

TASB Myth Buster: Facts About the Texas Association of School Boards

Don't fall for misinformation about TASB, which has proudly supported Texas school boards and the districts they serve for 75 years. Read below to get the straight scoop on falsehoods being circulated by would-be competitors and special interest groups.

Myth: "TASB monopolizes school district business."

This is false.

Throughout our history, TASB has stepped in and developed nonprofit programs and services for public schools when there's been a gap in solutions provided by others.

The goal of TASB's work has always been to lessen the burden of government and help school districts find cost-effective solutions to operate more efficiently and make best use of every local tax dollar, which ultimately benefits student outcomes.

Yet even with TASB's long track record of providing services of high quality and value to schools, the organization has always encouraged innovation, competition, and the absolute right of ISDs to assess their TASB membership and participation in any TASB programs.

Furthermore, TASB opens the door to many direct competitors to showcase their offerings at its jointly hosted annual TASA | TASB Convention, which draws thousands of public education leaders and decision-makers from across the state.

Of course, it's important for ISDs to be smart consumers when looking at products and services for their districts, especially when considering a provider that doesn't have an established track record or broad client base in Texas. See [Evaluating Competing Membership Organizations and Alternative Services](#) for helpful tips.

Myth: "TASB is anti-parent."

This is false.

TASB has always supported the role of parents as the primary and most important educators of children.

To be clear, TASB's position has always been that school board meetings should be places where parents and community members are welcomed and provided the opportunity to speak and openly share their opinions and concerns on how the schools in their communities are being governed. Quite simply, TASB views parents and community members as partners in the important work of educating all students.

Myth: “TASB supported — and continues to support — the views expressed in the 2021 NSBA letter to the Biden Administration.”

This is false.

TASB critics cite the amount of time it took for TASB to leave the National School Boards Association (NSBA) after its letter to the Biden administration that called for the assistance of federal law enforcement in the management of contentious school boards meetings as “evidence” that TASB supported the views expressed in the letter. But this claim is inaccurate.

Since our founding 75 years ago, TASB has always stood on the side of local control and governance. Furthermore, TASB was not involved or consulted in the development of the NSBA letter to the Biden administration.

The first time any member of the TASB Board of Directors or TASB staff saw the letter was after it was issued and made public in the fall of 2021. TASB’s decision to leave the NSBA in May 2022 followed a timeline that allowed for due process and an independent investigation. As soon as the investigation findings were issued, the TASB Board of Directors convened an emergency meeting to review the full report and conduct a vote on our association membership.

In voting to leave the NSBA in May 2022, the TASB Board cited operational deficiencies and lack of internal controls and processes that enabled the letter to be sent without the knowledge and support of NSBA’s state association members. Due process takes time and should not be distorted to mean that TASB is anti-parent. Rather TASB’s evidence-based approach to decision-making is what should be expected in a representative governance structure.

Myth: “TASB advocates against parents on LGBTQ+ issues.”

This is false.

In January 2023, TASB Legal Services updated its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Transgender Students to reflect a case out of the Federal Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. This FAQ resource was not a new document but one that had been online since 2015 and has been periodically updated as new law becomes available.

Contrary to criticism, this FAQ on Transgender Students fully aligns to current law and does not encourage school districts to obscure information from parents.

In fact, the FAQ does the following:

- It encourages districts to work closely with parents and students to find individualized, reasonable solutions that protect students’ safety, privacy, and wellbeing in the educational environment.
- It cites the Texas Attorney General’s guidance about parental rights twice in the document.
- It cites and repeats the law on reporting child abuse verbatim, clearly noting that “a person having reasonable cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person must immediately make a report,” as provided by Texas Family Code chapter 261.

- It fully aligns with Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules and the “Save Girls Sports Act.” TASB’s legal resource information at the relevant reference policy clearly says that a student must participate in an interscholastic athletic competition that is designated for the biological sex stated on the student’s birth certificate.
- And, when in doubt, it encourages district officials to seek legal advice.

In short, this FAQ was designed to help school attorneys and district policy administrators understand legal and compliance issues related to the complex and evolving area of law surrounding transgender students. This document doesn’t direct school districts to adopt any policies or take any position on this topic but is intended to help school districts minimize legal risk that could result in costly taxpayer-funded lawsuits.

Myth: “TASB advocates men be allowed in girls’ bathrooms.”

This is false.

Nowhere in any TASB materials, documents, or trainings does TASB advise school districts to allow men in girls’ bathrooms. As noted, TASB’s Legal FAQ on Transgender Students addresses how school officials can respond if a child and the child’s parents come to the school and ask about access to restroom facilities. The FAQ says school officials should first talk to the parents and try to make safe, private, and separate arrangements for the child.

Those who repeat this false claim are clearly trying to provoke a narrative that has no basis in reality. In its nearly 75-year history, TASB has been nothing but protective of public schoolchildren and public education. TASB remains committed to strongly countering distorted and false attacks on its image and reputation.

Myth: TASB colludes with teachers’ unions to work against school boards and students.

This is false.

TASB has no relationship with any union groups in Texas or beyond, so any assertions otherwise are attempts to misinform and distract.

Since our establishment in 1949, TASB has had one primary focus: to serve member school boards and provide tools and resources to strengthen local governance and advance educational outcomes for Texas students.

Additionally, any claims that TASB works against Texas’s right to work laws to protect educators are also untrue. TASB offers legal, policy, and HR Services to help give school boards the information and support they need to effectively navigate complex issues surrounding educator compensation and contracts. This work is done to strengthen local governance in this area so school boards can make the best staffing decisions for their local communities and the students they serve.

Myth: “TASB opposed legislation in 2017 to keep boys out of girls’ restrooms because it’s pushing a liberal agenda and doesn’t believe in protecting girls.”

This is false.

The bathroom bill referenced from 2017 (SB6) would have created an expensive unfunded mandate for school districts, which is why we opposed it. This legislation would have been especially difficult for smaller districts — the majority of districts in Texas — which would have needed to build new facilities to comply with the law. This would have led to increased costs for schools and more debt for taxpayers.

At the time, TASB helped develop language with House leaders that would have recognized the differences among school districts and still give them the tools to protect children and accommodate families, students, and staff according to their local values. Unfortunately, the updated language from the House was not accepted by the Senate, and the issue failed to move forward.

Myth: “TASB promotes a liberal political ideology through its policies.”

This is false.

TASB is nonpartisan and does not support, oppose, or coordinate with candidates in public elections and does not support, oppose, or coordinate with any political party.

TASB’s legal resource polices are a compilation of federal and state laws — TASB doesn’t make the law; legislative bodies and courts do. The approach taken by TASB’s Legal Services and Policy Service areas is a legally conservative one so that school districts can minimize the risk of costly lawsuits. A conservative approach means TASB does not encourage operating on the margins or the edges of the law. TASB policy consultants help districts develop local policies for adoption that are closely aligned to recent court decisions and regulatory updates. Of course, the sample language recommended by TASB in its local policy releases is always optional for districts to use. In fact, many districts use the sample policies as a starting point to develop their own customized policies that best meet the needs of their school communities.

Myth: “TASB lobbies against the interest of parents and taxpayers to lobby for its own agenda, not what local boards or communities want.”

This is false.

TASB advocates at the Capitol based on its Advocacy Agenda, which is developed through a grassroots process by member school boards from across the state and encourages participation every step of the way.

In every even-numbered year, this Advocacy Agenda is comprehensively reviewed, and Priorities and Resolutions are developed anew. All changes to the Advocacy Agenda, including proposed new Priorities and Resolutions, are considered and debated by the TASB Delegate Assembly, where member delegates in attendance have the opportunity to vote on the Advocacy Agenda. During odd-numbered years, the

Delegate Assembly can make changes to the Advocacy Agenda. Every member district school board of TASB has the right to send a voting delegate and alternate to the Delegate Assembly to ensure their school board is represented in this important event.

This profoundly member-governed process has been in place for nearly 75 years and reflects TASB's longstanding commitment and mission to serve its member school boards by providing a way for them to amplify their voice at the state Capitol.

Those who claim otherwise are trying to silence the voices of taxpayers heard through elected school board trustees, who are deeply involved in their communities and accountable to the voters in their districts.

Myth: "TASB pushes a 'woke' agenda."

This is false.

TASB is a non-partisan, membership association that is governed and led by trustees who are elected to serve on the TASB Board either by their regional peers or by their local board. With 40+ TASB Directors sitting on the TASB Board, every region of Texas is represented.

This governance structure provides accountability, accessibility, and financial oversight — ensuring alignment with member needs and priorities. Each fall, every school board has a voice in the overall direction and legislative agenda of TASB when participating in the annual Delegate Assembly, where members elect officers and directors, adopt the TASB Advocacy Agenda, and vote on Association governance structure, such as amending the bylaws. TASB's mission is simple: educational excellence for all Texas public school children.

Those who claim otherwise have their own agenda — namely weakening public education to push privatization schemes and their own political ambitions.

Myth: "TASB teaches that school board members are not accountable to their community's voters."

This is false.

TASB respects and appreciates that school board members are accountable to their school community — parents, community members, taxpayers, and voters.

Once elected, a school board trustee serves on a body corporate, and the board's "constituency" is the district itself, not a unique zip code or community within a district's boundaries or a specific block of voters.

In other words, trustees are called upon to serve the needs of the district and its schoolchildren, as a whole — even in a single-member district. To emphasize the legal requirement of working as a “body corporate,” three hours every year of team building, or team-of-eight training, is set forth among the continuing education requirements for trustees by the Texas Education Code, the Texas Administrative Code, and the Texas Government Code.