



2020–21

New Board Member Handbook

A Publication of the Texas Association of School Boards
Board Development Services Division



Texas Association of School Boards

From All of Us

Welcome!

Congratulations from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) on being elected to your local school board. There is no greater contribution than serving as a member of the leadership team that provides education opportunities for the children in your community.

Texas school board members formed TASB in 1949 to assist local trustees and their districts. TASB is YOUR organization and exists to serve you. We provide a wide variety of programs and information to assist you and your district, whatever your needs may be.

For information about TASB and about board service, visit our website at tasb.org. A customized web page for new board members filled with helpful information is located at tasb.org/welcome, and, of course, you can always call us at **800.580.8272**. If you are in Austin, drop by and visit our offices.

We are here for you, so when you need help, think TASB first!

Sincerely,



James B. Crow
TASB Executive Director



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You can find an electronic version of this handbook by going to tasb.org/welcome.



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Getting Your Bearings in Board Service

This handbook provides a quick reference for your first few months as a board member, but it just skims the surface of the resources TASB has for you. For more information specifically for new school board members, visit the Member Center at tasb.org/welcome.

Who Is TASB?

TASB is *your* association. We are a volunteer, nonprofit, statewide education association that serves and represents Texas school boards. For more information about TASB, go to tasb.org.


Your school board is tasked with ensuring that public schoolchildren in your community succeed. TASB can help you achieve this by tackling topics and training about student achievement, legalities of board service, working as a team, planning a budget, and more. Understanding the role of a school board member can take a considerable amount of time, but TASB is here as your resource.

Member Center

You can visit the Member Center home page at tasb.org/members to unlock a wealth of useful information. The Member Center is a password-protected area of the website that contains special resources and tools for school board members, including:

- Easy access to report and view continuing education credit
- Exclusive articles and resources for new and experienced board members
- Callouts to important dates, required training, or actions needed
- A calendar of upcoming events
- Quick links to legal and policy resources
- A listing of applications and resources relevant to your board service
- Ongoing insight into relevant, timely topics in education and how the Legislature is addressing them

As a new school board member, you may need to request account access if you have not already received your myTASB user ID and password. It's an easy process. Just click Request Access on the bottom of the login pop-up screen at **tasb.org/members** and fill out the form.



Board ServiceLegislativeServicesTrainingAboutShopContact

Improved Member CenterLOG IN

Member CenterNew for YouEnhance DistrictExpand KnowledgeAdvocate DistrictTASB Services

SEARCH FOR RESOURCES

How do school boards affect student achievement?

SEE HOW

I want information for...

School Board MembersSuperintendentsMore TASB Members

New for You at TASB



**New to the Member Center?
Read This**

Get familiar with the new members' site, which replaces your old myTASB experience.

LEARN MORE



The Governance Core Gets to the Heart of School Board Work

What makes school boards successful? A new book may have the answers.

LEARN MORE



How to Best Serve English-Learning (ELL) Students

ELL numbers are higher than ever. Find out how schools can serve them best.

READ NOW



How to Recruit and Retain Great Principals

Find, develop, and keep great principals to maintain a successful school.

LEARN MORE



Working with Your Board: How to Create A Culture of Trust

Build a culture of trust, transparency, and collaborative leadership. TASB can help.

LEARN MORE



Understand Your Role with the Superintendent and Board

As admin assistant, you need to know where you fit in with your boss and the board.

LEARN MORE

Your First Year of Service

Welcome to the world of school board service! There is an annual flow to a school board's work. Regardless of when you join the board, you will have to balance being a participating member of your board with quickly learning a lot about your role in the district and getting up to speed on topics that come before the board. Your first year—and some would say your entire first term—is quite a learning experience!



Get up to speed fast with TASB's new board member training courses

The TASB Institute for School Trustee Development (TASB ISD) is TASB's recommended curriculum for new board members.

This session focuses on the research-based roles of school board members in supporting student achievement in the district. Participants discuss legal and ethical components of their role as trustees and how those differ from the superintendent and other staff members. Newly elected trustees gain a broad introduction to the world of board service—from policy and human resources to finance and advocacy—to equip you to serve effectively as part of a visionary team. TASB ISD is offered at TASB's conferences throughout the year.

For details about TASB ISD, email tasbisd@tasb.org.

Learning about Board Service

The Framework for School Board Development

A good place to start understanding your role as a member of the school board is the Framework for School Board Development, one of the documents linked on the New School Board Member: What's Next? page when you visit tasb.org/welcome. You will also find a copy of this document in your policy manual in BBD(EXHIBIT). This Framework*, adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE), outlines tasks an effective board performs in its governing capacity. All tasks in the Framework contribute to the board's development and implementation of a vision that will move the district forward in its pursuit of educational excellence for students. The tasks fall under and support the five basic ideas listed below:

1. **Vision**—The board ensures creation of a shared vision that promotes enhanced student achievement.
2. **Structure**—The board provides guidance and direction for accomplishing the vision.
3. **Accountability**—The board measures and communicates how well the vision is being accomplished.
4. **Advocacy**—The board promotes the vision.
5. **Unity**—The board works with the superintendent to lead the district toward the vision.

* *SBOE is expected to approve revisions to the Framework in fall 2020; however, no action had been taken when this book went to print.*



A Code of Ethics

Most local boards have adopted a code of ethics for their members at BBF(LOCAL). The code below, which has been adopted by many school boards, represents good practices for all board members.

As a member of the board, I shall promote the best interests of the district as a whole and, to that end, shall adhere to the following ethical standards:

Equity in Attitude

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

Trustworthiness in Stewardship

- I will be accountable to the public by representing district policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in district affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of district resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance of my responsibilities.

Honor in Conduct

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

Integrity of Character

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the district as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will keep confidential any information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the district if disclosed.

Commitment to Service

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the board has delegated to the superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

Student-Centered Focus

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the district.

Training Requirements

Board members are required by law to receive seven training areas of continuing education required by the SBOE. As public officials, board members must also receive training on the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and sometimes the Public Information Act (PIA). In addition, elected board members must complete a cybersecurity training program certified by the Texas Department of Information Resources. Your training requirements as a new board member differ slightly from those you will need to meet in subsequent years of board service. Requirements also differ depending on whether it is a legislative year. The following table outlines the required trainings. Take special note of the timeframes and permitted providers of each type of training.

For more information about annual training requirements, visit cec.tasb.org.

Topic	First-Year Board Member		Experienced Board Member		Provider
	Hours	Timeframe	Hours	Timeframe	
Open Meetings Act	1	Within 90 days	N/A		Attorney General's Office or approved provider*
PIA (See Policy GBAA if this applies in your district)	Check local district policy for any board requirements [BBD (Local)]				
Cybersecurity	1	Within the first year	1	Each year	Courses approved by Texas Dept. of Information Resources
Local District Orientation	3	Up to 1 year before or within 120 days after election or appointment	N/A		Local District
Orientation to Texas Education Code	3	Within 120 days after election or appointment	N/A		Education Service Center
Update to Texas Education Code	N/A		Length determined by issues addressed in legislation	After each legislative session	Any registered provider*
Team Building	At least 3	Within the first year	At least 3	Each year	
Other Continuing Education	At least 10		At least 5		
Student Achievement, EISO	3	Within 120 days after election or appointment, if not completed while a candidate; every 2 years after initial training	3	Every 2 years	Any authorized provider*
Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention	1		1		Any registered provider*

* TASB is approved by TEA and the Attorney General's Office to provide all types of school board trainings except for local district orientation, orientation to the Texas Education Code (ESC), and cybersecurity (DIR-certified provider).

Tracking Your Continuing Education Credit Hours

The district is the official recordkeeper of board member training credit. For our members' convenience, TASB maintains a voluntary database of individual member training hours. The Continuing Education Credit Reporting Service (CECRS) allows superintendents and district designees to view and print board member reports of training obtained at TASB events. The district recordkeeper is also able to submit and track credit for non-TASB-sponsored training events.

If you attend TASB training events, each presenter will announce a unique code at the conclusion of the session. The easiest, most efficient way to record that continuing education credit (CEC) is by logging on to the TASB Member Center at **tasb.org/members** from any mobile device or computer. All you need is internet access and your myTASB user ID and password. You can enter and view your full credit history.



Jumping into Your Board Service

Even while you are getting your bearings as a new trustee, you will be making decisions and providing oversight for the district with your fellow board members. There's no probationary period for new board members; you have to just jump right in!

Within the broad list of tasks identified in the Framework for School Board Development, there are five ongoing key tasks the board uses to provide guidance and direction for the district. As a new board member, you can prepare to participate constructively right away with the following list.

Critical Work of the Board

1. Establishing a vision, adopting goals, and evaluating results

- Find out your district's process and calendar for setting goals and priorities and assessing success.
- Have your superintendent brief you on the state accountability system.
- Ask your superintendent for a copy of your district's most recent annual performance report.
- Get a copy of your current district vision and goals and review them.
- Find out how the success of your district's current goals is going to be measured.
- Keep a copy of your district goals with you at board meetings.

2. Adopting policies that enable the district to accomplish the goals

- Look at a copy of your district's policy manual. Most districts have their policies online.
- Have your board president, one of your colleagues, or the district's TASB policy consultant give you a brief introduction on how to use the policy manual and the distinctions between and among legal policies, local policies, and administrative regulations.
- Review the publication *The Board Member's Guide to Policy* in the TASB Policy Service Resource Library in the Member Center.

- Read through and make sure you are familiar with key policies you will need every day, such as the following:
 - Policy DGBA(LOCAL)—Employee Complaints/Grievances
 - Policy FNG(LOCAL)—Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances
 - Policy GF(LOCAL)—Public Complaints
- Read the legal and local policies that govern the conduct of board business, such as the following:
 - Policy BAA—Board Powers and Duties
 - Policy BBE—Board Member Authority
 - Policy BBF—Board Member Ethics
 - Policy BBFA—Conflict of Interest Disclosures
 - Policy BBFB—Prohibited Practices
 - Policy BE—Board Meetings
 - Policy BEC—Closed Meetings
 - Policy BED—Public Participation
- Ask about your district’s procedures for adopting and revising policy and review Policy BF.

3. Hiring and evaluating the superintendent

- Find out your board’s evaluation cycle and where you are in the process.
- Get a copy of the evaluation instrument your board will use and review it.
- Find out what procedure, if any, your board has established for you to ask questions about performance between the evaluation conferences.
- Study the BJ policy series on superintendent employment.

4. Adopting a budget and tax rate

- Ask your superintendent to give you an overview of the current budget.
- Ask for a copy of your district’s budget calendar.
- Get copies of any materials your board may have developed or may have received from staff that are relevant to the budget that is being prepared.
- Study the CE policy series on budget adoption.

5. Communicating with the constituents

- Find out what your board and district routinely do to keep the public fully and accurately informed.
- Find out who serves as the designated spokesperson for your board.
- Talk with your colleagues about the best way to respond to the constituents and to the media about hot topics.
- Find out how your board obtains community feedback.

Board Operations

1. Meetings

- Find out who prepares agendas for your board meetings and how to get an item included.
- Find out when you can expect to get agenda materials from your superintendent and what to do if you need additional information.
- Ask your board president what rules of order are used at your meetings.
- Make sure you complete your OMA training within the first 90 days and understand the basic provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Understand the limitations placed on closed sessions of your board.
- Study policies BE, BEC, and BED pertaining to meetings.
- Review past meeting agendas. (Most districts have their agendas posted online through BoardBook®.)



2. Board Members and District Constituents

- Ask your colleagues how they respond to controversial situations.
- Learn your district's policies and procedures for handling constituent complaints.
- Study Policy BED—Public Participation and Policy GF—Public Complaints.

3. Board Members and District Staff

- Ask your superintendent about the district hiring processes, especially how community-sensitive positions, such as principalships and head coaching jobs, are filled.
- Talk with your colleagues and your superintendent about when and how to raise concerns about district staff.
- Be sure you are familiar with board policies and procedures for asking information of staff.
- Make sure you know your district's policy for hearing complaints from staff.
- Find out your board's policy and procedures for board member visits to campuses and be very careful to adhere to them.
- Study the DC policy series—Employment Practices, Policy BBE—Board Member Authority, Policy DGBA—Employee Complaints/Grievances.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What topics should be included in my initial local orientation?

A: New board members are required to receive an orientation to their local district within 120 days of taking office. It must be at least three hours in length and address local district practices in curriculum and instruction, business and finance operations, district operations, superintendent evaluation, and board member roles and responsibilities. Ask your superintendent or board president if your district provides other resources for new members, such as a board handbook, board operating procedures, or mentors for new board members. Let your superintendent know if there are additional items you would like to have included.

Your orientation should include:

- Overview of district statistics, such as enrollment, demographics, performance summaries, and recent trends
- Administrative structure and names of key personnel
- District vision, mission, goals, and plan summaries
- District planning and evaluation process and calendar
- District budget summary and recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, and property values
- Budget development process and calendar
- Access to the online policy manual
- Policy development and review process
- Overview of district curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
- Superintendent evaluation process, calendar, instrument, current performance goals, and contract
- Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
- Preferred practices for common tasks, such as requesting information, bringing business before the board, preparing for and participating in board meetings, communicating with team members, communicating with the public and media, and visiting campuses or district offices

Q: How might my life change now that I'm a school board member?

A: It is very common for new school board members to experience some changes to their life when they begin their service. New board

members may be perceived and treated differently by many people in their community once they have been elected or appointed. You might also feel a bit busier because of the time it takes to prepare for and attend board meetings and other related commitments. A good way to prepare for these possible changes is by talking to experienced board members and attending training designed for new school board members, such as TASB ISD.

Q: What can I expect during my first several months of service?

A: Your first several months of service on the board can be an exciting time full of learning. Not only will you be learning about the board's governance role, but you will also be learning how your local board operates, how your district's schools function, and a variety of educational terms and phrases, among other things.

The first few months of service can be overwhelming at times, so it is a good idea to ask an experienced school board member to help you navigate through the first year of board service. You can rely on this mentor to help you keep your focus on learning the most important things at the appropriate time.

Q: What are some of the things that I should focus my learning on during my first several months of service?

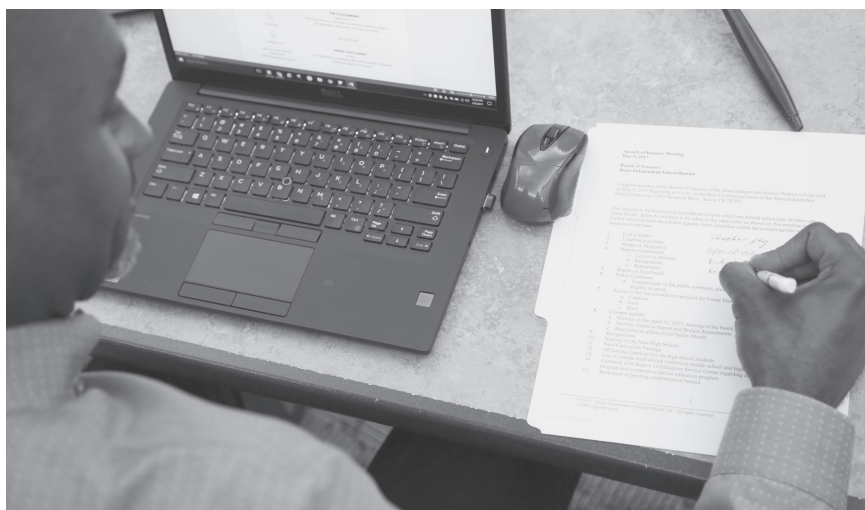
A: Initially, you should focus your attention on learning about the role of the board, understanding how your board and superintendent function together, listening to your fellow board members, and asking lots of questions about how and why things are done in a certain way. Understanding the board's role and how it is different from and complementary to the role of the superintendent is very important, as is learning how to listen to and handle concerns and complaints from your community and staff.

Resources to Help

New board members usually start their service with a variety of questions. You have many resources available to help you find the answers you need. Again, start with the Member Center at tasb.org/members. You can think of the Member Center as your learning hub as a trustee. This password-protected area of the TASB website provides you with just-in-time information and resources, so it's a great place to start with any questions.

Local Resources

For many local questions, you should start by asking your superintendent and board president. They can be great resources for how the board functions in your district. They may mention your local orientation, board operating procedures, and a board activity calendar, among other things, as places you'll learn about your role as a trustee. It is a good idea to become familiar with your district's policy manual, especially the policies that outline the board's governance role in the district.



TASB Resources

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) is your association. TASB is a volunteer, nonprofit, statewide education association that serves and represents Texas school boards. For more information about TASB, go to **tasb.org**.

Advocacy

One of the core functions of TASB is to represent our member school boards at the Texas Legislature when decisions are being made that may affect their districts. TASB's Governmental Relations (GR) monitors legislative developments, keeps members updated on activities, and promotes TASB's Advocacy Agenda in person with state and federal lawmakers, the State Board of Education, and other agencies.

GR hosts Regional Grassroots Meetings across the state in even-numbered years so that trustees can identify their legislative priorities, which are eventually adopted as TASB's Advocacy Agenda by the ultimate governing body of TASB, the Delegate Assembly, in the fall before a legislative session. In odd-numbered years, TASB and the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) host the Legislative Conference in March; TASB also holds the Post-Legislative Conference when the regular legislative session ends.

TASB's School Board Advocacy Network (SBAN) was established to help school board members become effective advocates. Participants in this free service receive training materials and stay connected through timely and succinct email updates. For more information, call GR at **800.580.4885** or visit **gr.tasb.org/sban** to join. You will also find resources on advocacy in the Member Center.



Training Opportunities


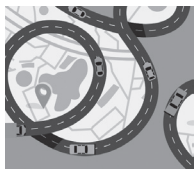
TASB offers training to meet your needs in many different forms:

- Conferences
- In-District consulting (IDC)
- Online Learning Center (OLC)
- Publications and videos

Conferences

TASB training events provide an opportunity for board members to hear from experienced education leaders, meet colleagues from around the state, and discuss hot topics and common issues. Some of the conferences have programming tailored specifically for new trustees.

Month	Conference	Description
June	Summer Leadership Institute <i>San Antonio and Fort Worth</i> 	SLI, TASB's flagship training conference offered at two locations in June, is designed to (1) provide new board members with immediate training following May elections, (2) offer focused training for newly elected board presidents, and (3) provide experienced board members with current practices, information, and key concerns.
July		
August		
September	TASA TASB Convention <i>Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio</i> 	This premier event is offered in partnership with the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) each fall. In addition to relevant programming and field trips, Convention offers a New Board Member Seminar and a seminar for small school districts. An exhibit hall features hundreds of exhibits and activities and opportunities to see Texas schoolchildren in action.
October		

November	Legal Services Seminars <i>Various locations across the state</i>	Attorneys from TASB Legal Services hit the road to offer Legal Seminars in the fall throughout the state. These seminars feature in-depth training on timely legal topics.
December		
January		
February	Governance Camp <i>Galveston</i> 	This winter conference offers focused training for both new and experienced board members. Governance Camp has a unique focus on student voices, and there are usually many opportunities to hear from and interact with students at the conference.
March	Spring Workshops	Spring Workshops offer timely training at locations throughout Texas in conjunction with regional education service centers, state colleges and universities, and area school boards associations.
April	<i>Various locations across the state</i>	
May		

In-District Consulting

In-district consulting sessions are tailored to meet the specific needs of your board-superintendent team. Frequent requests include district planning, understanding oversight of management, superintendent evaluation, and team dynamics.



In addition to singular sessions for in-district consulting, TASB offers eXceptional Governance Board Development (XG) as an in-district training option. XG is a five-session, whole-board learning experience that strengthens essential perspectives, builds governance capacity, and equips boards to act confidently with a focus on improving student outcomes.

Online Learning Center

The Online Learning Center (OLC) features self-paced video and interactive courses. Continuing education credit is offered for most courses. You can access the OLC through your Member Center. Check the course catalog for foundational courses in board policy, ethics, school finance, and practical topics like parliamentary procedure. Other OLC topics include board governance, superintendent evaluation, and more.

Publications

TASB produces a variety of publications on board governance and operations. Be sure to check out discount pricing for package orders. The following are especially useful for new board members:

- *Getting Started as a New School Board Member*
- *A New Board Member's Guide to Parliamentary Procedure*
- *The School Official's Guide to the Texas Open Meetings Act*
- *New Board Member Legal Package*
- *The Board Member's Guide to Policy* (available free in the Member Center)

To order resources listed here and view other publications available from TASB, visit **store.tasb.org** or call **800.580.8272, extension 1068**.



Services and Products

Think of a subject area your board or your schools deal with, and TASB most likely has a resource to assist. TASB is known for the exceptional quality of its services and its reputation for responding to district needs quickly, effectively, and thoroughly. You might ask your superintendent which TASB programs your district participates in. Visit tasb.org/member-services to learn more about those programs and other ways we support local school districts.

Regional Education Service Centers

Beyond your district and TASB resources, you can find additional information through your regional education service center (ESC). These regional centers are an arm of the Texas Education Agency, providing training and support for educators and board members throughout your region. Your initial training that provides an Orientation to the Texas Education Code is provided by your regional ESC.



Quick Reference Guide

Common Education Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act, Average Daily Attendance
AP.....	Advanced Placement
ARD.....	Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee
DAEP	Disciplinary Alternative Education Program
EL.....	English Learners
EOC.....	End-of-Course (exam or assessment)
ESC.....	Education Service Center
ESL.....	English as a Second Language
ESSA.....	Every Student Succeeds Act
FSP.....	Foundation School Program
FTE.....	Full-Time Equivalent
I&S.....	Interest and Sinking (Fund)
IDEA.....	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP.....	Individualized Education Program
LBB.....	Legislative Budget Board
LEP.....	Limited English Proficiency
LFA.....	Local Fund Assignment
M&O.....	Maintenance and Operations (Fund)
NAEP.....	National Assessment of Educational Progress
PEIMS.....	Public Education Information Management System
PSF.....	Permanent School Fund
SBEC.....	State Board for Educator Certification
SBOE.....	State Board of Education
SEL.....	Social Emotional Learning
SSI.....	Student Success Initiative

STAAR.....	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
TAC.....	Texas Administrative Code
TAKS.....	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
	<i>(TAKS phased out in 2011–12)</i>
TAPR.....	Texas Academic Performance Reports
TEA.....	Texas Education Agency
TEC.....	Texas Education Code
TEKS.....	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
T-PESS	Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System
TRS.....	Teacher Retirement System of Texas
T-TESS	Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System
WADA.....	Weighted Average Daily Attendance

Common TASB Abbreviations and Acronyms

BOA.....	Board Officers' Academy
CEC	Continuing Education Credit
CECRS	Continuing Education Credit Reporting Service
GR.....	Governmental Relations
LAC	Legislative Advisory Council
LTASB	Leadership TASB
OLC	Online Learning Center
SBAN.....	School Board Advocacy Network
SLI.....	Summer Leadership Institute
TASB ISD.....	TASB Institute for School Trustee Development
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Texas Lone Star</i> (monthly magazine)

TASB Key Contacts

Visit tasb.org/about-TASB/contact-us.aspx for a complete list of key contacts.

Texas Association of School Boards

Toll-free.....	800.580.8272
Austin	512.467.0222
Website.....	tasb.org
Email	tasb@tasb.org

TASB Board Development Services

Main Board Development Services Email	board.dev@tasb.org
New Board Member Resources	

Email	tasbisd@tasb.org
Phone	extension 2456

In-District Consulting	extension 2453
Online Learning Center	

Email	onlinelearning@tasb.org
Phone	extension 2455

Continuing Education Credit

Email	cec@tasb.org
Phone	extension 2453 or 2454

Leadership TASB	extension 2460
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TASB Events

Check the Member Center for information about upcoming TASB events.

Fall Legal Seminars	800.580.5345
Governance Camp	extension 2462
Grassroots Meetings	extension 1088
Spring Workshops	extension 2463
Summer Leadership Institute.....	extension 2462
TASA TASB Convention	extension 3549

Other TASB Resources

Area School Boards Associations.....	extension 2463
Governmental Relations	800.580.4885
HR Services	800.580.7782
Legal Services	800.580.5345
Policy Service	800.580.7529

TASB Publications

Phoneextension 1068
Store Websitestore.tasb.org





**They are
counting
on us.**

Speak up for
our children.

Speak up for
public schools.



**STAND UP FOR TEXAS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



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