The [first podcast](#) features Dax González, communications manager for TASB Governmental Relations, discussing specifics on Senate Bill 3 and its effects on public schools. The [second](#) features Catherine Clark on school finance. The 10- to 20-minute segments provide an easy way for members to hear brief updates on various topics of interest.

## Atkinson Joins TASB Board

Sylvia Perez Atkinson of Brownsville ISD was elected by the TASB Board to fill the interim position Region 1A. With more than 23 years in public education, she currently is an assistant superintendent in Rio Hondo ISD.

Atkinson earned bachelor degrees in political science and sociology from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, a master's in education from The University of Texas at Brownsville, and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Houston.

She is a longtime member of the Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association, Association of Texas Professional Educators, Texas Association of School Administrators, and Texas Association of School

## Member Survey Report

TASB surveys members annually to identify the pressing needs of members for the future, measure satisfaction with services, and track the makeup of trustees across the state. This year, the survey completed by 817 respondents included several advocacy and social media questions to gauge member opinions and preferences.

Survey participants believe TASB should focus efforts on these areas in the next five years: school funding, advocacy, communication with the public, training at conferences and online, and board governance.

The Association's performance also was rated by participants on a five-star scale. The chart below identifies the average rating for each measure. Once again, TASB exceeded its member satisfaction target of rating the overall value of TASB with at least 4.0 stars.

- Customer service—4.21
- Program cost—3.78
- Program quality—4.12
- Innovation—3.78
- Overall value—4.08

Responding trustees identified themselves as the following:

- 62 percent male and 38 percent female
- 75 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Black, 0.6 percent Native American/Alaska Native, 0.3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2 percent Other/Multiracial
- 69 percent in the over 50 years of age range and 24 percent aged 40–50

## **Business/Education Initiatives**

TASB kicked off its business/education initiatives several years ago to foster improved and expanded support of public schools by businesses and community groups.

### ***Business Recognition Program***

Districts are invited to recognize the [businesses or community groups that stand up for their public schools](#) by partnering with districts/schools to benefit students, faculty, and campuses. Districts may [submit](#) as many names as they want. TASB provides a formal presentation packet that can be used to express appreciation at board meetings, special recognition events, or the place of business. The first year, districts recognized 829 partners. Last year, they recognized 1,949. Recognitions for this school year will continue through June 30.

### ***Business/Education Forums***

[Forums](#) are one-day regional events hosted for the purpose of showcasing businesses and community groups that support schools and stimulating the creation of more business/school initiatives. Forums have been hosted in Austin, San Antonio, and the Houston area. Currently, plans are being finalized for a [Forum in Amarillo](#) on April 27. Other Forums are being discussed for next year.

## **Winners Announced for Student Video Contest**

[Six schools have been selected as winners](#) of TASB's third student video contest. These videos illustrate the true value of public education and emphasize the many positive aspects of our state's public schools.

Congratulatory presentations will be made at local school board meetings in the winning districts this month.

The contest was open to all Texas elementary and secondary public school students, and winners were selected in three categories: elementary, middle/junior high, and high school. First-place prizes of \$5,000 will be awarded to the following school districts for use in the students' classroom or campus:

- [Royse City High School, Royse City ISD](#)
- [Memorial Middle School, Edinburg CISD](#)
- [Zavala Elementary School, Harlingen CISD](#)

Second-place prizes of \$2,500 will be presented to the following:

- [Dubiski Career High School, Grand Prairie ISD](#)
- [League City Intermediate School, Clear Creek ISD](#)
- [Whitt Fine Arts Academy, Grand Prairie ISD](#)

Information about the videos was shared with state lawmakers when the gallery of videos was posted in February, and lawmakers were urged to view the videos and congratulate their students.

Students were asked to tell what makes their school exceptional, how the school has earned community support, how their school is making a difference in students' lives and future success, and what makes Texas public schools the best choice. All entries can be viewed on the [TASB website](#).

## TASB Advocacy Agenda

The second year of the [TASB Advocacy Agenda](#) biennium provides members with an opportunity to update, add, or delete Priorities and Resolutions. Any proposed changes must be adopted by the 2017 Delegate Assembly in Dallas.

### ***Call for Resolutions***

Resolutions guide TASB's response to issues that may arise during the legislative session or interim that are not included in the Advocacy Priorities. School boards may [submit resolutions](#) to amend the current Advocacy Agenda between April 1 and July 3.

### ***Legislative Advisory Council Meeting***

The Legislative Advisory Council (LAC) will meet June 17 immediately after the Summer Leadership Institute in San Antonio for a status report on the progress made toward accomplishing advocacy goals and to suggest revisions to the 2016–18 Advocacy Priorities.

## **Joint Committee on School Governance**

A joint subcommittee of the Member Services and Legislative committees was formed last fall to provide guidance on the Association's training initiatives and monitor related activities by the Texas Education Agency, SBOE, and Texas Legislature during the 85th session. In addition, the subcommittee is discussing substantial changes in TASB governance training and future research projects.

## **TASB Online Learning Center**

Over the past 18 months, TASB staff researched potential improvements to the [Online Learning Center](#). A new learning management system (LMS) was selected, and efforts are underway to migrate current courses and continue to add additional courses for trustee and board development. Recent conference sessions and webinars have been added as new courses.

The new system incorporates a single sign-on, so users will not need additional

login credentials beyond their myTASB login. The Online Learning Center also will integrate with continuing education credits, so members can view the credit needs in the same place as the online learning.

## Convention Update

The [TASATASB Convention](#) is going back to Dallas this year. Several new restaurants across from the Omni and Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center will make it convenient for attendees who want to leave the convention center for lunch.

The 2017 floor plan will once again boast almost 400 exhibits, a Learning Lounge, the Student Innovation Challenge, the Exhibit of School Architecture, an art exhibit from the Texas Art Education Association, and TASB and entity services. New this year will be vendor educational sessions in the exhibit hall.

## Upcoming Spring Workshops

Annual spring training workshops are offered at locations throughout Texas in conjunction with education service centers (ESC), state colleges and universities, and area school boards associations. Topics are selected by local planning committees and conducted by a mix of TASB staff, legal professionals, ESC staff, board members, and university staff.

[Registration information](#) is posted by individual location.

### ***Workshop Location and Dates***

- Abilene, Region 14 Education Service Center, May 11
- Alpine, Sul Ross State University, May 9
- Canyon, West Texas A&M University, May 17

- Commerce, Texas A&M University—Commerce, May 16
- El Paso, Region 19 Education Service Center, April 13
- Houston, Region 4 Education Service Center, April 26
- Huntsville, Region 6 Education Service Center, May 24
- Kingsville, Texas A&M University—Kingsville, April 5
- Lubbock, Region 17 Education Service Center, April 18
- Nacogdoches, Stephen F. Austin State University, May 16
- South Padre, South Padre Island Convention Center, May 19–20
- Stephenville, Tarleton State University, April 27
- Uvalde, Sul Ross State University—Rio Grande College, May 11
- Victoria, Victoria College Conference and Education Center, May 17
- Waco, Region 12 Education Service Center, May 23
- Wichita Falls, Region 9 Education Service Center, April 3

## **TASB Risk Management Fund Members' Conference**

The [2017 TASB Risk Management Fund's Annual Members' Conference](#) is scheduled for April 23–25 at the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Austin. This year's conference tag line is MemCon17 and will be used to promote the event through traditional methods and social media. The conference, limited to Fund members and offered at no cost, will feature two general sessions, 16 education sessions, the Excellence Award presentations, and a legislative update.

Additionally, for the fifth straight year, the Fund is offering a hotel room credit for attendees. With this benefit, one participant from each Fund member in attendance will receive a no-cost room at the conference hotel. Staff expects another very successful conference with more than 500 attendees participating in the various events.

## In Other Action, the Board Approved:

- Minutes for December 3, 2016, Board meeting
- Engagement of audit services for 2016–17
- Amendments to the 2016–17 Budget
- 2016–17 TASB Risk Management Fund Service Agreement Amended Fee Addendum
- Changes to board policy on the TASB staff retirement plan
- Changes to board policies on programs permitting payments to district officials: Leadership TASB selection of class participants, advocacy-related interaction, and expense reimbursement

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is July 29 in Austin.

Editor: [Barbara Williams](#)

TASB Communications