



STARTING AN AREA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

PURPOSE

An Area Association of School Boards (AASB) is a structured organization of school boards within one or more of the boundaries of TASB Regions that meets two to four times a year to provide Board Member Training and to facilitate networking between Trustees and Administrators for the benefit of the students in the region.

AFFILIATION

An Area Association of School Boards is affiliated with and receives support and exposure from the Texas Association of School Boards. The TASB liaison for Area Associations is tasked with providing support to AASBs such as identifying programs for area association meetings (including spring workshops, if applicable), posting meetings to the TASB Events Calendar and/or assisting with meeting announcements.

BEGINNING

To begin an Area Association, there must be one or more local Trustees in an area who want to undertake the effort to bring together Trustees and Administrators within the region to organize an association, plan and hold meetings. Current and former members of the Leadership TASB program are potential leaders of this effort, and they can obtain support from, Area Association mentors, TASB Area Association liaison, and the TASB Field Service Representative assigned to the area. The initiating Trustee will need to make his/her desires to start an Area Association known to his/her fellow Trustees and Superintendent to ensure support and success before moving forward.

The initiating Trustee should contact either an Area Association mentor or the TASB Area Association liaison prior to calling an initial planning meeting to obtain information on how existing AASBs are structured (bylaws, officers, dues, meeting schedules) and the types of programs that have been successful.

An initial planning meeting can be held by itself or in conjunction with another meeting scheduled in the region that involves school board members. The initiating Trustee will need to make the planning meeting known to his/her fellow Trustees and Superintendent, and to Trustees and Superintendents in other school districts in the region by (1) a personal letter of invitation; or (2) a general letter sent to Superintendents with the request that it be distributed to their Trustees. The letter must specify the purpose and expectations of the meeting, where and when it will be held, and whether a meal will be provided (food always helps attendance).

The initiating Trustee may also want to request help from his/her Superintendent in obtaining a list of the e-mail addresses of all Superintendents in the region and their administrative professionals so that correspondence related to the AASB can be done by technology, thereby reducing costs and time for printing and mailing meeting notices. TASB's Area Association Liaison may also be of assistance with this task.

PLANNING MEETING

At the initial planning meeting, the initiating Trustee should have an agenda and if applicable provide handouts obtained from the TASB Area Association liaison or the TASB Field Service Representative assigned to the area to facilitate discussion. Decisions that will need to be made include:

- (1) Is there a willingness to meet two or more times during the school year to receive Board Member Training that will improve the individual Trustee's ability to work effectively on behalf of students, staff, and community.
- (2) If so, which three to five Trustees at the meeting are willing to organize the first meeting.
- (3) What will be on the program for that first meeting and who will arrange it.
- (4) Where and when will that first meeting be held.
- (5) Will a meal be provided and, if so, will it be underwritten by the hosting school district, by the districts of the three to five Trustees organizing the meeting, and/or by an education-related business (tax collection firm; architectural firm; school law firm, etc.).
- (6) Who will work with the TASB Area Association liaison to ensure that the offered program qualifies for Board Member Training credit and to determine how that credit will be made known and recorded.
- (7) Should the initial Board Member Training meeting also include an item related to organizing an Area Association or should that decision be delayed until after the initial meeting when the three to five organizing Trustees meet to evaluate the initial meeting.

If the initial Board Member Training meeting is to include Area Association organizational consideration, additional decisions at the planning meeting will need to be made regarding:

- (1) Dues (same for all or graduated based on district enrollment; whether education-related businesses will be eligible for membership and, if so, at what cost; where the funds will be deposited and how they will be disbursed for authorized expenditures).
- (2) Officers (at least a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer with an additional odd number of Directors to ensure effective representation of and participation by the school districts within the ESC; term of office and when and how elected);
- (3) Bylaws (can be modeled after by-laws of existing Area Associations or other non-profit)

INITIAL TRAINING MEETING

To ensure that the initial Board Member Training meeting does not get bogged down in organizational details, it would be wise to structure the agenda to open with an explanation that the meeting is being held to show how an Area Association of School Boards can provide training to improve the effectiveness of Trustees in serving the students and staff of their community. The training program should then be offered, followed by discussion of organizational matters. This will allow disinterested Trustees to leave and provide a gauge for the potential success of an Area Association through the number that stay and participate in the discussion and decision-making.

BENEFITS FROM TASB FOR AREA ASSOCIATIONS

- Meetings posted to the TASB Events Calendar
- Presentations by TASB staff**
- Continuing education credit numbers
- Assistance with emails to advertise meetings
- Assistance with workshop planning

- Links to and from your website and the TASB website, www.tasb.org
- Area Associations may choose to offer door prizes and/or an annual scholarship to encourage attendance.
- Each area association will need to be a registered provider for Continuing Education Credit (CEC). The TASB Area Association liaison will provide assistance to the area association to become a registered provider through the Texas Education Agency.

***Contact the TASB Area Association liaison to arrange for TASB sessions. It is a good idea to select two to three session topics to ensure a TASB Staff presenter is available. Only one TASB session will be presented free of charge.*

FOLLOW-UP

Regardless of decisions made at the initial Board Member Training meeting, the three to five organizing Trustees need to meet within a week after the meeting to

- (1) Evaluate the meeting.
- (2) Send a communication to Trustees and Superintendents commenting on the meeting held, any decisions made, and plans for the next meeting; and
- (3) Begin implementation of decisions made regarding dues, officers, and by-laws.

AREA ASSOCIATION MENTORS

These mentors are experienced association leaders who have volunteered to help guide those beginning their journey in starting an area association. Please reach out to one of the following contacts for preparation and guidance:

- Trish Bode: President of the Central Texas Area Association of School Boards, tbode02@hotmail.com
- Grayle James: Executive Secretary, Gulf Coast Area Association of School Boards, 281-799-2873, gcschoolboards@aol.com

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

TASB Area Association Liaison

Cristina McKee, Special Programs Coordinator, Meeting and Event Planning, TASB.
800-580-8772 (x2463); cristina.mckee@tasb.org

To identify which Field Services Representative is in your region, please contact the TASB Area Association Liaison.