

December 2016
2016–17 TASB Officers

A report on the December 2016 TASB Board of Directors Meeting
TASB Headquarters, Austin

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Board Approves TASB School Finance Plan

School finance has been an issue argued in and out of courts for decades. The most recent chapter of litigation ended in May 2016 when the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the state school finance system meets minimum requirements under the Texas constitution. However, the Court noted that more than 5 million Texas schoolchildren deserve a “revamped, nonsclerotic system fit for the 21st century,” adding that “the current Texas school system leaves much to be desired. Few would argue that the State cannot do better.” In fact, the conclusion to the ruling reports that the Texas “school funding ‘system’ is undeniably imperfect, with immense room for improvement.”

For the TASB Board, the path ahead is clear: “Those who support change and improvement must seek remedies from the Legislature whose duty it is to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.”

To this end, the Board authorized staff to seek legislative implementation of the TASB School Finance Plan. Association leaders believe it is a viable option that addresses adequacy, fairness, and the growing needs of students who are economically disadvantaged and students who are English language

learners.

Benefits of the TASB Plan over the Current School Finance System

The TASB Plan is a single-tier, single-guaranteed yield system that:

- Replaces the target revenue and two-tiered formula systems;
- Phases out hold harmless provisions that have outlived their original purpose;
- Protects districts from losses during a two-year transition period by establishing a minimum gain feature;
- Controls state costs during a two-year transition period with a maximum gain feature;
- Recognizes the growing need for resources to assist all students in meeting state academic standards;
- Improves fairness by allocating greater gains to districts with low property wealth, higher percentages of at-risk students, and growing numbers of students who need assistance learning English;
- Is easier to understand and explain

Statewide Superintendent Salary Survey Released

Results of the [annual survey of district trends in superintendents' salaries and benefits](#) recently was released by TASB and the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA). The survey, conducted by [TASB HR Services](#), is the first of a series of three surveys that are the most definitive study of school district compensation and benefits practices in Texas. Of particular note in the superintendent salary survey are the following:

- Thirty-three percent of returning superintendents (200) did not receive a pay increase. Eighty-six percent of respondents (620) had a returning superintendent for 2016–17.
- The average superintendent pay increase was 3.2 percent, up from last year's average of 2.9 percent.
- The average superintendent salary for 2016–17 is \$142,154, a 1.9 percent increase from 2015–16.
- Average superintendent salaries range from \$94,920 in districts with fewer than 500 students to \$308,184 in districts with more than 50,000 students. Half of reported salaries are less than \$123,015.

The 2016–17 survey also reveals that superintendents have been in their current positions for an average of four years and report an average of seven years of total experience as a superintendent in any district. Most superintendents (62 percent) have served in only one school district. Of the 102 districts (14 percent) with a new superintendent for 2016–17, 63 percent hired a superintendent with no previous experience in the position.

Advocacy Efforts

In an effort to increase advocacy efforts on behalf of public schools, TASB is launching a legislative advertising campaign to build support for education issues before the Texas Legislature. TASB's public affairs firm worked with staff to fine-tune messages for the campaign and develop digital content for social media advertising.

The hub of the campaign is a [central advocacy website](#) that will allow individuals to learn about and take action on school privatization and funding issues with their own legislators.

Information also will be shared through regular communication vehicles such as the School Board Advocacy Network, *Legislative Report*, *The Star* e-newsletter, TASB Facebook page, and TASB Twitter account. In addition, the Association will continue to develop consistent messaging that can be shared with other supportive groups and community members.

New Directors Elected to TASB Board

Three new Directors were announced at the December meeting and will take their seats at the next TASB Board meeting in April. Joining the Board are Carrie Gregory, [Gregory-Portland ISD](#), Region 2; Thomas Darden, [Cooper ISD](#), Region 8; and Will Streit, [Leander ISD](#), Region 13B. All fill interim positions.

Gregory has been on her local board for two years and serves as secretary-treasurer. She is active in PTO and the Gregory Chamber of Commerce. A physical therapist with Affiliated Therapy Group Practice, she earned a bachelor's degree at Texas A&M University and master's degree at Texas Woman's University in Houston.

A 2007 graduate of Leadership TASB, Darden has served as his board's president since he was elected in 2002. He is a systems engineering manager for L-3 Communications, a defense contractor in Greenville. Darden earned a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University and master's degree from The University of Texas at Arlington.

Streit, who works at IBM, was elected to his board in 2008 and currently serves as president. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, San Diego, master's degree in business administration from Duke University, and master's degree in history from Sam Houston State University.

Campuses Can Win Cash in Video Contest

Entries are being accepted for the [2016–17 Student Video Contest](#). The contest is sponsored by TASB every other year to coincide with the legislative session.

In a 30-second to two-minute video, students can illustrate why their public school rocks and win cash prizes. The contest is open to all Texas elementary and secondary public school students, and winners will be selected in three categories: elementary, middle/junior high, and high school. First prize of \$5,000 and second prize of \$2,500 in each category will be awarded for use in the students' classroom or campus. A participating school district must be an [active member of TASB](#).

Visit the [Student Video Contest web page](#) for contest rules and to see previous winners. Entries must be received by January 13, 2017. For more information or answers to specific questions, e-mail studentvideo@tasb.org.

November 2016 Election Overview

While the November 8 election was filled with drama at the national level, not much changed at the state level. The 85th Legislative Session will begin on January 10, 2017. The Senate will be comprised of 20 Republicans and 11 Democrats—the same partisan makeup as before the election. Two of the 20 Republicans will be freshmen, and one of the 11 Democrats will be a freshman. The House of Representatives will be comprised of 95 Republicans and 55 Democrats after Democrats picked up five seats. Of the 95 Republicans, there will be 16 freshmen, and 10 of the 55 Democrats will be freshmen.

eXceptional Governance Summit

TASB Directors were briefed on the XG Project™, which is sparking important conversations on how exceptional governance can greatly impact student

success. With a goal of improved student performance, TASB is convening thought leaders and Texas governance practitioners January 12–13, 2017.

The [XG Summit™](#) in Austin will highlight promising practices and current research on the relationship of school boards and student performance. This and other upcoming activities will help position TASB as the premier leader on sharing governance research and practices and supporting boards to further student success. Registration and speaker biographies are detailed on the [TASB website](#).

Joint Legislative Conference

The upcoming legislative session is sure to present challenges and opportunities. It is critical that trustees and administrators learn about education bills working through the Legislature and share stories about their local students and schools.

TASB and TASA will host a joint [Legislative Conference](#) at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol on February 21, 2017. Board members and administrators will hear from Capitol insiders regarding insights on the 85th Legislative Session. Governmental relations staff from both associations will give updates on legislative happenings and proposed bills to prepare attendees to meet with legislators and their staffs later that day. After the conference, buses will be available to take attendees to the Capitol for appointments with lawmakers.

Regulatory Update

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has informed 11 districts that their school board trustees and superintendents must attend special Lone Star Governance training before it will approve school turnaround plans as required under new accountability legislation (HB 1842, 84th Legislature). The districts are

Brazosport, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Hearne, Houston, Lubbock, Midland, Nacogdoches, Tyler, and Waco ISDs.

Deputy Commissioner of Education for Governance A.J. Crabill sent letters to the 11 school boards in October, saying they need additional training because their plans for turning around campuses earning “Improvement Required” designations were unsatisfactory. Several districts have already completed this training.

SBOE to Examine School Board Standards and Tasks

The [“Framework for School Board Development”](#) is a State Board of Education (SBOE) rule that identifies five standards for school board performance and the tasks a board should perform to provide the vision, structure, accountability, advocacy, and unity necessary to ensure effective governance of school districts.

This important rule will be up for revision by the SBOE beginning in January, and TASB needs to be the primary advocate to the SBOE on how the Framework is revised. TASB President Charles R. Stafford has formed a joint subcommittee to provide direction to Association staff on how to advocate on possible revisions to the Framework.

School Board Recognition Month

[School Board Recognition Month](#) (SBRM) is celebrated each year to help Texas districts and communities express appreciation to those who serve on local boards. A secondary purpose for the month-long celebration is to share information with communities about the appropriate role of school board members and the value of board service in the overall life and health of any

community.

Each fall, TASB provides materials to help districts recognize their local trustees during the month of January. The [2017 kit](#), centered on the theme of “All-Star Team: Champions for Kids,” is full of ideas. Certificates and a sample release and article were mailed directly to districts in mid-October. Tips for activities, artwork, and other documents that can be customized are posted online, and districts can use the logo on the front page of their websites in January. All districts are urged to tell us how they celebrated, use [this form](#) to share your district’s activities, which will be included in next year’s kit.

Board Officers' Academy/TASB ISD Training Day

The new year also brings training opportunities specifically designed for new board members and new board officers with [a full-day event](#) in Austin on January 14, 2017. The new board member track will include basics in school law, teamwork, and boardsmanship. Newly elected board officers can explore duties and responsibilities, parliamentary procedures, and effective facilitation skills. A discount is available to board members electing to attend the [XG Summit™](#), which is being held in conjunction with this training.

Garcia Nominated for NSBA Officer Position

Former TASB President Viola M. Garcia of Aldine ISD has served two terms on the [National School Boards Association \(NSBA\) Board of Directors](#), representing the Southern Region.

On behalf of the TASB Board, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to nominate Garcia as a candidate for the secretary-treasurer position on the NSBA Board. She has served on the Aldine ISD Board since 1992 and is a past president of the Mexican-American School Board Members Association.

Texas Classroom Connectivity Initiative

EducationSuperHighway is the leading nonprofit organization with a focus on upgrading Internet access in every public school classroom in America. In March, Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Education Agency, and regional education service centers announced their partnership with the EducationSuperHighway and launched the Texas Classroom Connectivity Initiative.

The goal of [this initiative](#) is to connect every instructional building in the state via high-speed, scalable, and reliable connections to enable digital learning in the classroom. Currently, there are more than 150 districts that will need additional bandwidth to meet the minimum 100 Kbps per-student target and more than 200 districts that may lack the fiber infrastructure required to support increased bandwidth demand. Learn more at educationsuperhighway.org/blog/.

NSBA Advocacy Institute

NSBA will host its [Advocacy Institute](#) January 29–31, 2017. This premier conference for federal school board advocacy will take place at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, DC. The conference is focusing on a new administration and being held just nine days from the presidential inauguration.

[Registration and hotel reservations](#) must be made directly through NSBA's housing company for attendees to receive the conference rate of \$244 per night at the host hotel.

Winter Governance and Legal Seminar

The [2017 Winter Governance and Legal Seminar](#), March 2–4, 2017, at the Omni

Hotel Corpus Christi is offering several new attendee opportunities. For the first time, participants can pick up their registration packets on Wednesday.

Experienced board members will have a chance to join a small group dialogue session with the Thursday and Friday morning keynote speakers. A new strand of sessions to complement the student panel also is being introduced; the Student Voices strand invites districts to include students as presenters to share student-lead and/or student-initiated programs.

In Other Action, the Board Approved:

- Minutes for September 22, 2016, Board meeting
- Minutes for September 24, 2016, Delegate Assembly
- Executive Director Fiscal Year 2015–16 performance evaluation and 2017 employment
- Waiver of 90-day notice requirement for TASB Benefits Cooperative bylaws amendments
- Fiscal Year 2015–16 financial statement and audit
- Amendments to TASB Board policies on appointments, Nominations Committee operational guidelines, Nominations Committee accountabilities and approvals, and Planning and Development Committee accountabilities and approvals

The next meeting of the TASB Board of Directors is April 1, 2017, in Austin.

Editor: [Barbara Williams](#)

TASB Communications