

Report



Looking Ahead

TASBO committee leaders discuss important issues and how to handle them during the new school year





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TASBO Events

September 15 | Richardson
ACT100 Introduction To Accounting

September 15 | Round Rock
PEIMS Fundamentals

**September 16-17 | Round Rock/
Remote***
PEIMS Academy

September 27 | Austin/Remote*
PEIMS for Principals Workshop

September 28 | Austin/Remote*
School Office Fundamentals

October 18 | Denton
Payroll Fundamentals

October 18 | Denton
Personnel Fundamentals

October 19-20 | Denton/Remote*
Payroll & Personnel Academy

October 20 | Denton
Purchasing Fundamentals

October 21 | Victoria
Investment Training Workshop

October 21-22 | Denton/Remote*
Purchasing Academy

October 26 | Austin
MGT303 Approaches To Leadership and Management

October 28 | Austin
State Aid Template Workshop for ISDs

November 2 | Victoria
State Aid Template Workshop for ISDs

November 3-4 | Houston/Remote*
Accounting & Finance Academy

November 4-5 | Houston
School Operations Conference

**November 9-10 | Pflugerville/
Remote***
Synergy (Finance + Special Ed)

November 10 | Richardson
ACT104 Budget and Financial Planning

December 1 | Richardson
ACT106 Financial Coding for Texas Schools

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TASBO Report

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
**Texas Association of
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Adapting to Leadership Change



Darrell Dodds, RTSBA
TASBO Board President

A change in leadership can happen in many ways, and for any position, you may hold as a school business official. Many of you have experienced a change in leadership during your career. A change may be in the school board, superintendent, supervisor. Or, your role may have changed. I have had leadership changes in my what seems short career of 19 years in the school business. I have had seven superintendents and six interim superintendents in my career. And, I have been an interim superintendent in two different districts.

Every board of trustee election can bring change for your district. The board is the best contact with your community. Most are not educators, yet they volunteer their time to help shape the district, along with the superintendent, staff and stakeholders. Each time there is a change on the board, the dynamics of the board and direction of the district may shift. You must be willing to

“Even though the leadership in the district may change, our mission and purpose do not.”

adjust if needed to support those changes.

I have worked with several types of leaders or leadership styles. I have worked with first-time superintendents and those who have had years of experience. Some may be strong in academics or operations, or finance, depending on their background and experience. As a business official, you need to assess the leadership strengths and offer your expertise to help the supervisor for the benefit of the district. This type of “Managing Up” works well when teams can complement each other’s subject-matter expertise.

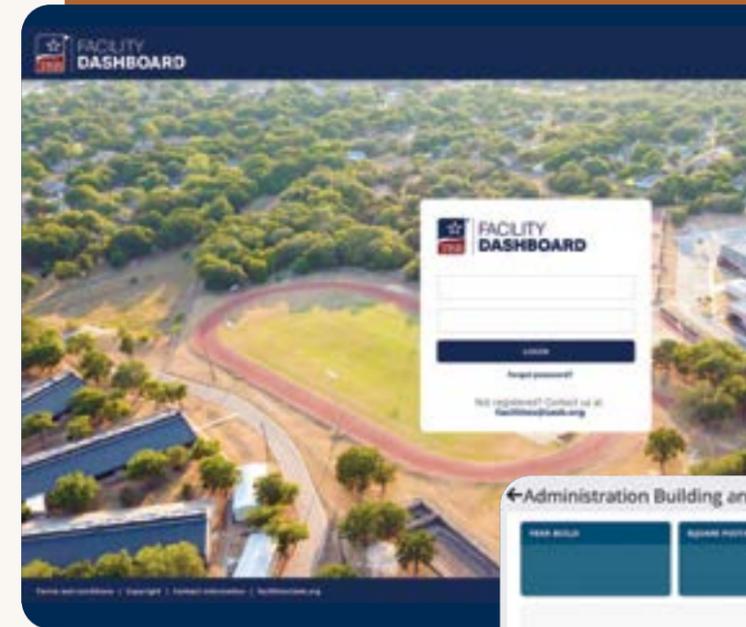
Even though the leadership in the district may change, our mission and purpose do not. That is to keep our focus on the needs of our students and staff that we serve. At the end of the day, that is the most important thing that we can do.

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Lessons from the Sea



Tracy Ginsburg

Ed.D., CAE

TASBO Executive Director

This past month Steve and I traveled to Ogunquit, Maine, meaning beautiful place by the sea, for a memorial service for his Uncle Arnie. Generations of Steve's family have lived and played in Ogunquit, so a decision was made to also rent a sailboat and spread his father's ashes while the extended family was gathered.

Late summer is one of my favorite times to travel to Maine – the flowers are in full bloom, lobsters are in plentiful supply, and the weather is wonderful. Mother Nature had other plans for us this year and to say things did not go as planned this trip would be an understatement. In fact, the weather was a summer version of a nor'easter storm.

I had many second thoughts about the entire boating adventure. The radar the morning of the sail was a deep shade of red and predicted to stay that way most of the day. It was raining

when we arrived at the dock, the wind had been blowing all night and the seas were angry. The captain was a seasoned sailor who was emphatic that it was now or never, the weather was only going to get worse and that we would be okay if we left NOW. We placed our trust in him, climbed in the boat, without life jackets, in a nor'easter. What was I thinking?

We'd been away from shore about 30 seconds when I realized just how foolish our decision to sail was and wanted to turn back. I was committed, as were my family members, so I held on for dear life and tried as hard as I could to summon my courage. The ride was very choppy and when the boat lifted several feet out of the water and turned on its side, the captain decided that maybe it was time to change course and head back to shore. None of us were fully prepared for our adventure.

I'm not sure that our experience at sea is unlike what you are facing as you begin the school year. I don't think any of us had the Delta variant in our back-to-school plans. Texas experienced a brief respite from COVID during the last few months. I think we were all full of hope and optimism and the prospect of a "normal" school year. Alas, it feels a little bit like March 2020 and the COVID version of Groundhog Day.

I'm thankful for you and for all you do, but I also know how exhausted you must be trying to anticipate the needs of your students while balancing the concerns of your parents and community as we begin dealing with the impact of the virus yet again. But unlike me, who set sail without a life



Whoops. The Ginsburgs may have picked the wrong time to honor Uncle Arnie.

jacket, you have a life jacket through your membership with TASBO. Each member of our team is here to serve and is absolutely committed to remaining your "trusted resource in school finance and operations."

I recently attended the Vincent Van Gogh exhibition in Austin and saw a quote from a letter he wrote to his brother that included in part "the point is nevertheless to revive and have courage, even though things don't turn out as one first thought." This past year provided the TASBO team with multiple opportunities to display courage and adjust so that we could respond to your needs.

TASBO staff recognized early on that virtual learning was an important capability that we needed to build

"We placed our trust in him, climbed in the boat, without life jackets, in a nor'easter. What was I thinking?"

Continued from page 11

upon. Staff quickly recognized that for many of our members, virtual learning is the only way to participate in professional development because of family obligations, travel distance or budgetary constraints.

TASBO will continue to offer academies in a hybrid format this fall. We hope that you will choose to join us in person but we will be happy to accommodate you if you can only attend virtually. Rest assured that our in-person events will be structured in such a manner to prioritize your health and safety.

We have broadened our eLearning Team with the addition of former board member, Brenda Richmond as the Director of Instructional Technology. TASBO also added two new faces recently - Matt Fulmer and Kyle Wallace. Matt and Kyle have been tasked with improving the functionality of our existing content and expanding our online course offerings. Our goal is to provide 100+ certification courses in a virtual format in the future. It's a lofty goal, but I know this team will succeed!

The eLearning Team is rounded out by long-time TASBO employee, Rene Turney who will facilitate our webinars. Brenda has recently audited our webinar library to ensure that the library of prerecorded webinars is timely and relevant. Do you have a topic that you would like to share? I know Brenda would welcome hearing from you as we seek to increase our webinar content.

The Center for School Finance is a



Past Board Member Brenda Richmond (right) joins the TASBO staff along with Past Board Member Becky Estrada, Kyle Wallace, and Matt Fulmer.

Continued on page 14

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Continued from page 12

relatively new offering from TASBO for our members. We were hopeful that at least 40 districts would see the value in the service in our first year of existence. Today I'm proud to share that district memberships in the Center for School Finance total more than 190 school districts serving more than 600 members.

Thank you for placing your trust in Research and Policy Team to assist your district with state funding estimations and other school finance questions. TASBO will add an additional team member later this fall to ensure that we are able to continue growing the program while providing the highest level of customer service.

We're also excited to welcome Becky Estrada as a full-time TASBO employee beginning September 1st. Becky will be a tremendous asset to both TASBO and to our members, as Education Associate.

This fall TASBO will welcome the sixth class of Emerging Leaders. It has been an absolute joy to watch the alumni of the program spread their wings and become leaders in school finance and operations. I cannot wait to see what the 26 individuals who are part of this year's cohort will achieve.

In addition, to the Emerging Leaders Program, TASBO will continue to offer the Leadership Fundamentals program which is tailored for newly minted supervisors and the Orange Frog program which is designed to bring positivity to the workplace. TASBO will offer these programs periodically throughout the year or you may

request a private training specific to your district.

Another "life jacket" we have in place are partnerships with other like-minded associations to work as a collective group and provide our members with what they need. TASA, TASB, and TASBO have joined together to offer budget development training for school district teams. The Budget Cohort model is based upon the superintendent, CFO, chief curriculum, and human resources officers attending the training together.

I have never been prouder to be a school business official than I was last year. We all held on together and weathered many challenges and opportunities to ensure that the children of Texas received the education that they need and deserve. The Texas constitution eloquently states, "A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools." Thank you for working to provide the resources for our teachers and students so that every student can succeed and prosper.

William Butler Yeats was credited with saying, "Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends." You are the glory who provides for the students of Texas. I'm so very thankful that you are here and are a part of TASBO. Thank you.

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HAPPY RETIREMENT! LINDA DUFAULT



TASBO Wishes Linda Dufault a Happy Retirement

After dutifully serving TASBO for 14 years, Credentialing Specialist Linda Dufault is set to retire effective August 31.

Linda has helped thousands of members earn and retain their certification. She was a friendly face at conferences and helpful to her colleagues.

"Linda set the standard for dedication to members and those seeking certification," said TASBO Executive Director Tracy Ginsburg. "We're going to miss her greatly in the office, but look forward to hearing about her adventures, since she's an avid traveler."

TASBO is set to welcome Heather Lee in her position, who will work closely with Lisa Krabbenhoft, Director of Certification.

We'll miss you, Linda! Top: Linda Dufault in 2019. Bottom-left: Linda visits Westminster Hall. Bottom-right: Linda with Lisa Krabbenhoft at a playground photoshoot.



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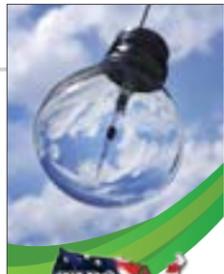
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Federated Investment Counseling Q451348 (4/21)



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Energy Program Manager
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Let's Wish Linda Dufault a Happy Retirement

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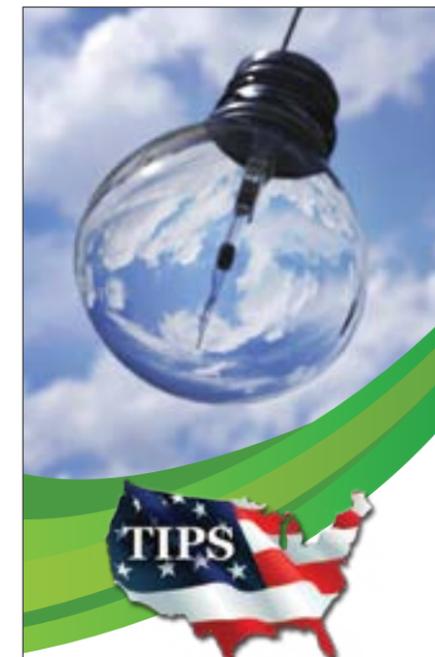
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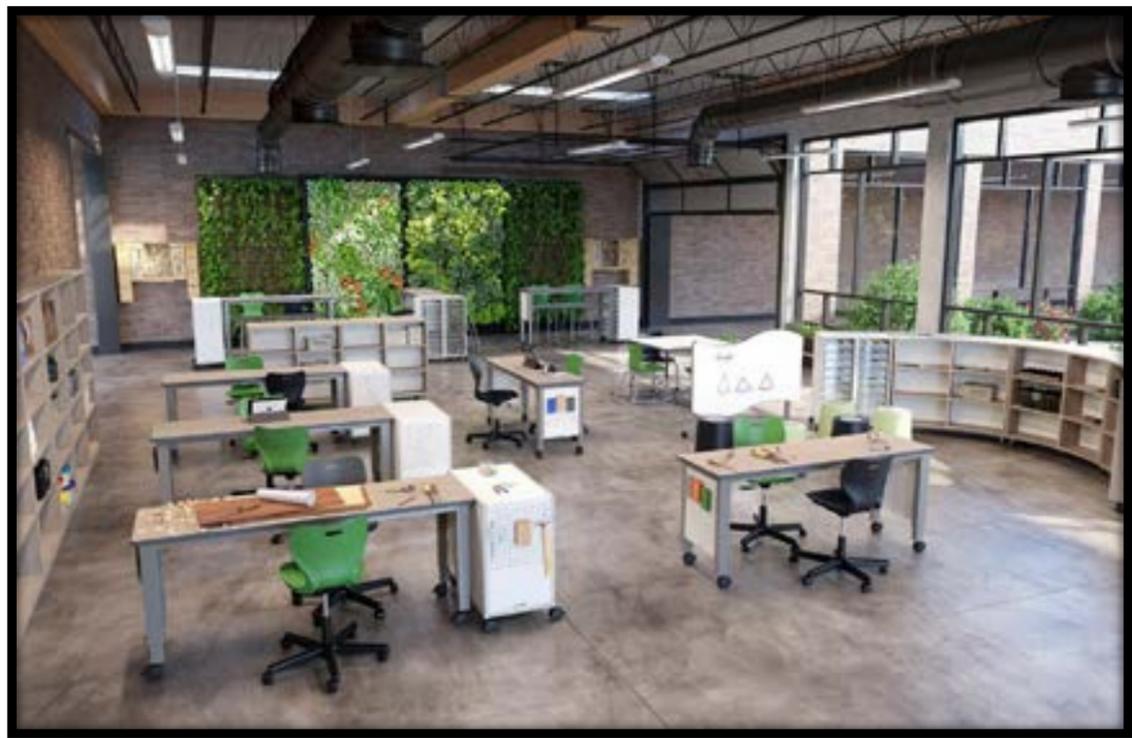
¹Source: iMoneyNet, Inc., 12/31/20. For more information on credit ratings, visit standardandpoors.com. Credit ratings do not protect against market risk.

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2021 HONORS

ASBO Honors Karen Smith with Distinguished Eagle Award

A SBO International recently named Cypress-Fairbanks ISD's Karen Smith as one of three 2021 Distinguished Eagle Award recipients. ASBO International honors school business professionals who stop at nothing to be change-agents for the students in their district and beyond. She will be honored at the ASBO International Annual Conference in Milwaukee this coming October.

Karen is currently the Chief Financial Officer for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD in the Houston area. She was President of the TASBO Board of Directors in 2016-17 and was named the TASBO Commitment to Excellence Recipient in 2020, when the conference was held in Houston.

A recognized leader in the field, Karen Smith has 29 years of school business under her belt and currently oversees school business operations in the third-largest district in Texas. Recognizing the importance of collaboration across the district, she developed a training program to teach



new principals their fiscal responsibilities and district financial processes. She also mentors new school business officials and presents at local and national conferences.

Smith is passionate about advocacy and helps state legislators understand the needs and concerns of school districts and their students. She was invited to testify before the Texas Legislature on funding for special

education, bilingual education, and at-risk students. Parts of her testimony were included in subsequent legislation.

The Eagle Award is sponsored by Equitable - who also sponsors the TASBO Commitment to Excellence award program. Each Distinguished Eagle Award recipient's district is awarded \$2500 for a high school senior.

ASBO International Honors Dr. Jesus Amezcua with Pinnacle of Achievement Award

ASBO International recognized Dr. Jesus Amezcua of Harris County Department of Education as a 2021 Pinnacle of Achievement Award Recipient. As one of three recipients, the award is part of the Pinnacle Awards that honors effective school business officials, who are experts at combining experience with creativity to solve problems facing 21st-century school districts. He will be honored, along with the Pinnacle of Excellence Recipient at the ASBO International Conference in Milwaukee this coming October.

Jesus is currently Assistant Superintendent for Business Services at the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE). When one of HCDE's schools, which serves special needs students from several districts, reached the end of its

lifespan, Jesus, the superintendent, and board recognized the need for a new, larger school to accommodate the growing number of students in need of special services. The school, which opened in August 2020, serves students ages 5–22. Features include a low student-to-instructor ratio, sensory rooms, a domestic living lab, and an innovative, inclusive playground.

The program was financed by negotiated lease revenue bonds through the district's Public Facilities Corporation. Jesus' department was able to secure a bank-qualified bond at a low rate and use a combination of one-time fund balance money and new debt to pay for the \$11 million school.

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PEIMS

Hot Topics

- Anticipation of pandemic-based changes
- Remote-learning processes that may require new policy
- Procedural and protocol challenges/changes

Upcoming Training

PEIMS Fundamentals | PEIMS Academy

The annual PEIMS Academy provides a comprehensive look at relevant topics within this specific area of PEIMS administration. Connect with colleagues around the state and hear from district leaders, key partners from regulatory agencies, legal firms, and innovators within the industry. PEIMS Fundamentals precedes the Academy and is designed for those new to the profession (within two years).

PEIMS Fundamentals
September 15, 2021 | Round Rock
PEIMS Academy
September 16-17, 2021 | Round Rock

The PEIMS Research Committee is chaired by Dr. Julie J. Guillory from Fort Bend ISD. She was a 2020 RISE Award Recipient and frequent instructor and presenter.

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

Definitely think outside the box with Plan “A”, Plan “B” and Plan “C”.

Like school districts, TASBO expanded its hybrid learning environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online continuing education?

TASBO has done a great job encompassing the learning modalities of various users. Whether it’s in-person, live online, or a live recording, there’s been an increase in the manner in which learning can take place with TASBO. With the increase in virtual online learning, there are sometimes unintended oral and/or visual distractions. Learners may think they can multi-task online, but that may impact learning. Some potential distractions could include, but are not limited to, Zoom backgrounds, inadvertent technical issues or environmental occurrences that can sidetrack what’s being discussed in an online or virtual session.

Any thoughts for others heading into this year?

Pray. We all learn differently so demonstrating patience and maintaining positive energy can yield successful online learning experiences!

We surveyed our research committee chairs and other area experts on the most pressing issues heading into 2021-22 and different ways to prepare, including upcoming training opportunities.

Hot Topics: Q&A on Preparing for 2021-22

Accounting & Finance

Hot Topics

- ESSER funding
- Calculation of state aid
- Procedures manual
- Audits for federal Funds/ESSER
- Legislative updates and impacts

Training & Resources

TASBO Accounting & Finance Academy

The annual Accounting & Finance Academy provides a comprehensive look at relevant topics within this specific area of school finance and operations.

November 3 - 4, 2021 | Omni Houston Galleria

Center for School Finance

The TASBO Policy & Research team provides members of this service with regular updates and presentations, and work closely with members to ensure they have what they need to plan ahead for their district. Registration for the upcoming school year is opening soon.

tasbo.org/center-for-school-finance

Budget Cohort

TASA has joined with the TASB and TASBO to offer comprehensive budget development training for school district teams. Registration for 2021-22 is opening soon.

tasbo.org/events

The Accounting & Finance Research Committee is the largest committee. The current chair, Jeffri Orosco, was elected to the TASBO Board of Directors in 2021. She's served as Vice-President of the Capital Area TASBO Affiliate and received the RISE Award in 2020.

What type of Accounting & Finance training is still optimal in-person?

Just from hearing comments from the Summary of Finance training in Pflugerville and Austin that I helped with, I feel that it is something that is better taught in-person so that you can get the hands-on help. It also needs to be broken down further for those new in the profession. At the one in Austin, the morning was great - step by step hand holding. Then, the afternoon flew by with a lot of information given on Hold Harmless/ESSER II.

Any thoughts for others heading into this year?

Stay involved with TASBO in regards to updates and read the online community digest each morning.



Accounting & Finance Research Committee Chair, Jeffri Orosco, receives her RISE Award in 2020. The RISE Award is eligible to members within their first 10 years of membership and recognizes activities like teaching courses and volunteering.

The Internal Audit Research Committee is chaired by Trish Potts, Internal Auditor from Wichita Falls ISD. She also serves at President for the Red River Area TASBO affiliate. This committee has been instrumental in developing sessions for the Internal Audit Academy and Workshops.

Internal Audit

needed from other districts. And, become involved in TASBO affiliate groups.

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

Being flexible and willing to adjust your schedule goes a long way. Making sure your recommendations are reasonable and obtainable.

What type of training is best in-person?

I've observed more questions and issues are discussed in-person than online.

Any thoughts for others heading into this year

Remind your administrators that internal audit adds value to your district and the staff are on your side to make the district the best possible.

Hot Topics

- Auditing ESSER Funds
- IT auditing
- Auditing & tracking electronics for students and employees
- Auditing attendance/PIEMS
- Audit work programs

Are there any new training offerings, updates, resources that members could use to help them address these hot topic issues?

We just had the **TASBO 2021 Internal Audit Academy** that addressed many of the topics. You can also use TASBO Connect to address issues or resources

Purchasing & Supply Mgt

Hot Topics

- How to spend ESSER Funds
- Commodity codes
- Purchasing Manual
- TDA and TEA audits

The Purchasing & Supply Management Research Committee is active and fast-growing. The current chair, Phillip Ellison, was elected to the TASBO Board of Directors in 2021. He's from Spring ISD and was a 2020 Commitment to Excellence Honoree.

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

Be on top of things, but don't knee-jerk to react to something. Careful consideration and dialog with your colleagues pays off.

Like school districts, TASBO expanded its hybrid learning environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online continuing education?

All types of training are best in-person. Quick meetings that can be easily held virtually instead of traveling across the district, or state can now be done with platforms like Zoom instead of on conference phone calls.

Distribution & Inventory

The Distribution & Inventory Research Committee is chaired by Todd Schultz, Director of Warehouse Services at Klein ISD.

Hot Topics

- Availability of supplies due to COVID
- Increased cost of products
- Effective communication with suppliers
- Extended lead times

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

Maintaining good vendor relationships is key during emergencies and critical supply situations.

Like school districts, TASBO expanded its hybrid learning environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online continuing education?

The ability to learn without the cost of travel is an advantage. The disadvantage of online training is that there is no networking. Having taught a class this spring, not seeing students was tough.

Training & Resources

Open Forum & Purchasing Forum

School purchasing connects with a variety of other areas in school finance & operations. The Open Forum is the largest discussion community in TASBO Connect, but the Purchasing Community is one of the more active committee-connected communities, available to members of that committee.

Purchasing Fundamentals | Purchasing Academy

The annual Purchasing Academy provides a comprehensive look at relevant topics within this specific area of school finance and operations. Connect with colleagues around the state and hear from district leaders, key partners from regulatory agencies, legal firms, and innovators within the industry. Purchasing Fundamentals precedes the Academy and is designed for those new to the profession (within two years).

Purchasing Fundamentals
October 20, 2021 | Denton
Purchasing Academy
October 21-22, 2021 | Denton

Board Member and Purchasing & Supply Management Research Committee Chair Phillip Ellison presents at the 2020 TASBO Engage Conference in Houston.



Training & Resources

DIS101 Online: Materials Management for School Districts

This course provides an overview of materials management functions. It will also address customer service; interfacing with purchasing; inventory systems; warehouse design; space requirements, and best practices for efficient operations.

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Payroll

The Payroll Research Committee is chaired by Round Rock ISD's Tonya Davis, a frequent course instructor. This committee has been instrumental in providing subject-matter for the Payroll & Personnel Academy.

Hot Topics

- State reporting
- TRS deadlines
- FLSA/FMLA

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

Teamwork. Without it, no one is successful.

Like school districts, TASBO expanded its hybrid learning environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online continuing education?

Training is unique to each individual attending the training, and participants must be given the option of how they select their learning. As we all found out this last year, virtual learning was hard for some, while virtual was great for others. Virtual learning is a quick way to gather a group without expense of traveling and helps get you to training when your job duties restrict the ability to travel.

Any thoughts for others heading into this year?

Work as a team and rely on TASBO as a resource to navigate the challenges this school year will bring.



Training & Resources

Payroll Fundamentals

Have you been in your personnel position for less than two years? TASBO Personnel Fundamentals has just what you need. Address the core skills that effectively guide coordinators, directors, or supervisors in a specific school business capacity.

October 18, 2021 | Denton

Training & Resources

Payroll & Personnel Academy

The annual Payroll/Personnel Academy provides a comprehensive look at relevant topics within this specific area of school finance and operations. Examine current events, recent legislation, state and federal guidelines, and best practices to successfully navigate the landscape of Texas schools.

October 19-21, 2021 | Denton

Personnel

The Personnel Research Committee is chaired by Brandy Burnett, HR Director for Liberty-Eylau ISD. She became a member with TASBO in 2017 and participated as a protege in the Personnel Mentoring Program.

Hot Topics

- Retire/Rehire of TRS employees
- Professional development requirements
- Teacher incentive allotment and strategic compensation
- Leaves and absences

Are there any new training offerings, updates, resources that members could use to help them address these hot topic issues?

The best way I keep up with the changes is by being a part of the Personnel mentoring group and signing up to receive the email notifications. Many members post questions and answers daily regarding changes and upcoming events. There are also many online courses and recorded offerings on TASBO.

Training & Resources

Personnel Fundamentals

Have you been in your personnel position for less than two years? TASBO Personnel Fundamentals has just what you need. Address the core skills that effectively guide coordinators, directors, or supervisors in a specific school business capacity.

October 18, 2021 | Denton

Maintenance & Operations

The Maintenance & Operations Research Committee is chaired by Kevin Wiegat, Director of Maintenance at Klein ISD.

Hot Topics

- Funding
- Training and mentoring new leadership
- Recruitment & retention

From the perspective of your position within school business, what have you learned this past year that could benefit others?

With the concerns of staffing and recruitment, we need to continue to think “outside the box.”

Are there any new training offerings, updates, resources that members could use to help them address these hot topic issues?

Our committee is working on some tracks in preparation of the TASBO School Operations Conference in November.

The TASBO School Operations Conference includes break-out sessions on Facilities/Construction, Safety & Risk Management, and Transportation. This year’s conference takes place in Houston.



TASBO School Operations Conference

November 4-5, 2021



Information Technology

Hot Topics

- Technology funding opportunities – stimulus funding, ESSER funding, E-Rate funding, CARES and other funding.
- Data Privacy with TEA legislative requirements
- Technology project management
- Cybersecurity and the latest most recent issues (it's not as if the problems are going away)
- Building trust with cloud service providers
- Hybrid learning and measures of support

The Information Technology Research Committee is co-chaired by Life Member Frankie Jackson and new TASBO employee and Life Member Brenda Richmond.

Are there any new training offerings, updates, resources that members could use to help them address these hot topic issues?

There are basically three sources – TASBO, TCEA and TETL - Texas Education Technology Leaders (formerly the Texas K-12 CTO Council, who changed their name in June 2021). At the national level – CoSN and ASBO.

What have you learned this past year that could help others?

Focusing on the hot topics we referenced is crucial.

Like school districts, TASBO expanded its hybrid learning environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online continuing education?

We learned during pandemic that eLearning can work. However, it does need to be developed in such a way to keep the learner engaged when remote/eLearning. Courses that require a lot of collaboration are best in-person.



In 2016, Frankie Jackson was awarded the TASBO Commitment to Excellence for impact to the profession and to TASBO. As a Life Member, she is still very active.

Instructional Materials

Hot Topics

- TIMA Fund cuts
- Delays in funding, with the amounts not yet known
- Health and Physical Education up for adoption
- Funding for AP
- Paper shortages

Chair

Jillian Dorland
Instructional Materials & Distribution Coordinator
Clear Creek ISD

Training & Resources

TXT102 Online: Instructional Materials Mgt Procedures

In this course, participants will cover information pertaining to Senate Bill 6, discuss proclamations and the IM selection process with an understanding of the role a district committee plays during a new adoption.



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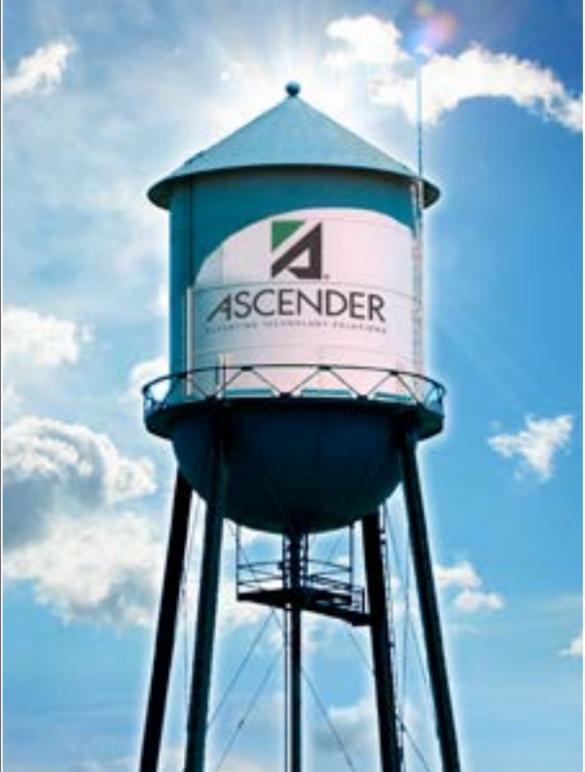
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HOT TOPIC Q&A

Safety & Risk Management

Hot Topics

- COVID protocols and impact on training, drills, and safety
- Malware, Ransomware attacks and liability
- Awareness of mental health impact on students, staff, and parents
- Trends in theft and loss
- After-hours and extracurricular security

Chair

Lloyd Blaine, CSRM
Director Student Services and Safety/Security
Royse City ISD

Training & Resources

TASBO School Operations Conference

November 4-5, 2021 | Houston

School Nutrition

Chair

Frank Milton, CTSBS
Sr. Manager, Nutrition
Houston ISD

Hot Topics

- Expansion of Seamless Summer Option
- Supply chain issues and communication
- TDA waivers
- PEIMS coding for new programs
- Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)
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Transportation Hot Topic ELDT and What Does It Mean for School Districts?

Judy Marchman
Freelance Writer

Temple ISD posted this picture on Twitter. It was the first group photo in over a decade. "Can't think of a better time and better group. Appreciate you transportating our citizens to warm shelters during the ice storm. Love this heroic group" - Superintendent Bobby Ott.

Transportation

Recruiting and retaining bus drivers is a perennial challenge for many school districts across the state, one that has certainly not been helped by an ongoing pandemic. Now, new federal training regulations are adding another challenge to the mix.

On February 7, 2022, new provisions in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 380, pertaining to the training of new entry-level commercial drivers will go into effect. Mandated by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, the new regulations establish a national training provider registry, administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), with the goal of ensuring that only qualified commercial drivers will be behind the wheel — including school buses.

"What the federal government is trying to do is establish a standard training format, which all organizations who either train or employ commercial vehicle drivers abide by," said Terry Penn, director of transportation for Rockwall ISD. "If you are a school district, and if you train your applicants to drive a school bus, then you're going to be required to follow these new rules."

Called Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT), the program sets the baseline requirements for training drivers who are obtaining a Class A or B commercial driver's license (CDL) for the first time, upgrading an existing Class B CDL, or receiving a school bus, passenger, or hazardous materials endorsement for the first time. Current CDL holders are not affected.

The new regulations actually relax certain requirements — for instance, there's now no set number of hours for

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the training; the training provider simply must show proof that the trainee was proficient in the curriculum. But that sets up a key question for school districts: to train or not to train. Any district that plans to train its drivers must register with the new Training Provider Registry.

Here's a breakdown of the ELDT process:

- The registered trainer enters new bus driver applicants into the registry as well and provides a set training curriculum.
- Once the applicant has completed the theory portion of the training and passed the trainer's test, the trainer will enter that information in the registry.
- When the applicant goes to their Texas Department of Public Safety office for the written CDL test, the DPS can then verify via the registry that the

person is eligible to take the exam.

- In passing that exam, the applicant receives their commercial learner's permit and can undergo the required hands-on behind-the-wheel (BTW) training.

- After the applicant completes that training successfully, they are considered a fully certified bus driver. The school district enters that certification in the registry, and the applicant can now take their skills test through the DPS for their license. [Link: Texas CDL Testing Sites: DPS and Third-Party Testing: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/Internetforms/getForm.ashx?id=DL-95.pdf>]

"The government wants to see that certificate [in the registry] that supports that the trainee has completed all of the mandated training steps and that they are ready to go take their CDL tests," Penn said, adding

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that the goal is to ultimately have all certified commercial drivers in the registry.

Setting up such a training program could be a concern for some districts, particularly small districts, where “transportation departments may not be staffed adequately to meet the theory portion of the ELDT,” said Kayne Smith, Ph.D., director of transportation at Cypress-Fairbanks ISD and past president of the Texas Association of Pupil Transportation (TAPT). “Larger districts, such as Cy-Fair ISD, have full-time school bus driver trainers who can facilitate the classroom instruction, where smaller districts may have to rely on the director or an identified responsible person who can provide this training.”

Smith added that budget impacts would most likely be personnel-related but that there could be costs associated with the driver training curriculum as well. A district that registers as a trainer must have the available resources to provide not only the theory curriculum based on the Section 380 requirements but also in-person behind-the-wheel (BTW) training, unless they use a third-party vendor. But Penn pointed out that relying on a third-party vendor such as a commercial driver training school could present a scheduling issue for districts depending on a vendor’s availability and proximity to the district.

Whether the ELDT program could affect recruitment and retention of bus drivers remains uncertain, although Smith said he believed the impact would be minimal. Penn sees the

program instead as an opportunity for districts to build a culture of professionalism around bus drivers, which in the long term could lead to stronger recruitment and retention.

“It’s that culture you build through how you support them, how you build them, how you teach them, and how you then carry through afterwards,” he said. “It’s a profession — because you have to be certified to do this, and it’s not an easy certification to obtain.”

To help districts get on top of the new regulations, TAPT is providing webinars and information from FMSCA to its members, said Smith. Districts can also visit the FMSCA website to learn more about the ELDT regulations or to register as a training provider: <https://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

TASBO is planning to cover the requirements at the TASBO School Operations Conference in Houston, November 4-5.

Stolen Catalytic Converter Cases Surge

David Wylie

TASB Risk Management Fund

If you’re looking to make a case for managing risk in your schools, math might just be your strongest ally. Consider the creative budgeting forced on Mobile, Alabama schools.

Earlier this year, a thief stole catalytic converters from 10 school buses. The going rate to replace them is about \$3,000 each. That’s an eye-popping \$30,000 in bus parts. And then there’s the cost of towing the vehicle, which can run hundreds of dollars for school buses.

Your schools can avoid unplanned expenses and operational hiccups that come with catalytic converter theft—without investing in high-dollar security equipment.

Catalytic converter basics

That muffler-looking part under a vehicle is the catalytic converter. Its job is to change harmful carbon monoxide and other engine exhaust into safer gases. Federal law has required catalytic converters on vehicles since 1981.

What’s in it for thieves?

Catalytic converters are made of precious metals called platinum, palladium, and rhodium. All three are harder to come by during the pandemic because of a mining labor shortage. Shrinking supply has driven

asking prices steadily higher.

In January 2020, an ounce of rhodium cost \$6,000. Today, the price tag is about \$25,000 per ounce.

So, what’s in it for thieves?

“Most likely, these people are selling them for \$100 or \$200 individually, but that’s a quick bit of money to get [sic] a couple minutes work,” Lufkin Police Detective J.B. Smith told KTRE News.

New bill targets buyers and sellers

House Bill 4110, which goes into effect September 1, 2021, requires metal recycling companies that buy catalytic converters to submit the seller’s name and thumbprints to the State.

Other required records include the year, make, model, and vehicle identification number (VIN) the catalytic converter was removed from.

HB 4110 bill also dials up the crime from Class A misdemeanor to felony.

Diagnosing the crime

Catalytic converter theft doesn’t take elaborate planning or precision timing. Criminals simply crawl under a vehicle, usually at night, and saw off the converter. The process takes minutes.

You don’t have to be a trained mechanic to know when a vehicle has

been relieved of its catalytic converter. Just look and listen for the red flags:

- Roaring or rumbling sound that gets louder when you press the gas pedal
- Spacious gap in the middle of the exhaust system
- Vehicle drives roughly or sputters
- Check engine light comes on

How to prevent catalytic converter theft

Fleets make attractive targets because criminals can make off with multiple catalytic converters from a single location.

Use these tips to protect your organization from catalytic converter theft.

Guard your vehicles

- Park in secure, alarmed, well-lit yards that have video surveillance.
- Set vehicle alarms to be triggered by vibration.
- Consider overnight security for additional protection.

Secure your catalytic converters

- Etch VINs into catalytic converters.
- Weld catalytic converters to vehicles.

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- Spray-paint catalytic converters with bright, high-temperature automotive exhaust paint. Thieves have to scrape the paint off before they can sell it.
- Explore catalytic converter anti-theft devices. For example, your transportation department could install protective cages around converters.

Pay special attention to large vehicles

The ground clearance on buses, passenger vans, trucks, and SUVs makes it easy for criminals to crawl underneath and do their work.

What if someone steals your catalytic converters?

Start by calling the police. Fund members with Auto coverage should also report the incident to us online, by email, or by phone at 800.482.7276, x6800.

Don't let anyone drive the vehicle until your transportation department performs a complete safety check. You can't be certain thieves didn't damage other components.

Key takeaways

Stolen catalytic converters compromise more than your budget. They sideline your vehicles and impact your ability to get staff and students from Point A to Point B safely.

HB 4110 is designed to make thefts less attractive. Your schools can help.

Simple measures like etching VINs into catalytic converters and welding them onto vehicles deter crime.

As always, your TASB risk solutions consultant is here to support you. Reach out for guidance on protecting your fleet from theft, vandalism, traffic accidents, and other incidents.

[This article was originally published July 19, 2021 in InsideRM.](#)



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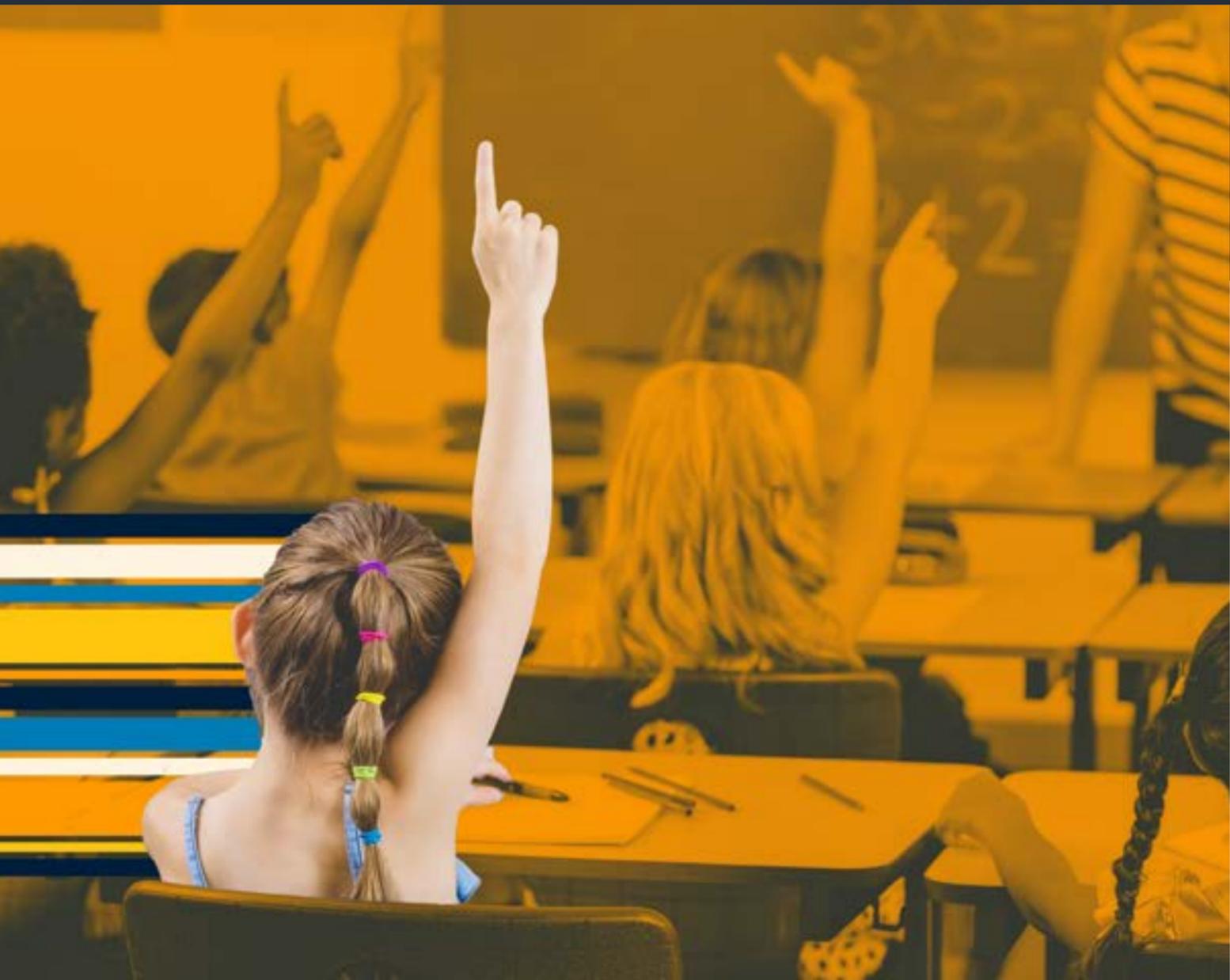
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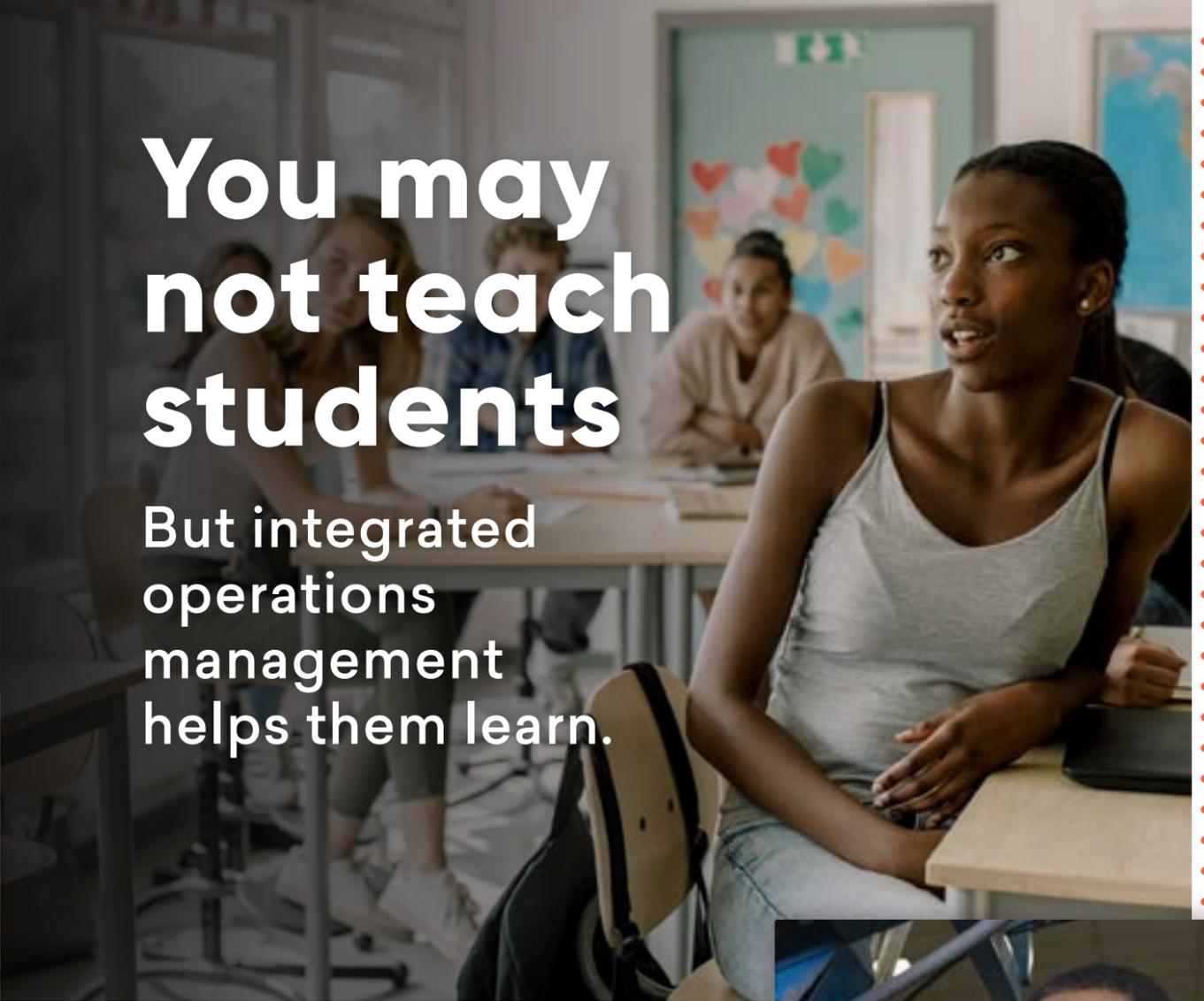
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- ExploreVictoriaTexas.com

Judy Marchman
Special Contributor

The Crossroads Area ASBO consists primarily of all Region 3 Education Service Center districts, giving it a rather unique makeup. Most districts in the region can be considered rural — with Victoria, at about 67,000 residents, being the largest city in the area. But, as the affiliate’s name signifies, the region benefits from being located in the middle of a triangle connecting three larger cities that are only about an hour or two away: Austin, Houston and Corpus Christi.

Affiliate Ins and Outs

The affiliate dates to May 1993, when it was established as a TASBO affiliate through its Articles of Incorporation. Current membership numbers at 25 and dues are \$30 per year, with new recruitment relying mainly on word of mouth from members to new district business employees. Region 3 also sends out listserv emails to all district business personnel about upcoming meetings and other affiliate news.

Meetings are normally held every two months between September and May. Each meeting offers members a presentation on current school district business topics — an important benefit, says Daniel Harper, chief financial officer at Edna ISD and president of Crossroads Area ASBO.

Regional Challenges (and Strengths)

Another key benefit is the peer networking those meetings afford. And like with most other affiliates, the coronavirus pandemic required

the Crossroads Area ASBO to make a major adjustment to how it has conducted meetings and other activities. “Starting toward the end of the summer, once we realized things were not going to be able to go back to normal, we came up with a plan with the Region 3 ESC to have our meetings via Zoom,” Harper says. “In response to this, we also made sure to review and modify our bylaws to make sure electronic meetings would be allowed.” The affiliate hosted its first Zoom meeting in October and plans to continue with virtual meetings into the near future.

Instituting remote learning due to the pandemic presented a major challenge at the beginning of the 2020–21 school year, but, says Harper, most districts have moved back to face-to-face learning or a hybrid setup, so that

“...we came up with a plan with the Region 3 ESC to have our meetings via Zoom,” Harper says. ‘In response to this, we also made sure to review and modify our bylaws to make sure electronic meetings would be allowed.’”

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has moved down the list somewhat at present. The next major challenge facing school districts in Region 3 and across the state, according to Harper, is the Texas legislative session. “With Texas sales tax and economy down due to closures and COVID-19, I am expecting cuts to the state budget, which would impact school funding,” he says.

Local Lowdown

When visiting the Crossroads area, Victoria is where you’ll find most touristy things to do, says Harper. “Victoria has several things to see, including but not limited to the 1892 county courthouse, the Texas Zoo and a couple of museums,” he adds. Among the museums you can visit are the Children’s Discovery Museum, Museum of the Coastal Bend and the Nave Museum.

Plus, the Gulf Coast and its beaches — and plenty of boating and fishing — are not that far away, as most districts in Region 3 are either right off the coast or within an hour or less of the coastline.



Most of Region 3 (Crossroads) is either off the coast or near the coast. Blessed with beautiful wildlife preserves, fishing, and beaches, this area includes Matagorda Bay and Port Lavaca.

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Patent Pending
Portable Snap Fit™ Board



DeAnne Page,

RTSBA



Executive Director of Finance
Castleberry ISD

In celebration of TASBO's 75th Anniversary, we organized a 75th Week celebration in early June, with videos, photos, and a TASBO Connect thread. We also hosted an essay contest seeking memorable experiences with TASBO. Members talked about their first conference, meeting new people, even taking a course during the 2021 Ice Storm.

Castleberry ISD's DeAnne Page won the contest with this anecdote about her first time as an instructor:

I remember the first class that I taught for TASBO summer conference. I remember thinking I will start with summer conference because it is smaller. I was so nervous because I was teaching with Karen Smith.

I remember walking into the room in

the morning and calling my husband and said, "I am just going to leave. This room is huge!"

We had a class over 100 people, but Karen walked in and made me feel so comfortable. I still get nervous (it gets easier) when I teach but I feel passionate about giving back to an organization that has given me so much.

I wouldn't have gone back to school to get my Bachelors, let alone my Masters, without an organization that made me feel so welcome as I started my second and last career.



YOUR DISTRICT'S TO-DO-LIST LIST FOR REOPENING IN THE FALL

1. Conduct campus disinfection
2. Perform deep cleaning
3. Ensure adequate support staffing
4. Find additional funding
5. Conduct preventative maintenance
6. Service grounds
7. Check and service air filtration systems
8. Conduct energy management assessment
9. Fill open support services positions
10. Develop long-term facilities plan
11. Implement sustainability program
12. Management employee retirement program
13. Develop quality assurance program
14. Understand stakeholder goals
15. Purchase new support equipment
16. Test emergency systems
17. Tag assets
18. Upload assets into CMMS
19. Implement new work order systems
20. Conduct facilities conditions assessment
21. Develop supporting KPIs
22. Source quality assurance technology
23. Implement QA/QC processes

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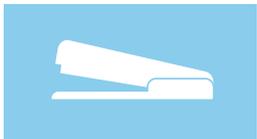
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- Ice Cream • Nutrition Software



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- Disaster Mitigation, Recovery, Consultants



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- First Aid • Furniture • Office • Textbooks and Library Books



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