

# Texas Lone Star

A Publication of the Texas Association of School Boards | Volume 42, Number 4 | May 2024

## TRUSTEE LEADERSHIP

**TASB BOARD HAS GUIDED  
ASSOCIATION THROUGHOUT  
ITS HISTORY**



## Featured Event



### TASB Officers 2023-24

Armando Rodriguez, President, Canutillo ISD  
Rolinda Schmidt, President-Elect, Kerrville ISD  
Tony Hopkins, First Vice President, Friendswood ISD, Region 4C  
Mary Jane Hetrick, Second Vice President, Dripping Springs ISD, Region 13B  
Dan Micciche, Secretary-Treasurer, Dallas ISD, Region 10C  
Debbie Gillespie, Immediate Past President

### TASB Board of Directors 2023-24

Moises Alfaro, Mathis ISD, Region 2  
Jesus Amaya, Los Fresnos CISD, Region 1A  
Rose Avalos, Aldine ISD, Region 4A  
Carlos Bentancourt, Slaton ISD, Region 17  
Lynn Boswell, Austin ISD, Region 13A  
Darlene Breaux, Alief ISD, Region 4B  
Steve Brown, Ector County ISD, Region 18  
Kevin A. Carbó, Mesquite ISD, Region 10D  
Justin Chapa, Arlington ISD, Region 11C  
John Classe, Frisco ISD, Region 10E  
Julie Cole, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, Region 11A  
Thomas Darden, Cooper ISD, Region 8  
Angela Lemond Flowers, Houston ISD, Region 4D  
Rebecca Fox, Katy ISD, Region 4E  
Ginger Friesenhahn, East Central ISD, Region 20A  
Sylvia Sánchez Garza, South Texas ISD, Region 1B  
Linda Gooch, Sunnyvale ISD, Region 10B  
Carol Harle, Northside ISD-Bexar County, Region 20B  
Tricia Ikard, Maypearl ISD, Region 10A  
Mark Lukert, Wichita Falls ISD, Region 9  
Kathy Major, Liberty Hill ISD, Region 13C  
Kristen Malone, Fort Bend ISD, Region 4G  
Raymond P. Meza, San Felipe Del Rio CISD, Region 15  
Cynthia Najera, Socorro ISD, Region 19  
Steven Newcom, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD, Region 11D  
Nicholas Phillips, Nederland ISD, Region 5  
Quinton "Q" Phillips, Fort Worth ISD, Region 11B  
Margaret Pruett, Victoria ISD, Region 3  
Beth Prykryl, New Caney ISD, Region 6A  
Tony Raymond, Sabine ISD, Region 7  
Rich Sena, Boerne ISD, Region 20D  
Cindy Spanel, Highland Park ISD-Potter County, Region 16  
David Sublasky, ESC 19, ESC Representative  
Theresa Wagaman, Conroe ISD, Region 6B  
Mildred Watkins, La Vega ISD, Region 12  
Greg Welch, Clyde CISD, Region 14

## MAY

- 1-2 • TASB HR Services: Administering Pay Plans — Virtual Event
- 8 • TASB Spring Workshop — Alpine
- 8-9 • TASB HR Services: Understanding Wage and Hour Law — Virtual Event
- 9 • TASB Spring Workshop — Abilene
- 9 • TASB Spring Workshop — Huntsville
- 9 • TASB Student Solutions Webinar Series: Wrapping Up 2023-24 — Virtual Event
- 9-10 • TASB Virtual 30<sup>th</sup> Annual SHARS Conference — Virtual Event
- 14 • TASB Spring Workshop — Commerce
- 14 • TASB Spring Workshop — Nacogdoches
- 15 • TASB Spring Workshop — Canyon
- 15 • TASB SHARS Matters Webinar Series: End-of-Year SHARS Reminders — Virtual Event
- 20 • TASB SHARS Road Show — Waco
- 21 • TASB Spring Workshop — Waco
- 23 • TASB Spring Workshop — El Paso

## JUNE

- 5-6 • TASB HR Services: Managing State and Federal Leave — Virtual Event
- 12-15 • TASB Summer Leadership Institute — San Antonio
- 13 • TASB Legislative Advisory Council II Meeting — San Antonio
- 19-22 • TASB Summer Leadership Institute — Fort Worth
- 26-27 • TASB HR Services: Get a Grip on the Family and Medical Leave Act — Virtual Event

## JULY

- 16 • TASB Facility Services: Asbestos Designated Person Training — Austin
- 17 • TASB Facility Services: Integrated Pest Management — Austin
- 18 • TASB Facility Services: Best Practices: Maintenance and Operations — Austin



For more information about these events or deadlines, visit the TASB website at [tasb.org](https://tasb.org) or call TASB at **512-467-0222** or **800-580-8272** toll-free.



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New for 2024: Elevate your leadership skills with TASBO's exclusive preconference session, **Board Members and School Budgets**. TASBO staff will provide board members with an overview of the budget process and take a deeper dive into some of the issues board members currently face as they approach the 2025 budget year.

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is now open



Visit [tasb.org/SLI](https://tasb.org/SLI) for more information and to register.



# Engagement and Service

TASB helps trustees better serve students

by Armando Rodriguez



Armando Rodriguez

**A**s trustees, we understand the weight of our responsibility. Every decision we make has a ripple effect, shaping the educational landscape of our communities and the lives of our students. It is a profound privilege to serve, but it also comes with its challenges.

Throughout my journey as a trustee, one principle has remained steadfast in my mind: “If you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu.” This quote, which has resonated with me since my teenage years, serves as a constant reminder of the importance of active engagement and service.

I vividly remember attending school board meetings while still in high school, eager to learn and contribute to the dis-

cussions that would impact my education and that of my peers. It quickly became apparent that those who are actively involved have a greater influence on the direction of our schools and communities.

## Creating positive change

Service is not just a commitment; it is a catalyst for positive change. The more we invest in our roles as trustees, the greater the dividends for our students and school districts in the long run. This principle holds true not only at the local level but also within organizations like TASB.

Engagement with TASB offers invaluable opportunities for growth and development. Whether through enrollment in programs like Board Officer Institute,

participation in the many conferences and training opportunities, or fostering connections with fellow members, TASB provides a platform for trustees to enhance their skills and effectiveness.

I personally cherish my time at TASB, not only for the deep knowledge and trusted insights I have gained but also for the relationships I’ve been able to forge with fellow trustees from every corner of Texas. The camaraderie and shared commitment to public service have enriched my experience as a trustee in my home district of Canutillo.

## Staying engaged

As we navigate the challenges and opportunities facing public education, it is more important than ever for us to stay engaged, stay connected, and embrace the ethos of TASB public service. Our collective efforts have the power to shape the future of education in Texas and ensure that every student has access to quality learning experiences.

I urge each of you to seize the opportunities afforded by TASB membership, to actively participate in the initiatives and programs available, and to continue advocating for the needs of your communities. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and the success of our school districts.

Thank you for your dedication to public education and your commitment to service. Let us continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the students and families we serve.★

*Armando Rodriguez, president of the Canutillo ISD board of trustees, is the 2023-24 president of TASB.*



Photo by TASB Media Services

TASB President Armando Rodriguez (third from right) and Ted Beard, a Longview ISD trustee and the 2021-22 TASB President (to Rodriguez’s right) join other trustees and students during a closing activity at the 2024 Governance Camp in Galveston.

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# Turning to Trustees

TASB Board leadership central to our mission

by Laura Tolley



Laura Tolley

This month, we continue our year-long effort in *Texas Lone Star* to highlight TASB's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a story about how the Association has turned to our members, experienced trustees, to help develop and guide our mission of serving school boards and districts across Texas.

It's been this way from the beginning because TASB understands and values the expertise and commitment of those who lead our school districts. We know that trustees are dedicated to providing the best education possible to all students, and that they also bring this passion and knowledge to their leadership roles at TASB. When our members serve in leadership roles at TASB, everyone benefits.

As I worked on this story with *TLS* staff writer Sylvia Wood, I especially enjoyed hearing from a number of previous TASB presidents who shared their experiences serving on the TASB Board of Directors. You can read about their experiences in the story that begins on page 8.

While doing research, I also read about early TASB leaders and what they had to say about leadership and service in a book the Association published about TASB's first 40 years. For example, the book includes excerpts of a speech Willie I. Kocurek delivered at the TASA Midwinter Conference on Education on Jan. 6, 1951. Kocurek, who was the 1950-52 TASB president and served on the Austin ISD board, talked about the still-new Association's mission to help more board members — and how those board members helped TASB. It's interesting how his words are still relevant.

"Board members who belong to the Association also serve on a variety of committees which are not only contributing to the improvement of education in

Texas, but each board member who serves on one of these committees is a better board member after having served," said Kocurek, who has an elementary school in Austin ISD named after him. "It is through a continuing, growing, enthusiastic group of board members joined together in the Texas Association of School Boards that all of us in education can help to solve the major problems in Texas education."

Despite funding and other challenges, I'm always amazed and inspired by school districts' many innovative efforts to provide a range of programs, events, initiatives, and other activities.

## Continuing challenges

Of course, Texas school districts continue to deal with a range of issues. Funding has often been a challenge and it remains so today. Stagnant per-pupil funding coupled with inflationary price increases are impacting school districts across the state, with many forced to approve deficit budgets in 2023-24 and likely again in 2024-25.

As school leaders navigate this school finance crisis, some districts and school boards may be considering ways to provide funding for school programs and salaries. One option for districts facing

this challenging situation is a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election, or VATRE. This month's issue includes a story about VATRE and why it may be a way for districts to secure revenue that is designated specifically for people and programs. The story begins on page 18 and includes a lot of useful tips and deadlines.

## Inspiring student programs

Despite funding and other challenges, I'm always amazed and inspired by school districts' many innovative efforts to provide a range of programs, events, initiatives, and other activities — all to help their students get the best education possible.

A story that starts on page 14 shows how a casual conversation at a hair salon led to the establishment of a CTE cosmetology program at Gorman ISD in North Texas. We highlighted this one initiative in the May issue, but other districts large and small across the state also are putting more resources into CTE courses to align with regional workforce needs.

However, these CTE programs can have additional benefits. The students in the cosmetology course, for example, helped the community by participating as a group in a local charitable effort. It's an interesting and heartwarming story highlighting one of the many successes playing out in Texas public schools today.

I hope you enjoy it — and the entire issue.★

A handwritten signature of Laura Tolley in black ink.

Laura Tolley is managing editor of *Texas Lone Star*.



# TRUSTEE LEADERSHIP

TASB BOARD HAS GUIDED ASSOCIATION THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY

by Laura Tolley and Sylvia Wood

*Editor's note: In every issue of Texas Lone Star this year, the magazine will honor TASB's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by writing about the positive impact the Association has had on Texas public schools through its high-quality services, visionary leadership, and skilled advocacy. Additionally, these articles will highlight the significant events, people, legislation, and issues that have shaped public education in Texas. Overall, these articles reflect how TASB and school leaders work hard together to promote educational excellence for all Texas schoolchildren.*

**A**t the heart of TASB's governance structure is an understanding and appreciation of its members. Throughout its 75-year history, TASB has turned to members for leadership in developing and guiding its mission to provide advocacy, expert training, and high-quality services to school boards and districts.

TASB values the power of leveraging the expertise of members who not only lead their school districts but often are skilled professionals in business, law, technology, and other fields. They also represent the state's geographic diversity, understanding their areas' needs, challenges, and culture.

These trustees are devoted to running their school boards — and they bring that dedication, knowledge, experience, and understanding of public education to their leadership roles at TASB, helping it fulfill its many responsibilities to members.

"TASB is led by a trusted, experienced family of school board leaders who are bound by the common goal of fostering excellence in public education," said current TASB President Armando Rodriguez, who also serves as Canutillo ISD's board president. "Our Board leadership is dedicated to serving TASB and making sure it does all it can to help school boards and



Photos over the years show TASB Board members meeting to discuss the Association's efforts to provide expert training, advocacy, and high-quality services to school boards and districts.

*Photos from the TASB archives*



their districts provide the best education possible to students. I know I speak for the entire Board when I say we are honored, and humbled, to serve in this vital role.”

TASB is a member-led association, with six officers and a board of directors made up of trustees from districts in every education service center region in Texas, plus one representative for ESC boards. They help shape TASB's future and ensure that the Association delivers practical, beneficial results to its members across Texas.

Board members are elected to the TASB Board at TASB's Delegate Assembly, the annual membership meeting held at txEDCON. Delegate Assembly also adopts TASB's Advocacy Agenda, which is created by members, for members. The Advocacy Agenda is a two-year action plan focusing on the legislative priorities of the more than 1,000 school boards in Texas. (Read more about TASB's advocacy efforts, including Delegate Assembly, in the upcoming June issue of *Texas Lone Star*.)

“Our success over the past 75 years is really a reflection of our member-led governance structure that ensures TASB is aligning our work with member values, needs, and priorities,” said TASB Executive Director Dan Troxell.

In addition to the Board, other TASB affiliated entities also benefit from member leadership, including the TASB Risk Management Fund, Lone Star Investment Pool, The Local Government Purchasing Cooperative (also known as BuyBoard), TASB Benefits Cooperative, TASB Legal Assistance Fund, First Public Governance Committee, the National Purchasing Cooperative, and TASB Energy Cooperative. TASB entities have boards that include members who are trustees, superintendents, and other administrators. Throughout the year, these boards hold 29 official board meetings.

### Early days of leadership

In November 1949, a small group of trustees gathered in Austin to charter TASB and elect its first leaders, including Ray K. Daily, a Houston school board member who was chosen as the first president, and Willie Kocurek of Austin ISD,

selected as first vice president and then as TASB's second president.

From the start, the trustees' leadership was an acknowledged asset.

“Board members who belong to the Association also serve on a variety of committees, which are not only contributing to the improvement of education in Texas, but each board member who serves on one of these committees is a better board member after having served,” Kocurek, as TASB president, said at the Midwinter Conference on Education, held in Austin on Jan. 6, 1951. “It is through a continuing, growing, enthusiastic group of board members joined together in the Texas Association of School Boards that all of us in education can help to solve the major problems in Texas education.”

TASB continued its work to help school boards and expand membership. Some 20 years later, the 27-member board was expanded to 35 members representing 26 districts. Laura T. Doing, a Wichita Falls trustee and TASB president in 1970, solicited more representatives from urban boards.

In the late 1970s into 1989, TASB and its leadership helped members respond to challenges brought on by new laws and lawsuits and an emphasis on education reform. In January 1978, at a meeting of the TASB Board of Trustees, members decided to reevaluate TASB's goals and objectives. They agreed that TASB was a threefold organization: service-oriented, management-oriented, and product-oriented. During the next decade, the Association would develop many services and programs based on those goals established by the Board.

At every major point in its history, TASB presidents and other board leaders have been at the forefront of helping the Association expertly and reliably serve its members in myriad ways. For example:

- Franklin Bass, then a Corpus Christi ISD trustee, served as president of TASB in 1978-79, a time when the Association was expanding its legislative goals, especially at the federal level. Bass also guided TASB in





Janis F. Petronis, a former Copperas Cove ISD trustee, was the 1987-88 TASB President.



George H. McShan, a former Harlingen CISD trustee, was the 1998-99 TASB President.

promoting more trustee involvement in Association activities. There was then record attendance at the annual convention, and the Spring Workshops and Board Leadership Workshops were highly successful.

- When Julianan Cowden, then an Alvarado ISD trustee, was president in 1982-83, TASB grew phenomenally, and the Texas School Services Foundation was developed to provide risk management programs.
- John Quisenberry, then an Ector County ISD trustee, became TASB president in 1984, when school districts were trying to implement the changes mandated by House Bill 72, a reform bill that impacted many aspects of district operations. Under Quisenberry's leadership, TASB worked to help districts with the many changes they were facing. In addition, the Legislative Program developed under his leadership focused on changing some problem areas, such as class-size mandates, in HB 72.

TASB and its Board leadership have continuously worked to provide expert services and products to its members and understand members' evolving needs. One of TASB's goals has been to keep its annual membership fees as low as possible while also bringing an economy of scale to many district operations — helping reduce the burden of government. The same formula has been in place since 1978 to determine TASB membership fees with smaller districts paying less than larger ones. No district, however, no matter how large, pays more than \$11,000 — a cap that has been in place since 1991.

#### **TASB Board today**

Today, the Board convenes at least four times a year, but there is more work to be done in appointments to

standing Board committees. Conference calls, informal meetings, events, and more activities are all part of a Board member's work.

While this governance framework allows TASB to tap into trustees' wealth of experience and knowledge, TASB directors also benefit from connecting with and learning from each other, becoming even stronger school leaders.

As part of the effort to honor TASB's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, TASB staff interviewed several past presidents, asking them about the vital role the Board plays in TASB governance and some of the key initiatives they worked on during their tenures. Following are excerpts from those interviews.

#### **Uniting two entities**

Janis F. Petronis, a former Copperas Cove trustee, served as TASB president in 1987-88, a time when TASB and the Texas School Services Foundation began to combine some services. TSSF had been created in 1983 as a nonprofit to administer services in the risk management area.

"I think I served on the TASB Board as president at probably one of the most volatile times, not explosive volatile, but just change," she said, noting there were basically two organizations, and the goal was to unite them.

"Through my presidency and the next couple after me, that was changed, and we brought all of the services under the TASB banner," she said. "The Board believed it was important."

She said the process began when she was president, but it continued under the two succeeding TASB presidents, Byron F. Black, TASB president 1988-89 and then a Burleson ISD trustee, and Charles Wade, TASB president 1989-90 and then a Monahans-Wickett-Pyote ISD trustee.

“It wasn’t just during my term as president; it was two or three presidents there where we really changed the structure of TASB to pull it under one umbrella.”

Petronis also served as president when TASB worked on its strategic planning.

“During my term as president was when we did our first strategic plan for TASB, and it definitely was a game changer,” she said. “We as a team came together with where we were going and how we were going to get there, and it was just so exciting to me.”

Petronis said decisions had to be made on how TASB was going to divide things within the Association as well as how it was going to be run and what the goals and purposes would be.

“It was pioneering in that we were deciding our future. And the strategic planning effort, which is still very much a part of the organization today, started that effort. And if I could pick a singular thing, that would be it,” she said.

### Working on providing resources

George H. McShan, a former Harlingen CISD trustee, was TASB’s first Black president, serving in 1998-99. “As the TASB president, it was a tremendous learning experience, an opportunity for me to lead in a way that was different. Because being the first Black president, and being from Harlingen, which is the southernmost part of the state, was a little bit different,” McShan said.

“At the time, TASB put emphasis on providing resources to school districts and what we did was we worked on entrepreneurship,” McShan said. “BuyBoard was one of the big things we started.”

The Local Government Purchasing Cooperative, also known as BuyBoard, launched in 1998. BuyBoard helps

school districts and other local governments increase purchasing power, lower administrative costs, and streamline the procurement process. Membership in the Cooperative continues to grow and now numbers more than 3,000 governmental entities across the state.

McShan said the TASB Board was always focused on helping school districts — rural, urban, suburban — get the resources they need.

“You have to have resources to support districts,” he said.

“We are a nonprofit, so we felt we could do more. ... BuyBoard and the Lone Star Investment Pool were others. Districts had choices, and we gave them that choice. And we really focused on that and not just on memberships,” he said. “And if a district is investing in TASB, what are you going to get back? We stressed that, and it worked out very well.”

### School funding challenges

Bret Begert is a longtime Fort Elliott CISD trustee who is now president of that board. Begert served on the TASB Board from 2005 to 2017 and was TASB president 2015-16, a period when the Texas Legislature enacted deep budget cuts to public education funding to overcome an overall shortfall in the state budget.

“The 2011 [legislative] session was not friendly to public education, and it was about that time when the districts faced so many cuts that the [TASB] staff and Board together waived the fees to our conferences to help our membership out and allow the training without cost, and it was very well received and appreciated from schools throughout the state,” Begert said.



Bret Begert, a Fort Elliott CISD trustee, was the 2015-16 TASB President.





## Addressing challenges

Jim Rice, a former Fort Bend ISD trustee, served on the TASB Board from 2012 to 2022. He served as board president in 2020-21, when James B. Crow retired as longtime TASB executive director. Rice's term began in October 2020, months after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, forcing school districts to close.

The Board convened a search committee to find a replacement for Crow and had a recommendation to choose Troxell, who was unanimously approved, Rice said.

Navigating the ongoing pandemic was much more tumultuous. TASB, he said, had to pivot to work on canceling in-person events and shifting Summer Leadership Institute and txEDCON to online events.

"But TASB showed its resilience, really the TASB staff, stepped up to the plate and did that. And for the most part, we got through everything," Rice said.

## Selecting a new brand

Recently, the TASB Board served an important role in guiding the Association's brand and logo modernization effort.

While nonprofit organizations often outsource their rebranding campaigns to ad agencies, TASB once again turned to its Board for guidance. A key group of five TASB directors, the Planning and Development Subcommittee on Brand Modernization, worked hard on developing a new brand and logo recommendation.

"We appreciated having the opportunity to guide this project," said TASB Immediate Past President and subcommittee member Debbie Gillespie, who served on the Frisco ISD board. "TASB staff were all so incredibly responsive

to the committee's concerns and questions as we worked through many possible designs and color combinations."

Gillespie was joined by TASB First Vice-President Tony Hopkins, who serves on the Friendswood ISD board; TASB Director Sylvia Sánchez Garza of South Texas ISD; TASB Director Linda Gooch of Sunnyvale ISD; and former TASB Director Robert Westbrook, who until recently served on the Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD board.

The subcommittee worked for several months on the project before presenting a recommendation to the entire TASB Board at the March 2023 meeting, where they approved the new logo and brand.

"Change can be difficult, but it's also exciting," Gillespie said.

The brand and logo project, along with other initiatives implemented during the past 75 years, demonstrate the vital importance of TASB Board leadership.

"Throughout our history, we have been blessed to have such extensive knowledge and dedication on our board," Troxell said. "Our directors are always bringing that trusted experience to the table — and our members know they can depend on us to help them address any need or challenge."★

*Laura Tolley is managing editor of Texas Lone Star. Sylvia Wood is a staff writer for Texas Lone Star.*



Jim Rice, a former Fort Bend ISD trustee, was the 2020-21 TASB President.



Debbie Gillespie, a former Frisco ISD trustee, was the 2022-23 TASB President.

# TASB PRESIDENTS FROM THE BEGINNING

1949-50	Ray K. Daily, Houston ISD	1990-91	Patti A. Clapp, Richardson ISD
1950-52	Willie I. Kocurek, Austin ISD	1991-92	Amber M. Yeary, Laredo ISD
1952-54	James A. Redmond, Beaumont ISD	1992-93	Charles L. Lowry, Mount Vernon ISD
1954-56	Mose W. Glosserman, Lockhart ISD	1993-94	Jim E. Nelson, Ector County ISD
1956-57	Mrs. Will (Margaret) Miller, Corsicana ISD	1994-95	Lynn Allen, Hico ISD
1957-58	George S. Gandy, Wheeler ISD	1995-96	Ken Lloyd, Spring Branch ISD
1958-59	Ted Address, El Paso ISD	1996-97	Jannis Hayers, Electra ISD
1959-60	Arch H. McCulloch, Highland Park ISD (Dallas)	1997-98	David Sublasky, Fabens ISD
1960-61	W.H.B. Fehl, South Park ISD (Beaumont)	1998-99	George H. McShan, Harlingen CISD
1961-63	George C. Guthrie, San Antonio ISD	1999-00	John R. McInnis, Arlington ISD
1963-65	Lee Ragsdale, Jacksonville ISD	2000-01	Troy W. Simmons, Longview ISD
1965-67	John E. Meade, Bonham ISD	2001-02	Carlos E. Nieto, Presidio ISD
1967-69	Harold R. Yeary, Laredo ISD	2002-03	Rick Ogden, Aldine ISD
1969-70	W.T. Crouch, Tarrant County	2003-04	Bonnie Longnion, Humble ISD
1970-71	Laura T. Doing, Wichita Falls ISD	2004-05	Robert Sepulveda, Weslaco ISD
1971-72	Calvin R. Guest, Bryan ISD	2005-06	Katie Reed, Northside ISD, Bexar County
1972-73	Albert D. Brown, Jr., North East ISD (San Antonio)	2006-07	Jim Ash, Arlington ISD
1973-74	Shirley A. Hall, Weatherford ISD	2007-08	Renard Thomas, Angleton ISD
1974-75	Will D. Davis, Austin ISD	2008-09	Robert Seward, Mesquite ISD
1975-76	Ross O. Borrett, Ysleta ISD	2009-10	Sarah Winkler, Alief ISD
1976-77	Charles Waters, Lubbock ISD	2010-11	Sylvester Vasquez, Jr., Southwest ISD
1977-78	Tess Norris, San Marcos ISD	2011-12	Gary W. Inmon, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD
1978-79	Franklin Bass, Corpus Christi ISD	2012-13	Viola M. Garcia, Aldine ISD
1979-80	Charles Whiteside, Kilgore ISD	2013-14	Faye Beaulieu, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD
1980-81	Paul K. McCash, Jr., Texarkana ISD	2014-15	Andra Self, Lufkin ISD
1981-82	Floyd H. Myers, Clear Creek ISD	2015-16	Bret Begert, Fort Elliott CISD
1982-83	Julianan Cowden, Alvarado ISD	2016-17	Charles R. Stafford, Denton ISD
1983-84	Harris Hill, Garland ISD	2017-18	Teresa Flores, Ingleside ISD
1984-85	John Quisenberry, Ector County ISD	2018-19	James de Garavilla, Silsbee ISD
1985-86	Oscar G. Hernandez, San Antonio ISD	2019-20	Lee Lentz-Edwards, Kermit ISD
1986-87	W. Dee Hilton, Jr., Greenville ISD	2020-21	Jim Rice, Fort Bend ISD
1987-88	Janis F. Petronis, Copperas Cove ISD	2021-22	Ted Beard, Longview ISD
1988-89	Byron F. Black, Burleson ISD	2022-23	Debbie Gillespie, Frisco ISD
1989-90	Charles Wade, Monahans-Wickett-Pyote ISD	2023-24	Armando Rodriguez, Canutillo ISD







# A Cut Above

CTE program at Gorman ISD transforms lives

by Beth Griesmer

It was the kind of chatter that often happens during a haircut. They talked about kids and what was going on in the schools. Then, Shawndelle Harrington was asked a question that would put her on the path to bring a new career and technology education program to Gorman ISD, a small rural district in northwest Texas.

"I was cutting the school counselor's hair and she said to me, 'I noticed that your license says instructor and hers says cosmetologist, and I want to know what the difference is,'" Harrington recounted. "I told her that I'm licensed to teach cosmetology."

The counselor was thrilled to hear that information. She knew a few girls in the district of 250 students who wanted to take cosmetology courses and wondered if Harrington could help her. That simple request turned out to be the start of a CTE program that would transform the lives of not only the cosmetology students but would also have a positive impact on the community.

"It's the little program that could," said Gorman ISD Superintendent Mike Winter.

Districts large and small across the state are putting more resources into CTE programs to align with regional workforce needs, but there is also an awareness that these programs instill far more than occupational skills. "Cosmetology gave them a focus and direction and a little bit more motivation to do better in school in general," Winter said of the students who have participated in the program. "So many of our students today are aimless, especially after COVID. A program like this gives them the direction they need and want."

## Building a program

Landing in Gorman after her husband retired from teaching automotive CTE classes in Birdville ISD in Haltom City, the Harringtons were looking forward to returning to his hometown and being part of the farming and ranching community west of Fort Worth. A former cosmetology




Gorman

teacher at Birdville ISD, Harrington rented a chair at a local salon in Gorman and jumped at the chance to expand when the opportunity came to buy the barbershop next door.

As district leaders explored creating a cosmetology program in Gorman, Harrington offered her insight as a CTE and cosmetology teacher. She suggested they try to partner with a community college to offer the coursework to students and even participated in initial conversations with local colleges.



Cosmetology students visit a nursing home to give manicures.



Winter knew that Harrington would be a necessary part of the program. Nearby Ranger College agreed to partner with Gorman ISD to offer dual credit, which allowed the district to hire Harrington as a part-time teacher.

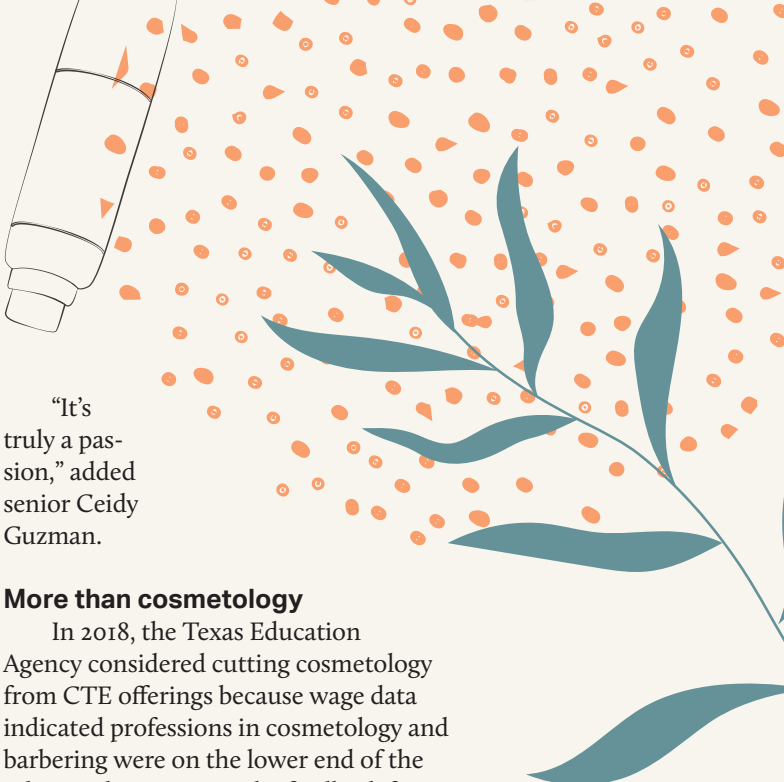
“For me personally, it was a leap of faith,” Winter said. “If we try something and fail on behalf of students, then we aren’t really failing.” The school board gave its full support to the endeavor.

The district rented a shop in town and its maintenance department got it ready and inspected the day before the start of the 2021-22 school year, when five students enrolled in the inaugural class. By the next school year, Harrington went full time with a group of juniors in the mornings and seniors in the afternoons.

For the 2024-25 school year, the program will include sophomores and be open to nearby districts. “We are in conversations to expand to a bigger facility,” said Harrington.

The four seniors who have been in the CTE program this year will graduate with associate degrees from Ranger College, a community college in the town of Ranger, before they graduate from high school, with dual licenses in barbering and cosmetology.

“Cosmetology is very beneficial to us for many reasons,” said senior Brooke Gillen as she discussed the confidence she has gained to go out and talk to potential clients. “With being in cosmetology, I have blossomed.”



“It’s truly a passion,” added senior Ceidy Guzman.

### More than cosmetology

In 2018, the Texas Education Agency considered cutting cosmetology from CTE offerings because wage data indicated professions in cosmetology and barbering were on the lower end of the salary scale. However, the feedback from students, teachers, and industry professionals strongly supported the value of these programs.

Harrington and Winter presented on the success of the Gorman CTE program at txEDCON23.

“It’s about so much more than just doing hair,” Harrington explained. From color theory to microbiology to workplace safety, cosmetology students complete more than 1,000 hours of coursework. Harrington also insisted on a district membership in the Texas chapter of SkillsUSA, a career and technical student organization (CTSO).

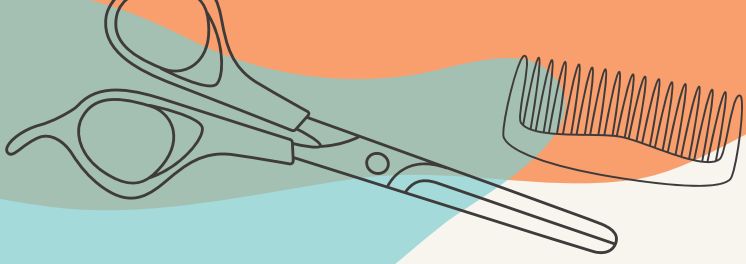
According to the U.S. Department of Education, CTSOs are a critical component of effective CTE programs. CTSOs



Photos courtesy of Gorman ISD

The cosmetology classroom is set up like a salon.





Gorman ISD cosmetology students fill boxes at the local food bank.

offer activities that support instructional programs like cosmetology through events and competitions on the regional, state, and national level. The Texas chapter of SkillsUSA is a CTSO approved by TEA, along with eight other organizations in the state.

A national organization, SkillsUSA states its goal is to improve “the quality of America’s skilled workforce through a structured program of citizenship, leadership, employability, technical, and professional skills training.” This is largely done through a series of competitions in everything from automotive maintenance to wedding cake design.

Harrington had experienced the value of these competitions in her previous teaching positions. “The student gets to just focus on what they want to be. You get to see what it’s going to be like to be a barber,” she said as an example of one of the competitions Gorman ISD students had excelled at this year. “It shows them that you are learning all these different tools you can put in your belt.”

### Impacting a community

To get the competition program off the ground, the cosmetology students held a holiday fundraiser in the park, which included a parade, vendor booths, caroling, a hayride, and a visit from Santa. They partnered with the Gorman Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to raise money to travel to and participate in SkillsUSA competitions.

After the fundraiser’s success, a community member asked Harrington if her students wanted to help with another charitable effort — the annual angel tree project.

“So many families in our community depend on the local angel tree project to make Christmas possible for their children,” said Belinda Segura, director of the Gorman food bank.

The small group of cosmetology seniors agreed to take it on. To them, the angel tree project was about giving other children in the community “the Christmas that they deserve.”

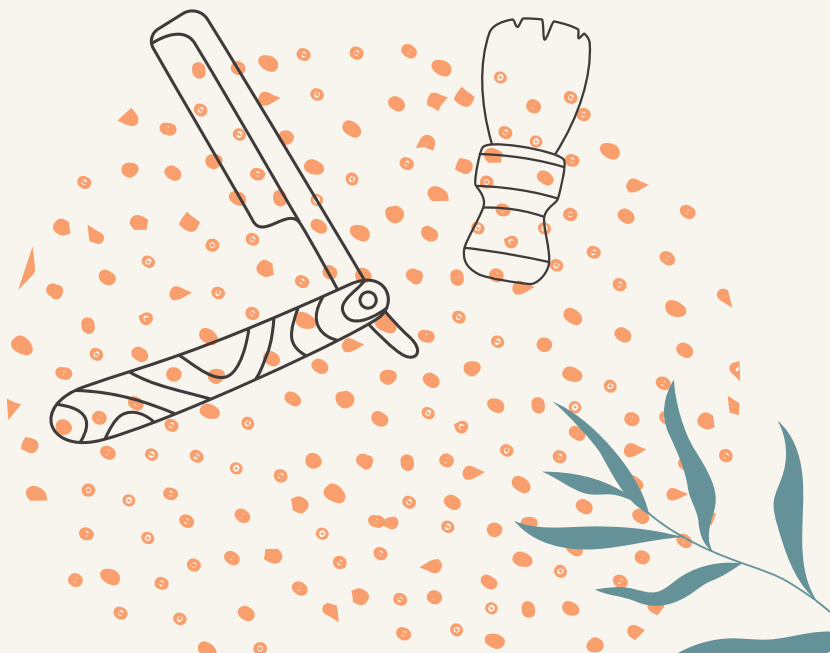
Harrington was so impressed with how the students tackled the angel trees that she decided they should participate in a state SkillsUSA competition in the leadership division, which has a community service component.

As part of the SkillsUSA leadership competition, the students had to show the process they used to develop their community service project based on their motto, “Teamwork makes our community work.” The seniors created a system that allowed parents to voluntarily fill out information about their children, including ages, clothing sizes, and gifts that would make them happy. The students then organized the names to provide confidentiality for participating families and the 45 children among them.

The angel trees, hand decorated by the students to reflect each child, were then placed in three local businesses and the word was spread to the community and beyond through social media. As gifts and donations poured in, the students developed a system of organization to help the eventual distribution go smoothly.

When the time came, it was important to the students to create a welcoming environment for parents to come pick up gifts. They chose a local church as the pickup location. The event included music and Christmas cookies as the seniors efficiently used their system to bring out the gifts to the families, along with wrapping paper and tape.

“One family had 11 kids and we were able to provide over \$500 for each kid,” Gillen said about the generosity of people who donated.





## Transforming lives

During a presentation at TASB's Governance Camp in early March, the cosmetology students stressed the importance of personal, workplace, and technical skills in the SkillsUSA framework.

"Without having SkillsUSA and cosmetology, we wouldn't have made those sacrifices," senior Lauren Campbell said about the angel tree experience. "I'm a different person now. I am able to look at things and be completely grateful."

Through preparing both for the CTE-related competitions and the community service project, the students practiced soft skills such as talking to customers and being professional in their community interactions.

"Work ethic is something we had to build and not something that is just made in one day," said Guzman. "We had to practice, practice, and practice to get good at what we were doing. You have to build that work ethic along with self-motivation."

An important goal of the project for the students was to make sure the families were signed up with the local food bank to ensure they had food supplies for the rest of the year to be picked up weekly. The students packed 310 boxes at the local food bank for the families to take home along with the gifts.

"Selfless acts like this make our community stronger and a great place to live," Gorman Mayor David K. Perry said about the angel tree project and the impact it had on the community. "I only hope that they will remain in our community after graduation or return to us after finishing their education."

After graduation this May, Campbell plans to use her newly acquired licenses to pursue cosmetology and has had a job offer from a salon in nearby Stephenville where the staff would like to mentor her career. Guzman plans to go to college and use her cosmetology skills to help supplement her income as she pursues a degree in communications at Texas State University.

After the completion of the project, the students "put a book together and they won gold at district and then they went on and won silver at state," Harrington said.

"The way that we learned how to do this was through having opportunity in the CTE program and participation in SkillsUSA," said Gillen. Her goal after graduation is to open her own studio in Gorman that will include a variety of cosmetology services as well as photography.

"You can be a small school and you can go to state and win third place," Campbell said. "Let us be an example to you that through believing in ourselves, our confidence, work ethic, communication, teamwork, and the support of our community, we were able to show what a small IA school can do."★

*Beth Griesmer is a staff writer for Texas Lone Star.*



Photos courtesy of Gorman ISD

A local bank hosted one of the angel trees from the students' project.



Gorman ISD seniors led the annual angel tree project. Pictured left to right: Brooke Gillen, Shawndelle Harrington, Emma Little, Lauren Campbell, and Ceidy Guzman.

# Funding Futures

## Districts use tax rate election for people, programs

by Mary Ann Lopez



In early 2023, officials at fast-growing Forney ISD, located about 25 miles east of Dallas, were watching and waiting to see what was going to play out at the state Capitol. The district had the facilities it needed to handle its more than 16,000 students, thanks to two successful bond elections in 2019 and 2022. Now, it was time to support its teachers and staff with pay increases.

Like so many school districts across the state, Forney ISD's officials were hoping the Legislature would provide much-needed funding for public education. But as time passed without any funding legislation imminent, they began considering the "what ifs." What would the district do if the per-pupil allotment were to remain stagnant? How would it fund salaries as inflation continued to eat away at its fund balance?

The answer for the district was a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election, or VATRE, said Kristin Zastoupil, Forney ISD's executive director of marketing and communications. The district looked at neighboring districts in North Texas and found that about 80% had already successfully passed a VATRE.

"We talked with our staff and said, 'Hey, here's the situation we're in and the per-pupil funding allotment is not necessarily going to go up, so this is an opportunity for us to claim money that's potentially being left on the table for our students, for classroom programming, and for staff salaries,'" Zastoupil said.

### Why VATRE?

As more and more Texas school districts are faced with approving deficit budgets and funding challenges, a VATRE may be one way to secure revenue designated specifically for people and programs.

A VATRE is triggered when a board adopts a tax rate that exceeds the district's voter-approval tax rate (VATR). The VATR is determined for each district by a statutory formula and is the highest tax rate a board can adopt without holding an election. A district's adopted tax rate has two components: the district's debt service rate, or its interest and sinking (I&S) rate, and its maintenance and operations (M&O) rate.

While a bond election authorizes the issuance of bonds to generate funds for a district's buildings and infrastructure and to be repaid from I&S revenue, a VATRE approves an increase in the district's M&O tax rate, which can only be used for items related to programs and people, such as teacher salaries and stipends, training programs, educational programs, and other student activities, such as extracurricular programs.

### Staying competitive

Like Forney, Lockhart ISD was among the more than 50 school districts across Texas that held a VATRE in the November 2023 uniform election. And of those districts that pursued a VATRE, 85% successfully passed, according



Forney,  
Lockhart, and  
Corpus Christi

to data from the Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO).

Lockhart ISD, located about 25 miles south of Austin, has a student population of about 6,700 — the 16<sup>th</sup> largest enrollment among Austin area independent school districts. When Superintendent Mark Estrada realized early in 2023 that his district was going to lose a significant amount of state funding — about 5% of the district's operating budget — due to changes in the state's assigned property values, he and his district's leadership team began to consider a VATRE.

"We knew that we had no other option if we wanted to give a raise [to teachers] and accomplish some school security things that we needed to do and that were being mandated by the state without the necessary funds," he said. "We saw an opportunity to strategically work with our community and for them to invest in our district. So, the timing was very critical."

### Board support

For Lockhart ISD, the November 2023 election wasn't the first time the district attempted a VATRE. In fact, in the November 2022 uniform election, the district had a VATRE on the ballot, but it wasn't successful.





## Two Funds — Two Different Elections



PEOPLE & PROGRAMS



CAPITAL PROJECTS



Photo courtesy of Lockhart ISD

“We knew that we were going to have a fight to get this to pass [in 2023] because we had already had one fail,” Estrada said.

The process of building support began with outreach to the district’s leadership team and the board. Those conversations with leadership included about 50 people, including his cabinet, directors, principals, and assistant principals, Estrada said.

“We had to make sure that we had board support before that August,” Estrada said. “Because if there was going to be any buy-in — if we couldn’t get the support of the board to pass a higher tax rate than allowed, which triggers the election — then that was going to be problematic.”

Estrada took the spring and summer to educate the board, making sure they understood the objectives and outcomes of approving the higher-than-allowable tax rate.

“I think part of getting them on board was really showing them side by

side [comparisons],” he said. “If we don’t pass this, this is what our revenue and budget look like and this is how dire that situation is versus, if we go forward and it passes, how does that change our budget and potential revenue? And what does that allow us to do?”

Building that board support also allowed Estrada and his team the time they needed to ensure trustees had a basic understanding of how public education funding works in Texas, which is complicated and can be confusing even for the most well-versed in finance, but having a clear understanding is critical when answering to constituents and stakeholders.

“Because board members have a fiduciary responsibility to their community when making these decisions, board members should ask questions and make sure they understand what the VATRE is for and why the district is doing it,” said Kristi Clark, chief policy officer at TASBO.

### Beat the clock

At Forney ISD, officials were hopeful that based on the recent bond elections, which passed with strong support, the VATRE would also get community backing, Zastoupil said. But officials also knew the VATRE would require a different approach for community outreach.

Even before a district can begin to do community outreach and education, it must meet several very strict timelines

and deadlines to get a VATRE on the November ballot, Clark said. “You can’t do it last minute,” she said. “You have to have your ducks in a row well in advance.”

From hiring an auditor by early July to conduct an efficiency audit to publishing the newspaper notice for the budget and tax rate meeting, adopting the budget and tax rate, and ordering the VATRE in August, there are deadlines that, if not met, will blow a district’s chances to have the election, Clark said.

“It’s easy for any district to miss an essential step or deadline,” Clark said. “And I think the reason we heard about more districts missing something is because more districts were doing it or trying to do it.”

### Community education

Once the board votes on the tax rate and orders the VATRE, the district will need to begin the work of educating the community, Clark said.

At both Lockhart and Forney ISDs, the districts began reaching out to civic organizations, holding community meetings to inform and educate the public about their upcoming elections.

At Lockhart ISD, the district held meetings at different times of the day — morning, lunch, and evening, Estrada said. They had a calendar of events planned through Election Day with activities to engage the community and educate them about the VATRE

proposal, which included social media posts and videos. In addition, a political action committee was also promoting the measure.

“That was a big help,” Estrada said. “Really focusing on and providing clarity to the community, so it’s not that we’re just asking for money, we’re asking for money for the specific things that we must have.”

And those specific items included teacher salaries, which the district was able to compare with neighboring districts, and school security upgrades. “We just focused on those two things and committed to our community,” Estrada said.

At Forney ISD, the district took a similar approach to community outreach, sharing presentations with community groups, using social media posts, sharing insightful videos, and providing pertinent information on its website.

But the district also knew this election would be different than its prior bond elections, Zastoupil said.

### Changing tactics

After COVID, it was more challenging to get people to participate in focus groups or even to attend public

meetings, so the district had folks go out and knock on doors and bring the information directly to voters, Zastoupil said. That allowed voters to ask questions and the door knockers were ready with answers. There was also a personal connection created in the process.

Forney ISD also took a different approach when communicating information or talking with voters.

Unlike the district’s previous bond elections, when voters asked, “What will you do if it doesn’t pass?” Zastoupil said, the district’s response was always affirmative; that the district has faith that voters would make the best decision. But with the 2023 VATRE, the district made clear what might happen.

“We said, you know what? So, what happens if this doesn’t pass? If this doesn’t happen, we’re going to have to come back to our community and ask you, ‘What would you like us to begin to prioritize?’” she said.

They shared the programs that might need to be cut, such as fine arts, athletics, and career programming, which included its cosmetology program, she said.

They also shared the impact of inflation on the district and that just

like voters, the district pays water and electric bills, yet since 2019, there’s been no increase to the per-pupil funding allotment, she said.

“That really hit home for people because everybody in the room understands inflation,” Zastoupil said. “They understand I’m paying more at the grocery store. I’m paying more when I go buy things. My bills are more. And that was very eye opening for our community to understand that ‘Oh, you guys are actually doing a whole lot more and battling this inflation rate with no more money.’”

### Waiting game

In some ways, 2023 was an outlier. Because tax rates went down and the homestead exemption increased, longstanding property tax frustrations were abated. Consequently, districts’ requests for tax increases were more palatable to voters, Clark said. That may not be the case in 2024, which is one reason districts should consider whether they might encounter opposition and how they will prepare to educate voters.

While districts like Forney ISD and Lockhart ISD were able to take advantage of a VATRE in 2023, many other districts throughout the state —

## Planning for a VATRE

Trustees play a key role in approving a VATRE, so it’s important that they understand the reasons why the district will be asking voters to approve a tax increase. Here is some key information to keep in mind should your district decide to pursue a VATRE.

### What is the difference between a bond and a Voter-Approval Tax Rate election?

A bond election is used when a district needs funds for major capital projects, such as for school building renovations or construction projects.

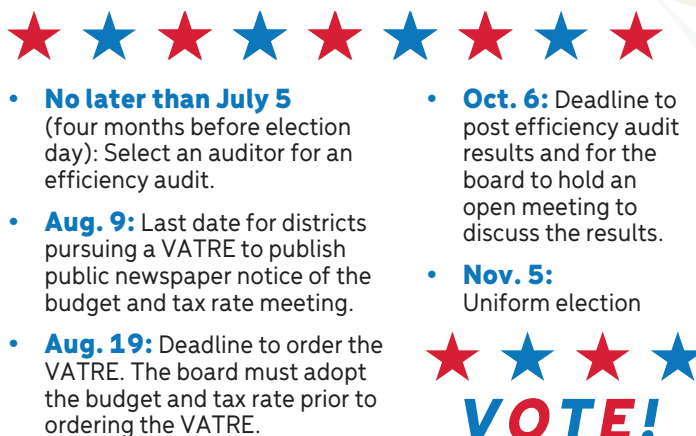
A VATRE is required when a district approves a tax rate that exceeds the district’s voter-approval tax rate. These funds can only be used toward its maintenance and operations, or M&O. The VATRE funds a district’s people and programs.

### When can a district hold a VATRE?

A VATRE can only be placed on the ballot for the November uniform election.

## What are key dates and deadlines a district must meet to place a VATRE on the ballot this November?

According to TASBO, districts must be very organized to meet the various deadlines, which include:

- 
- **No later than July 5** (four months before election day): Select an auditor for an efficiency audit.
  - **Aug. 9:** Last date for districts pursuing a VATRE to publish public newspaper notice of the budget and tax rate meeting.
  - **Aug. 19:** Deadline to order the VATRE. The board must adopt the budget and tax rate prior to ordering the VATRE.
  - **Oct. 6:** Deadline to post efficiency audit results and for the board to hold an open meeting to discuss the results.
  - **Nov. 5:** Uniform election

**VOTE!**



Members of the Forney ISD Political Action Committee prepare to distribute yard signs in advance of the November 2023 VATRE.

Photo courtesy of Forney ISD

that anticipated the Legislature taking action — are now faced with making difficult decisions while working with deficit budgets.

One such district is Corpus Christi ISD, which adopted a \$25 million deficit budget in 2023-24.

“Our board always wants to explore every option,” said Karen Griffith, Corpus Christi ISD’s deputy superintendent of business and support services. “It is important to them to demonstrate to the community that they have exhausted all other options before requesting VATRE support and explaining why it is needed.”

With inflation hitting everyone hard, no school board wants to put more strain on its community when the state Legislature should be providing funding

for education, she said, adding that she worries there won’t be any state-level relief this year and anticipates districts like hers will face higher deficit budgets in 2024-25.

In the meantime, the district is looking at all cost-saving options including, like many districts, the savings potential that could be realized by closing some of its older, low enrollment schools and consolidating those students in newer, more energy-efficient modern schools.

“We may have some tough decisions depending on what the Legislature decides next year,” Griffith said. “We are just like many in the state trying to find ways to cut spending. At the same time, you don’t want to do it at the risk of student achievement, especially when we’re making gains.”

### Courageous action

Estrada said he hopes districts won’t let obstacles hold them back from pursuing a VATRE.

“I do think that, for boards and superintendents, this is an opportunity to be courageous,” Estrada said. “Let the community decide, put it out there and let them decide. Like I said, we had one fail, and there are a lot of people who

said, ‘It already failed. There’s no way it’s going to pass again.’ And we put it on the ballot for the community to decide if they wanted to invest in the district. And because of that, it passed.”

Zastoupil said that while there may be more challenges for districts attempting a VATRE in 2024, it still comes down to preparation.

“It may change some of their key messaging, as they’re presenting those key informational messages,” she said. “But at the same time, the planning, the approach, making sure you’re educating people and sharing facts, those good bones of that informational campaign don’t change.”

The biggest challenge is providing clarity to voters because the school funding formula is so complex, “and it doesn’t make logical sense,” Estrada said. “I think the more we’ve been able to educate our community on how it actually works, the more support we get because they see that it’s a broken system and they see the inequities of the state system.”★

*Mary Ann Lopez is a staff writer for Texas Lone Star.*

## When can a district begin public education about the election?

According to Mark Estrada, Lockhart ISD’s superintendent, his district was prepared to begin public education immediately after the VATRE was ordered. This was done to avoid any misinformation that might be shared by other entities about the ballot issue.

## What key points should districts share with the public?

Districts pursuing a VATRE will want to emphasize the why and what:

- **Why districts need the funds:** Stagnant funding and a basic allotment that hasn’t increased since 2019, coupled with double-digit inflation, are causing districts to do more with less and leading to deficit budgets, and potential cuts to staff and programs.
- **What the money will fund:** A VATRE can be used to support salaries for teachers, staff, security staff, stipends, training, educational

programs, and other programs such as extracurricular activities. How each district chooses to use the funds will vary, and it’s important to clearly explain to voters the intent for the funds and why they are needed. For example, at Forney ISD, the district wanted to have an armed police officer in every school and provide salary increases to teachers and staff.

## Voters may be hesitant to support a VATRE. How can we prepare?

- **Have a list of frequently asked questions ready** and direct voters to a knowledgeable source if their question isn’t easily answered.
- **Break it down into the simplest terms** and explain the ballot language, which is specific and complicated, so voters understand what they’re being asked to support.
- **Explain where and when people can vote**, sharing poll location

information — do not tell them how to vote.

- **Share factual information through a variety of avenues**, including the district’s website, social media, community meetings, door-to-door outreach, and through civic organizations, to name a few.
- **Provide clear, factual examples** of what will happen if a VATRE passes and the outcomes if it fails.

## Where can we find more information to prepare for a VATRE?

TASB’s School Law eSource has resources available to members that explain what a VATRE is and what is required from a district to meet its due diligence.

Go to [tasb.org/resources/esource](https://tasb.org/resources/esource), click on the eSource index, find the Business section, and click on School District Voter-Approval Tax Rate Elections.



# Enrolling in School

Texas policies address admitting students into districts

by TASB Legal Services

**D**istrict administrators and trustees frequently find themselves faced with questions about when students can enroll in the district. Following are answers to the most commonly asked questions about student enrollment.

## 1. Who can enroll in the district?

A person who is at least five and under 21 years old on Sept. 1 can be enrolled in a Texas school district if the person satisfies at least one of the conditions for enrollment in Texas Education Code section 25.001. Many of the conditions for enrollment are discussed in this column, but a school district should review the law in TASB Policy FD(LEGAL) for a full list.

## 2. What documents are required for enrollment?

The Texas Education Code requires that documents establishing a child's identity be provided within 30 days of enrollment. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.002(a-1). If the child is under age 11, the person enrolling the child must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of the child's identity and age and a signed statement explaining the person's inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate. If the person fails to provide this information by the applicable

deadline, the school must notify appropriate law enforcement before the 31<sup>st</sup> day after the person fails to comply. Tex. Code Crim. Proc. art. 63.019.

## 3. What if a parent or legal guardian can't provide proof of the child's identity?

The Texas Education Agency states that a district should not deny enrollment solely for failure to provide documentation proving identity or previous school records. However, if a parent or legal guardian does not provide this required information within 30 days after enrollment, the district must notify local law enforcement and request a determination as to whether the child has been reported as missing. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.002(c).

## 4. Are immunization records required for enrollment?

Yes, a district can deny admission to an applicant who is not fully immunized and has not begun the required immunizations. Tex. Educ. Code § 38.001(a). Exceptions to this general rule apply for special populations, such as homeless students and students in foster care. Additionally, a parent may provide a physician's affidavit of medical risk or an affidavit signed by the parent declining a vaccination for reasons of conscience in lieu of vaccination. Tex. Educ. Code § 38.001(c).

**A person who is at least five and under 21 years old on Sept. 1 can be enrolled in a Texas school district if the person satisfies at least one of the conditions for enrollment in Texas Education Code section 25.001.**



## 5. Can the district ask for proof of residency?

Yes. According to Texas Education Code section 25.001(c), the school board or its designee may require evidence that a person is eligible to attend school within the district at the time of application for admission, and the board may establish the minimum proof of residency acceptable to the district and allow reasonable inquiries to verify eligibility for admission.

## 6. What should the district do if a non-parent tries to enroll a child?

The district must record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling the child. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.002(f).

## 7. Where should the child of divorced parents enroll?

A district must enroll if the child and either parent resides in the district or, even if the child does not reside in the district, a parent who is a joint managing conservator, sole managing conservator, or possessory conservator of the student resides in the district. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(b)(1), (2).



**8. What should we do when a minor who lives separate and apart from their parent enrolls?**

State law requires school districts to admit a minor who has established a residence separate and apart from their parents or legal guardian with exceptions for applicants with certain disciplinary histories. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(b)(4), (d).

**9. Can the district enroll a person whose grandparent lives in the district and provides after-school care?**

Yes. A district must admit a person who does not reside in the district if the person's grandparent lives in the district and provides a substantial amount of after-school care, as determined by the board. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(b)(9).

**10. Where should homeless students be enrolled?**

A homeless student is entitled to admission in any school district. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(b)(5). Under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, the term *homeless children or youth* means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate

nighttime residence. 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2). Whether a student meets the definition of homelessness is a case-specific inquiry depending on the individual's living situation and circumstances.

**11. Where should students in foster care or DFPS conservatorship be enrolled?**

A child in foster care may attend schools in the district in which the foster parents reside free of charge regardless of the amount of time the child has lived in the district. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.001(f). Federal law requires the district to presume that it is in the best interest of the student to remain in the student's *school of origin*, which here means the school in which the student was enrolled at the time the student was placed in foster care. 20 U.S.C. § 6311(g)(1)(E).

**12. Can a peace officer or service member choose to transfer their child to a different campus or school district other than the campus or district at which the child would be eligible to enroll?**

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, the Texas Education Code requires that a school district transfer a student to another district campus or to another district selected by a parent or guardian who is a peace officer or service member on request of that parent or guardian. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.0344.

For more information on this subject and other school law topics, visit the TASB School Law eSource Library at [tasb.org/resources/esource](https://tasb.org/resources/esource). ★

*This article is provided for educational purposes and contains information to facilitate a general understanding of the law. References to judicial or other official proceedings are intended to be a fair and impartial account of public records, which may contain allegations that are not true. This article is not an exhaustive treatment of the law, nor is it intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney. Consult your own attorney to apply these legal principles to specific fact situations.*

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# LAC Members Elected

Trustees distilling regional priorities into one agenda

by Dax González

**T**rustees from across the state have been elected to the Legislative Advisory Council. They were chosen during their regional Grassroots Meetings to represent their local boards as the priorities are formed for a new Advocacy Agenda. The group met in April and will meet once more in June before sending a draft set of priorities to the TASB Board for their July meeting. The TASB Delegate Assembly will eventually act on the draft priorities and adopt a new Advocacy Agenda during its meeting in September.

TASB would like to thank the following LAC members who volunteered to serve in this important capacity. Their terms will extend through the 2026 Grassroots meetings when new LAC members are selected.

## Region 1

Jennifer Alfaro, Rio Hondo ISD  
Alison Busse-Savage, Lyford CISD  
Gloria Casas, La Feria ISD  
Marcos Garcia, Mercedes ISD  
Elizabeth Kittleman, McAllen ISD  
Daniella Lopez-Valdez, Brownsville ISD  
Aisha Reyes, San Isidro ISD  
Ruben Treviño, Los Fresnos CISD  
Lucia Regalado, McAllen ISD\*

## Region 2

S. Jaime Arredondo, Corpus Christi ISD  
Erika Hesseltine, Orange Grove ISD  
John Mullenax, Aransas Pass ISD  
Dolly Trolley, Corpus Christi ISD  
Carrie Gregory, Gregory-Portland ISD\*

## Region 3

Becky Aguilera, Palacios ISD  
Buddy Broussard, Matagorda ISD  
Shawn Chilek, Boling ISD  
Pamela Remmers, Nordheim ISD

## Region 4

James Campisi, Goose Creek CISD  
Crystal Carbone, Pearland ISD  
Dawn Champagne, Katy ISD  
Shumona Collins, Channelview ISD  
Paola Gonzalez, Pasadena ISD  
Kelly Hodges, Spring ISD  
Jose Jimenez, Galena Park ISD  
Jennifer Key, Alief ISD  
Zach Lambert, Lamar CISD  
Martina Lemond Dixon, Humble ISD  
Jerry Adkins, Brazosport ISD\*

## Region 5

Andrew Brooks, Hardin-Jefferson ISD  
Chris Kovatch, Orangefield ISD  
Linda Platt-Bryant, West Orange-Cove CISD  
Paul Zoch, Bridge City ISD  
Tammy Rountree, Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD\*

## Region 6

Christine Deppe, Calvert ISD  
Monty Huffman, Trinity ISD  
Amy Jarvis, Navasota ISD  
Kimberly McAdams, College Station ISD  
David Stasny, Bryan ISD  
Carolyn Waldon, Calvert ISD\*

## Region 7

Michele Blackmon, Brownsboro ISD  
Bobby Brashears, Cushing ISD  
Jeff Cook, Gladewater ISD  
Stephanie Luper, Bullard ISD  
Troy Simmons, Longview ISD  
Cody Levrets, Tyler ISD\*

## Region 8

Jason Choate, Cooper ISD  
Yvonne Hampton, Mount Pleasant ISD  
Stephen Holmes, North Lamar ISD  
Sharon Nears, Chapel Hill ISD  
David Tremor, Cumby Collegiate ISD\*



Trustees gather in Austin for a Grassroots Meeting earlier this year.

Photo by TASB Media Services

### Region 9

Sandy Camp, Wichita Falls ISD  
Betty Ellsworth, Henrietta ISD  
Les Healton, Burkburnett ISD  
Charley Lanier, Forestburg ISD  
Robin Bachert, Burkburnett ISD\*

### Region 10

Nichole Bentley, Coppel ISD  
Eric Fort, Royse City ISD  
Nancy Humphrey, Plano ISD  
Ty G. Jones, Lancaster ISD  
Lee Mathew, Sunnyvale ISD  
Polly Montgomery, Allen ISD  
Francisco Oaxaca, McKinney ISD  
Gopal Ponangi, Frisco ISD  
Robert Seward, Mesquite ISD  
Daphne Stanley, Garland ISD  
Ileana Garza-Rojas, Carrollton-Farmers  
Branch ISD\*

### Region 11

Fred Campos, Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD  
Daryl Davis, Crowley ISD  
Camille Eckersley, Bluff Dale ISD  
Courtney Gore, Granbury ISD  
Jennifer Murphy, Northwest ISD  
Benita Reed, Mansfield ISD  
Michael Ryan, Fort Worth ISD  
Katherine Sells, Lewisville ISD  
Lori Tays, Denton ISD  
Georgia Scott, Bluff Dale ISD\*

### Region 12

Shameria Davis, Copperas Cove ISD  
David Duty, Bruceville-Eddy ISD  
Larry "Doc" Hawthorne, Hubbard ISD  
Russ Johnson, Lorena ISD  
Myron Ridge, La Vega ISD  
Erin Bass, Belton ISD\*  
Chris Flor, Belton ISD\*

### Region 13

Trish Bode, Leander ISD  
Ana Cortez, Manor ISD  
Bryan Holubec, Thrall ISD  
Jean Mayer, Pflugerville ISD  
Edward Navarette, Florence ISD  
Marco R. Ortiz, Taylor ISD  
Heather Sheffield, Eanes ISD  
Amy English, Hutto ISD\*

### Region 14

Ben Hussey, Gustine ISD  
Emilia Moreno, Hawley ISD  
Doyle Russell, Ranger ISD  
Jerry Scheets, Paint Creek ISD

### Region 15

Lupita Arroyo, San Angelo ISD  
Jesus Galindo, San Felipe Del Rio CISD  
Gerard Gallegos, San Angelo ISD  
Ami Mizell-Flint, San Angelo ISD

### Region 16

Elise Kovar, Highland Park ISD  
Kayla Mendez, Amarillo ISD  
Melinda Powell, River Road ISD  
Jennifer Sanchez, Highland Park ISD

### Region 17

Kyla Hamilton, Shallowater ISD  
Steven Henn, Crosbyton CISD  
Joyce Johnson, Levelland ISD  
Julie McGehee, Idalou ISD  
Matthew Valdonado, Brownfield ISD\*

### Region 18

Sara Burleson, Midland ISD  
Donna Garcia, Monahans-Wickett-  
Pyote ISD  
Tammy Hawkins, Ector County ISD  
AlexAndrea Zamarripa, Pecos-  
Barstow-Toyah ISD  
Becky Gonzales, Pecos-Barstow-Toyah  
ISD\*  
Nancy Upchurch, Monahans-Wickett-  
Pyote ISD\*

### Region 19

Marlene Bullard, Tornillo ISD  
Alicia Jiménez Gardea, Socorro ISD  
Sandra Licon, San Elizario ISD  
Lorenzo Luevano, San Elizario ISD  
Blanca Trout, Canutillo ISD  
Sylvia Gonzales, Fabens ISD\*

### Region 20

Jimmy Cornelius, Randolph Field ISD  
Luis Fernandez, Uvalde CISD  
Suzanne Kenoyer, Judson ISD  
Alexander Kotara, Karnes City ISD  
Louie Luna, Harlandale ISD  
Rosario Morales, Cotulla ISD  
Corinne Saldaña, Northside ISD  
Amy Thomas, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal  
City ISD  
Norma Cavazos, Harlandale ISD\*

\* Alternate LAC Member★

*Dax González is division director of TASB  
Governmental Relations.*



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# Board Work

Trustees should lean into policies, procedures

by Robert Long III

**A**s I've traveled across the state, meeting with boards from San Marcos to Kingsville and talking with members of the Leadership TASB Class of 2024 about what good governance looks like, one question keeps coming up: What is the true work of the board?

The board as a "body corporate" governs the district by leading through policy, while the superintendent uses those policies to manage and develop staff to improve student outcomes. If we use the analogy of a basketball team, the coach and the players each play a part in a team's success. But if they aren't in sync, or if they haven't built trust in each other, wins will be hard to come by.

The key to success is ensuring that the board has a clearly defined vision and has done the foundational work to build cohesion. When that collaborative spirit is missing, strained relationships may result. To help build strong relationships, TASB Board Development Services encourages boards to consider the following three strategies:

## 1. Take a board self-assessment.

A good place to start is by evaluating the board itself to ensure good policies are in place and there's effective governance.

The board self-assessment is a critical tool to build a cohesive board with unity around vision and mission. To assist in this work, our TASB team of Board Development Services consultants travels across the state to provide this support for boards.

Trustees take the self-assessment, and the responses are analyzed based on the State Board of Education's Framework for School Board Development. Once that information is gathered, consultants help

boards navigate challenges and opportunities, including identifying areas where they are doing well and where they have the potential to improve. The self-assessment, followed by a workshop, are among the few opportunities trustees have to speak freely and share what's working well and what could work better.

In doing this work, we've often encountered situations where misunderstandings have fostered communication breakdowns in the boardroom. Working through conflicts can seem challenging, but having difficult conversations today often leads to greater collaboration tomorrow. As we say, "It's hard to hate up close." A board that cannot communicate effectively will struggle when it comes to focusing on students, which should be every board's north star.

## 2. Prioritize policy with the board-superintendent relationship.

Another key component of an effective board is the relationship with the district's superintendent. Among board responsibilities, nothing is as important as hiring the district's top leader and then managing the performance of that superintendent with a high-quality and comprehensive annual review. Although that review happens once a year, conversations with the superintendent should be happening throughout the year to ensure the district is heading in the right direction, meeting its goals, and maintaining its vision for student success. Strong board policy can support this process with clearly defined expectations, timelines and processes, and relevant data. When the policy and expectations are clearly defined, there is no room for misunderstandings or miscommunication, which makes the entire process more effective for both the board and the superintendent.

Simply put, when a board leads through strong policy, it strengthens the board-superintendent relationship.

## 3. Lean into strong board operating procedures.

School board service is more challenging than ever in a climate of increased public scrutiny and politicization. Within this context, boards should consider leaning into their operating procedures to ensure they are both functional and





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## Working through conflicts can seem challenging, but having difficult conversations today often leads to greater collaboration tomorrow.

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intentional, offering both transparency and clarity on how the board and trustees approach their roles.

A good starting point is creating and maintaining a board calendar that aids intentionality. What gets scheduled gets done. When done consistently and effectively, this process can ensure a culture of transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment.

In addition, the board operating procedure documents might cover everything from onboarding new trustees to choosing board officers, and civility clauses that guide how trustees interact with one another. I've seen many great examples of strong operating procedures in my district visits, and it's clear that much time is spent in carefully and thoughtfully crafting them.

But just writing these procedures isn't enough; they need to be followed with fidelity. And operating procedures are living, breathing documents that should be reviewed annually, whether by a committee or the board itself. They should not sit on a shelf collecting dust.

Boards and trustees are bound to face challenges, but when boards have clearly defined policies and procedures, it takes away the guesswork. The board knows its governance role and how that relates to the work of the superintendent. Doing the work to build relationships, maintain open communication, and set clear policies and procedures will keep the board on the right path, with a clear focus on achieving the district's vision and goals.★

*Robert Long III is division director of Board Development Services and the Leadership TASB program manager.*

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# James B. Crow Award

Northside ISD Trustee Bobby Blount honored by TASB

by Sylvia Wood

**B**obby Blount, a longtime Northside ISD school board member and president of the Texas Caucus of Black School Board Members, has been named the 2024 recipient of TASB's James B. Crow Innovation in Governance Award.

The James B. Crow Innovation in Governance Award was established in 2022 in honor of its namesake, who retired as TASB executive director in August 2021, after 40 years of service to the Association. Crow was known for his relentless commitment to improving public education by supporting excellent local school board governance through visionary leadership. Those eligible for

the award include individuals who have significantly influenced effective school district governance practices at the state or local level.

Blount, a San Antonio resident, has served continuously on the Northside ISD Board of Trustees since first being elected in 1999. He was selected for the honor by the TASB Member Services Committee, which praised his ongoing commitment to public education and his work to improve the lives of the children in his community and beyond. The award includes a \$10,000 contribution to the district of the recipient's choice. Blount has selected Northside ISD, located in Bexar County.

"The entire committee was impressed

by Bobby Blount's long tenure of school board service and his track record of always putting kids first," said Nederland ISD Trustee Nicholas Phillips, who chaired the selection committee and serves on the TASB Board of Directors. "As we reviewed the nominating application, several highlights stood out, including his unique ability to build collaborative relationships to strengthen school board governance and student outcomes. He also excels at making connections and building relationships with other organizations and leaders to expand student opportunities and foster thriving communities."

While serving on his local board, Blount has held many notable leadership roles in San Antonio, including the Bexar County School Board Coalition, the Go Public Campaign, and the San Antonio Area African American Community Fund. He is the founder and director of the Northside Solar Car Races, which involves more than 1,000 students annually, and the founder of the Northside Soccer League. He is a former director on the TASB Board, served on the TASB Legislative Advisory Council, and is an alumni of the Leadership TASB program. Until his retirement in 2023, he served for 35 years as a systems engineer for the MITRE Corporation, a company dedicated to advancing national security.



Photos courtesy of Northside ISD

Bobby Blount, a longtime Northside ISD school board member, is the 2024 recipient of TASB's James B. Crow Innovation in Governance Award.



Upon learning of his selection for the award, Blount said he was both honored and humbled. “There are so many individuals who are doing so many great things for our public schools,” he said. “It’s an honor to be recognized with an award named after James B. Crow whose work over decades was so critical to advancing school board service in Texas.”

Blount said he’s stayed motivated on the Northside ISD Board of Trustees for 25 years because there’s still work to be done with increasing student opportunities across the state. “To really move the needle, it takes time and effort, so that’s why I continue to serve.”

TASB Executive Director Dan Troxell said the James B. Crow Award offers an important opportunity to showcase outstanding and effective school district governance in Texas public education. “In establishing this award, the TASB Board sought to recognize individuals who demonstrate integrity, collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to relationship building and empowering others,” he said. “There is no better way to honor the legacy of James B. Crow than by paying tribute to a longtime servant leader like Bobby Blount.”

Blount earned his law degree from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, and holds a master’s degree in systems management from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio and a bachelor’s degree in engineering science from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He and his wife have two children, both graduates of Northside ISD.

The award will be presented at the TASB Summer Leadership Institute in June. Nominations for the 2025 James B. Crow Innovation in Governance Award will open at the end of the year.★

*Sylvia Wood is a staff writer for Texas Lone Star.*



Northside ISD Trustee Bobby Blount poses with a student.



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# President's Talk

TASB leader discusses public education with staff

TASB President Armando Rodriguez discussed the importance of family, community, and public education during a special conversation with Association staff members.

Rodriguez, Canutillo ISD's board president, sat down with TASB Executive Director Dan Troxell in March to talk about his service and commitment to public education.

"Public schools are the heart of the state and our local communities," Rodriguez told TASB staff members who attended the event in person at TASB headquarters and online.

Rodriguez is from Canutillo, a small but growing town in El Paso County, and he graduated from Canutillo High School. His mother raised him and his siblings after his father passed away when he was 10.

"I grew up in a humble community, which I'm proud to be from," Rodriguez said, adding a public education was vitally important to his mother, who passed away last August.

Rodriguez said Canutillo ISD has worked to provide one of the "best quality education systems in El Paso [County]." Attending Canutillo ISD "helped make me the man I am today, both professionally and personally."

His interest in governance and politics began early in school. Rodriguez recalled how, after finishing football practice, he would head directly to the Canutillo ISD board meetings to learn about what was happening in his district.

Today, he's very proud to serve as board president at Canutillo ISD and help students learn and thrive in his community.

"At the end of the day, public education is an equalizer in society. It also has the ability to provide huge opportunities for many people that look like me," he said.

Rodriguez also thanked TASB staff members for all they do to help school boards and districts succeed. "You truly have an impact on districts and students," he said. "You do great work."★



TASB President Armando Rodriguez, Canutillo ISD's board president, sat down with TASB Executive Director Dan Troxell for a special conversation with staff members in March.

*Photos by TASB Media Services*







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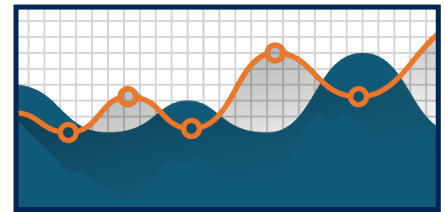
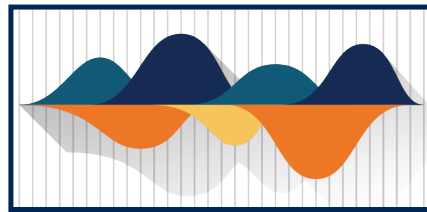
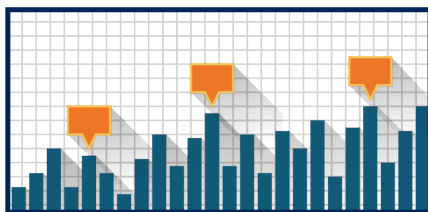
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# Summer Leadership Institute

Conference offers array of learning opportunities

by Brianna Garcia

Before summer arrives, trustees and teams of eight should begin planning for their professional development training provided at Summer Leadership Institute, which offers an array of guest speakers and programming designed specifically to support board service.

TASB members can attend SLI in San Antonio or Fort Worth, depending on what best fits their schedule and location preference. The two offer the same schedule, general session speakers, staff sessions, all-day sessions, and the majority of breakout sessions. SLI also offers attendees the opportunity to connect as a team and network with other trustees from around the state to improve leadership practices that benefit Texas public schoolchildren.



Arrive early!

## Pre-conference sessions

Trustees are encouraged to attend a valuable pre-conference session on June 12 and June 19. This in-depth session will address legislative funding and what it means for Texas school districts. TASB members attending this session will receive an overview of the best budget processes for the school year, advice on long-term planning and budget adoption, and a

review of legal requirements and timelines. The session will close with a discussion of the 89<sup>th</sup> legislative session and what board members can do to help advocate for better funding moving forward.

## Keynote speakers

Thursday, June 13 and June 20

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decades of experience, Maybin has shared her insights in all 50 states, 10 countries, and on the TEDx stage. She is a former university dean of students and wrote the book on how to respond to the question, *If You Can't Say Something Nice, What DO You Say?* Maybin continues the conversation in her book *Say What You Mean in a Nice Way*.

*Friday, June 14 and June 21*

#### **Jamie Vollmer**

Vollmer defends and promotes public education and works to increase support for America's public schools. He is the author of the book *Schools Cannot Do It Alone*. Over the last 30 years, he has become an articulate champion, working with educators, parents, and business and community leaders to remove obstacles to student success.

#### **Anthony Robles**

Robles is a three-time wrestling All-American, the 2011 NCAA Division I National Champion, a two-time ESPY Award recipient, and the author of *Unstoppable*, a book about triumph over adversity. Born without a right leg, Robles didn't let his disability hold him back. Robles walked onto the wrestling team at Arizona State University, where he had an outstanding college career. Robles is an ESPN college commentator, a PAC 12 Network wrestling analyst, and an internationally renowned motivational speaker.

#### **In-depth training for all levels**

In addition to the many training sessions, TASB's Texas Trustee Institute will be offered for newly elected and first-

year school board members, who will take a deep dive into board service during this all-day training on Thursday and Friday. Board officers, new and experienced, can attend the Board Officer Institute all-day training on Thursday to master parliamentary procedures, learn innovative meeting facilitation skills, engage in interactive learning, and connect with fellow leaders. SLI attendees who need to fulfill the bi-annual Evaluating and Improving Student Outcomes training requirement can do so on Saturday morning in each location.

To register for SLI, please visit [tasb.org/training-events/sli](https://tasb.org/training-events/sli). ★

*Brianna Garcia is a staff writer for Texas Lone Star.*

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# Bulletin Board

## Leadership TASB Applications Open

Applications are now being accepted for Leadership TASB, a highly selective board leadership training program. Experienced trustees seeking to expand their leadership skills can apply to the program through July 1 (11:59 p.m.).

LTASB provides participants with an in-depth exploration of leadership skills through immersive experiences, and cohorts are limited to a maximum of 36 trustees each year. To be eligible for participation in Leadership TASB, applicants must:

- Be currently serving on an Active Member school board for the preceding 18 months.
- Have proof of completing the minimum required training at the last statutorily required reporting period.
- Have demonstrated leadership ability on their board and in their community.

Each year, the TASB president will appoint an ad hoc Selection Committee from Leadership TASB graduates. Identities of the committee members will remain confidential. All applications will be processed and reviewed by the Selection Committee at a meeting in July.

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Commitment to the goals of the program
- Commitment to personal growth
- Commitment to board service as a means of improving student performance
- Leadership contributions to the local board
- Levels and types of participation in school board-related activities outside the local district (TASB activities, area association activities, etc.)
- Levels and types of participation in other organizations within the local community

For more information on Leadership TASB, contact [leadershiptasb@tasb.org](mailto:leadershiptasb@tasb.org).

## TASA Announces President-Elect, Vice President

The Texas Association of School Administrators Executive Committee has ratified the election of San Angelo ISD Superintendent Chris Moran as 2024-25 TASA president-elect. He currently serves as the 2023-24 TASA vice president.

At its March 27 meeting, the committee also elected Lamar CISD Superintendent Roosevelt Nivens as the 2024-25 TASA vice president. He currently serves as chair of the TASA Advocacy Committee, and as such, holds a position on the Executive Committee.

Martha Salazar-Zamora, superintendent, Tomball ISD, assumes the position of 2024-25 TASA president on June 1, when Moran and Nivens also begin their one-year terms. (Last fall, TASB selected Salazar-Zamora as the Superintendent of the Year.) Aldine ISD Superintendent LaTonya Goffney, TASA's current president, will begin her one-year term as immediate past president June 1.

TASB's Executive Search Services is currently accepting applications for the positions listed below:

► **Kermit ISD:** Superintendent  
Deadline: May 6, 2024

► **Early ISD:** Superintendent  
Deadline: TBD

For information about vacancies or services provided by TASB's Executive Search Services, call **800-580-8272**, email [executive.search@tasb.org](mailto:executive.search@tasb.org).



**TASB**  
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SERVICES

We want to recognize school board members' extraordinary work in TLS!

If you have received any awards or honors, please send your news and photos to [tls@tasb.org](mailto:tls@tasb.org).

# Board Members: MAP YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

TASB supports trustees at every point along the board leadership journey, offering training and programs to excel at board governance.

## New Trustees

### Texas Trustee Institute

TTI offers a comprehensive program to build skills, dive into governance, and develop a leadership network.

**Key offerings:** Texas Open Meetings Act, Board Governance, Consensus Building.

**Sessions coming to SLI!**  
**Register now!**

Learn more! [tasb.org/training-events/sli](https://tasb.org/training-events/sli)

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For experienced trustees, meet with innovative districts and leaders, while learning what makes them successful. LTASB's one-of-a-kind experience will expand your view of education leadership.

**Applications being accepted now!**  
Learn more! [leadershiptasb@tasb.org](mailto:leadershiptasb@tasb.org)

### Whole Board Training

Need support with your board self-assessment? Board Development Services' consultants are here to help! Get training tailored to your district's needs.

[board.dev@tasb.org](mailto:board.dev@tasb.org)



## ENGAGE



## EXPAND



## EXPLORE



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[onlinelearning.tasb.org](https://onlinelearning.tasb.org)

## Experienced Trustees

### Board Officer Institute

For veteran trustees and board officers, BOI imparts knowledge and tools for effective and efficient meetings.

**Key offerings:** Important Tools for Meeting Preparation, Effective Meetings, Focused and Productive Board Discussions.

**Sessions coming to SLI!**  
**Register now!** [tasb.org/training-events/sli](https://tasb.org/training-events/sli)

### Continuing Education

With the Online Learning Center, you can find courses to support your board service, including Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure, Board Officers Forum, and Advocacy 101 and 201.

[onlinelearning.tasb.org](https://onlinelearning.tasb.org)



# Celebrating Success

May events focus on student achievement

by Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield



Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield

**O**f all the months in a school year, May was always one of my favorites because of the focus on student success and achievement.

Typically, I would give my family a heads up about working nights and weekends to either organize or attend many of the celebrations, whether it was handing out awards for academics or athletics or perhaps celebrating scholarships and volunteering. The culmination, of course, was graduation, which in a large district usually extends over several days and truly represents the goal of what we do in public education: launching well-prepared students into the world and into the next steps of their journeys — whether college, career, or military service.

challenges that accompany school board service.

## Our James B. Crow honoree

Just look at this year's winner of the James B. Crow Innovation in Governance Award, Northside ISD-Bexar County Trustee Bobby Blount. He was first elected to his board in 1999 and has served continuously since then — about 25 years to be exact. That's at least 600 school board meetings, not including workshops or special meetings. Add on all the other district celebrations, activities, performances, games, and, of course, graduations, and you begin to wonder where any one person would have the time, energy, and enthusiasm for such servant leadership. None of this includes

## Dedication and service

In a month when we are celebrating so much good work happening in school districts across the state, it seems especially fitting to also recognize school board members like Blount who are leading the way and providing the dedication and governance that make student success possible. As Blount noted, this isn't work that happens overnight. Rather, it takes the relentless commitment of volunteers who put kids first. Every time. Every opportunity. For as long as it takes.

That's especially challenging today, when a few may view school board service as a steppingstone to other ambitions or positions. Blount, on the other hand, just steps up, as do so many other school board members across Texas. Upon learning about his selection for the Crow award, he humbly noted, "There are so many individuals who are doing so many great things for our public schools."

Those are very true words and should provide encouragement as we move into this month of celebrations and graduations. No matter the challenges facing public education, whether difficult budgets or polarized politics, there's so much to make us all proud. This year's winner of the James B. Crow Award is a good example of how showing up — in this case for 25 years — can move the needle for students. Thank you, Bobby! ★

*Tiffany Dunne-Oldfield is deputy executive director of TASB.*

**Upon learning about his selection for the Crow award, Northside ISD-Bexar County Trustee Bobby Blount humbly noted, "There are so many individuals who are doing so many great things for our public schools."**

This time of year is busy for school administrators but also for school boards, whose members will see their calendars fill up with events and opportunities to congratulate and cheer on the Class of 2024, their families, and all of the teachers and staff, for a job well done. I've never heard a school board member complain about this part of the job, even when it includes attending outdoor graduations in blistering heat or drenching rain. These are the moments that inspire, motivate, and sustain them, in spite of all the

the challenges of juggling a full-time job with volunteer board service or balancing the demands of raising children or caring for family or taking on other community leadership roles.

Next time I'm feeling overscheduled, I'll just remember to keep my mouth shut.

Yet when Blount was asked how he's still going strong after 25 years, his answer was simple: "To really move the needle, it takes time and effort, so that's why I continue to serve," he said. Read more about this amazing trustee on page 28.



50  
YEARS STRONG

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[tasbrmf.org](https://tasbrmf.org)





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May 8: Alpine .....Region 18

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May 9: Abilene .....Region 14

May 14: Nacogdoches .....Region 7

May 14: Commerce\* .....Region 10

May 15: Canyon\* .....Region 16

May 21: Waco\* .....Region 12

May 23: El Paso .....Region 19

\* These locations will offer the Texas Trustee Institute Spring Workshop Edition of new board member training.



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Visit [tasb.org/spring-workshops](https://tasb.org/spring-workshops) for more information.