



Spring 2025

TAFE Newsletter

Texas Association of Future Educators

Monica Oliver, TAFE State Program Director

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From Our President:

JOSHUA PONCE, COLLEGIATE HS, CORPUS CHRISTI

Hey Future Educators!

My name is Josiah Ponce and I am incredibly honored to serve as your 2025-2026 TAFE State President! I am a Junior at Collegiate High School in Corpus Christi, Texas. I am passionate about education, leadership, and making a lasting impact on future educators across our great state.

Since my freshman year, TAFE has been more than just an organization to me, it's been a family. I started as a Chapter President, moved up to Vice President of Area 1, and now, I'm excited and proud to serve as your State President.

Staying Informed: The Future of Education

In my segment of the quarterly newsletter, I want to keep our TAFE members informed about what's happening in education today along with TAFE related news. Education is one of the most powerful tools we have—one that shapes us as students, future educators, and lifelong learners. But with that power comes challenges, and it's important that we face them head-on with courage and adaptability.

This year, major conversations in education will include:

- AI in the Classroom – How can we use AI as a tool without relying on it to do our work?
- Social Media's Influence on Learning – Can we turn distractions into advantages?
- Standardized Testing – How do these shape our education system?
- Mental Health in Schools – How can we better support students and educators?
- Facing Challenges - What can we do about the political and social changes we see in education?

These topics will shape education in 2025 and beyond. But beyond these larger discussions, each of us has our own personal challenges in school—balancing academics, extracurriculars, friendships, and responsibilities.

This Year's Theme

This year, I challenge you to think about our 2025-2026 theme: "Blooming in the Garden of Education." What does it mean to bloom into the best version of yourself? How can you grow academically, socially, and personally?

For many students, blooming means:

- Improving study habits – Finding what works for you, whether it's study playlists, better sleep, or time management.
- Managing stress effectively – Learning when to take breaks and how to stay motivated.
- Getting involved – Engaging in extracurriculars, leadership roles, and volunteer work.
- Using technology wisely – Turning social media into a tool for learning, networking, and inspiration.

Everyone's journey is different and your version of success won't look like anyone else's—and that's okay! The key is experimenting, adapting, and continuing to grow. If you ever need guidance, have a question or idea, or just want to chat, you can always reach out to me at joshia.ponce123@gmail.com or find me on Instagram @joshiahp_101.

Let's make this an incredible year, future educators!

Talk soon,

~ Josiah Ponce, TAFE State President

www.tafeonline.org

College Connections:

JASMON SAMPY - ALIEF TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL, HOUSTON
TAFE VICE-PRESIDENT



Hi!! My name is Jasmon Sampy, and I absolutely love being involved in my school and community. I currently serve as Chapter President, Area 4, 2nd Vice President, and, of course, State Vice President. When I'm not busy leading and learning, you can find me playing trumpet and baritone in my school's band or baking sweets in my free time. Education is my passion, and I am so excited to represent Texas this year!

This section of the newsletter is all about helping YOU take the next step toward your future! Whether it's college recruiters, scholarship opportunities, or must-know application tips, I'll be sharing valuable resources to help you stay informed and prepared. If there's something specific you'd like to see, feel free to reach out—I'd love to help! You can contact me at jasmon.sampy4053@gmail.com!



KUDOS

PEYTON STEWART - KINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, HOUSTON
TAFE SECRETARY

In the TAFE newsletter, I'll be featuring two sections. TRAFLES CONNECTIONS will spotlight different chapters, giving them a platform to share their TRAFLES projects and activities. KUDOS is all about showing appreciation to the incredible people who support this organization. Stay tuned for both!

TAFE 2025-2026 STATE THEME:

*"Blooming in the Garden
of Education"*



TAFE BOARD
MONDAY FEBRUARY 17TH 2025

MAKE today GREAT

2025-2026 STATE OFFICER TEAM!

President: Josiah Ponce
Collegiate HS, Corpus Christi

Vice President: Jasmon Sampy
Alief Taylor HS, Houston

Secretary: Peyton Stewart
Kingwood HS, Houston

Historian: April Fernandez
Silverton HS, Silverton

College Connections:

Future Educators Shine:

Tarleton TAFE Heads to National Competition



Four students from Tarleton State University's Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) chapter are headed to Orlando, Florida, this June after qualifying for the Educators Rising national conference. Their outstanding performance at the Teach Tomorrow Summit state conference in Galveston this February earned them a spot at the national level — and the pride of their campus community.

Representing Tarleton State at the national competition are Abby Graham, Journey Harris, Madison Klement, and Mariann Pustejovsky. The students will compete in a range of events, including Educators Rising Moment (Graham); Impromptu Speaking, Interactive Bulletin Board — Elementary, and Public Speaking (Harris); Public Speaking (Klement); and Creative Lecture (Pustejovsky).

In addition to these individual achievements, the Tarleton State TAFE chapter brought home the Outstanding Chapter award, a testament to its rapid growth and campus impact since its formation in fall 2023. The chapter even hosted last year's area competition and continues to set the bar high for future educator organizations across the state.

TAFE: More Than Just a Competition

"The national conference is more than just a competition — it's a celebration of passion, dedication and the future of education," said Journey Harris, Tarleton State TAFE president. As the national TAFE president, she is thrilled to return to nationals alongside her chapter, noting how the experience continues to fuel her growth and leadership as an aspiring educator.

Madison Klement, a Tarleton senior and teacher resident, echoed that enthusiasm. "I'm excited for nationals because as a teacher resident, I truly believe what my speech is about. It's especially exciting since it is my last year to compete," she said. "I hope to continue positively representing Tarleton State's education program as an alumna."

Dr. Lesley Leach, Dean of the College of Education, praised the students' success: "This achievement reflects the students' passion for education and commitment to excellence — two essential qualities of outstanding teachers. We wish our students the best of luck at nationals!"

Dr. Katherine Jones, College of Education Assistant Professor and TAFE competitive adviser, emphasized the significance of this year's competition. "This year's Teach Tomorrow Summit state conference was the largest in TAFE history, with more than 3,700 Texas high school and collegiate competitors. Our recruitment table attracted over 400 students, allowing us to showcase the value of a Tarleton State education."



Why Choose Tarleton for Your Future in Education?

For students passionate about becoming educators, Tarleton State University provides an ideal environment to grow, learn, and lead. With a strong College of Education, hands-on learning experiences, and a dedicated TAFE chapter on every campus, Tarleton equips future teachers with the skills, knowledge, and support needed for success. Whether you're looking to make an impact in the classroom, develop leadership skills, or compete at the highest levels in educational organizations like TAFE, Tarleton offers the perfect foundation for your journey.

Stay Connected and Keep Growing with Tarleton TAFE!

Are you seeking a community of fellow educators as you begin your college journey? Look no further than Tarleton State University! With an active TAFE chapter on each of its four campuses, Tarleton offers a supportive network of faculty, staff, and peers who are passionate about shaping the future of education — and becoming lifelong friends in the process.

Here's what current Tarleton TAFE members are saying about their experience:

"Being a Tarleton TAFE member means I get to share the positives, not only about the education program, but also about education in general, to aspiring educators. It meant I got to dive deeper into the field that I've wanted to go into since I first started kindergarten." -Madison Klement, Senior

"Being a Tarleton TAFE member has helped me get out of my shell. I met new people and got to experience many different opportunities. With the support of my TAFE peers and advisors, I ended up going to State! TAFE really means a great symbol of hope to me as it has let me achieve many things that I never thought I would accomplish!"

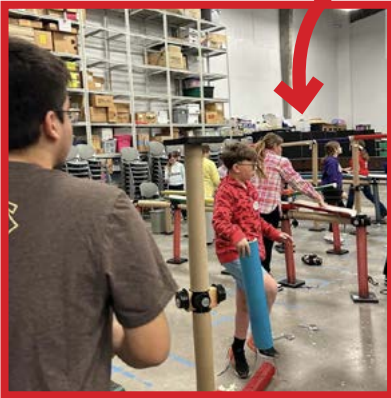
"Being a Tarleton TAFE member means that I am gaining invaluable experience for my future career and equipping myself with as many tools as possible to build a classroom founded in constant positive learning for the doers of tomorrow." - Anna Rasberry, Freshman

About Tarleton State

A founding member of The Texas A&M University System, Tarleton State University is breaking records in enrollment, research, scholarship, and student success while transforming the lives of approximately 18,000 students in Stephenville, Fort Worth, Waco, Bryan and online. For over 125 years, Tarleton has provided accessible, high-impact education that prepares students for meaningful careers and leadership in Texas and beyond. <https://www.tarleton.edu/coe/>



TRAFLES CONNECTIONS

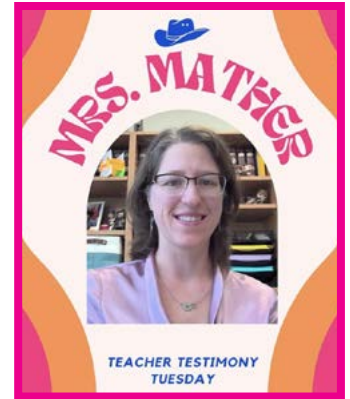


Cleburne TAFE

Thank you for volunteering at ESC Region 11's Annual STEAM Carnival! You go above and beyond in demonstrating education—one of the key TRAFLES—by leading stations ranging from coding challenges to creative art activities. Your dedication to our amazing club does not go unnoticed!

Timber Creek TAFE

This chapter takes appreciation to the next level with weekly shoutouts to their incredible teachers. Your gratitude is truly valued, and we love seeing you embody TAFE's core values and promote the teachers that are inspiring us to join the teaching profession. Keep up the great work!

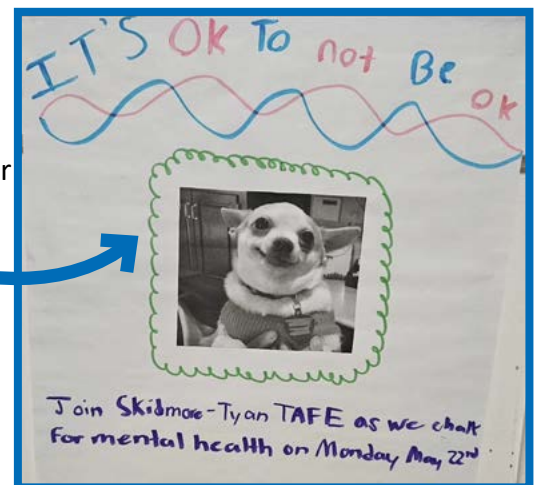


Texas State Collegiate TAFE

When it comes to knowing TRAFLES, y'all have it down pat! Your experience shines, especially through your fundraising efforts. We saw your Valentine's fundraiser, and the love you spread is at the heart of TAFE's mission. Y'all are amazing—we can't wait to see what you have planned next at TXST!

Skidmore-Tynan High School TAFE

Your dedication to TRAFLES through educational awareness on mental health is both needed and deeply appreciated! The chalk designs are a creative and impactful way to spread awareness while strengthening our TAFE community. Love the hard work!



KUDOS!

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Moody Gardens Resort in Galveston for hosting this year's TAFE State Conference. The beautiful venue, the cute animals, excellent accommodations, and outstanding competition facilities made this Teach Tomorrow Summit truly unforgettable.

A huge thank you to our dedicated volunteer judges, timekeepers, and door monitors, whose hard work ensured the smooth execution of our competitive events. We also especially appreciate Austin Ince, Monica Oliver, along with all Area Coordinators for their essential role in organizing and coordinating this incredible event. Even more thanks to our keynote speaker for sharing invaluable lessons, and some fire dance moves on stage that enriched both our academic and personal growth as well as making us laugh a little. Kudos to the previous State Officers who made this 2025 State conference one of the best; I hope we are able to fill y'all's shoes!

Additionally, we want to recognize the many kind faces who made this conference even more special—especially the Rusk Chapter, whose positivity radiated throughout the halls of Moody Gardens.

Finally, our deepest gratitude goes to the Audio-Visual team and, most importantly, to every TAFE member who contributed to making this event the best one yet!





PICTURE THIS: Virtual TAFE Scrapbook

**APRIL FERNANDEZ – SILVERTON HIGH SCHOOL
TAFE HISTORIAN**

Hi everyone! My name is April Fernandez. I'm a Junior at Silverton High School. I'm very honored to be your 2025-26 Historian. Last year, I was Area 8 Second Vice President. I have been in TAFE my entire high school career and am very grateful for it. When I get older, I aspire to be a children's trauma counselor. I can't wait to see you all at the National Conference in Orlando, Florida!

This year, I will have a section in the newsletter called "Picture This." In this section, I will highlight TAFE events from around the state. Please send all pictures to my email: fernandezapril153@gmail.com.





From the Director

Monica Oliver | monica@tassp.org or 512-443-2100 ext 8512



GOOD NEWS!!!

THANK YOU for the time, effort, and patience you provide your students with. The opportunities you provide them are giving them skills to be successful in life. We had 3700+ students and teachers attend the 41st Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit. We are in a constant state of growth from year to year.

As we close out this school year, we are ending the year with 360 chapters. We cannot continue to be successful without the support you provide your students and school communities as Teacher Leaders. THANK YOU!

If you have any questions, need help or have suggestions for the future, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

END OF THE YEAR AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

It is that time of the year for you to provide recognition to your students for their hard work. Don't forget to order your patches, pins, and honor cords so that you have them in time for your awards ceremonies. To ensure your items arrive in time for May Graduations, orders must be placed by April 30th. TAFE policy is we only take checks or credit cards for store orders. We do not ship items out until we receive payment. For more information visit TAFE Store.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

I am looking forward to attending the Educators Rising National Conference, June 26-29 in Orlando, Florida. This year we have 41 national delegates who will represent our voice at the national level.

We can't wait to see how their voice impacts the national level.

Josiah Ponce	Collegiate HS	Laura Calva	San Benito HS #1	Emily Spinner	Georgetown HS
Jasmon Sampy	Alief Taylor HS	Jaxon Tomlinson	Cleburne HS	Kaylee Collett	Wylie HS
Peyton Stewart	Kingwood HS	Teagan Fletcher	Andrews HS	Ethan Barriga	Abilene HS
April Fernandez	Silverton HS	Tatum Holley	Andrews HS	Brooke Despain	Wylie HS
Izabella Crossett	Kingwood HS	Reese Bryant	Sachse HS	Danielle Y'Barbo	Wylie HS
Aubrey Fisher	Cleburne HS	Gabrielle Roberts	Wylie HS	Emily Doty	Cleburne HS
Jacqueline Roe	Lockhart HS	Mariana Serrano	Coleman HS	Torri Whitehead	Cleburne HS
Amelya Armstrong	Georgetown HS	Aaliyah Martinez	Coleman HS	Mary Holland	Cleburne HS
Sienna Carter	Medina HS	Paige Mc Shan	Porter HS	Analucia Arguello	Andrews HS
Lila Linger	San Marcos HS	Christina Iturralde	Dayton HS	Georgia Recio	San Marcos HS
Iris Martinez	Cleburne HS	Trinity Campbell	P.L. Dunbar HS	Hector Vasquez	Bryan HS
Hailey Gray	Rusk HS	Jaide Crawford	Rosie Sorrells School	Zanaya Peterson	Bryan HS
Jerry Yang	John H. Guyer HS	of Education of Social Services		Ahva Sherman	Mary Carroll HS
Sergio Naranjo	San Benito HS #1	Paisley Russell	Porter HS	Natalya Perez	Mary Carroll HS

State was tough, but at nationals, your students are competing with the best students from all over the United States. I wish the best of luck to all the competitors. **We will again be wearing the conference wear below during the opening general session on June 26th.**

T-Shirt Front



T-Shirt Back



Flag Design



Custom Pin Design

Submitted by Nathalie Petit
from Coppell HS, Teacher
Leader Raneta Ansley



T-Shirts: \$15

Flags: \$6

Pins \$3 for 1 or 4 for \$10

**National Combo: \$20
(1 T-Shirt, Flag and Pin)**

Use this [ORDER FORM](#) all orders must be placed by April 25. We will begin shipping orders the week of May 19

TEACHER LEADER WORKSHOP

The TAFE Teacher Leader's Workshop will be **July 14-15, 2025**. It will be in conjunction with the FCSTAT Conference. We will be utilizing their two pre-conference days. For more information, please visit [Teacher Leader's Workshop](#).

News From EDUCATORS RISING

Exciting Activities Await at the 2025 Educators Rising Conference

The 2025 Educators Rising Conference isn't just about competitions and breakout sessions—it's a one-of-a-kind experience packed with opportunities to learn, network, and have fun! [Explore all of the activities students can engage in at the conference.](#)



Expand Your Future – Take an ETS test (more details coming soon) and explore top colleges and universities at our College & Innovation Fair.



Show Off Your Talent – Don't miss the fan-favorite Lip Sync Battle and Karaoke, where students bring the energy and excitement!

- Sign up for the [Lip Sync Battle](#) using an online form.
- Sign up for [Karaoke](#) using an online form.



Experience Orlando Like Never Before – We've worked with Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and Visit Orlando to offer exclusive discounts to attendees. Enjoy the magic and thrills after a full day of conference activities!

Get ready for an unforgettable experience!

Kappan Guided Discussion Questions Available

Each quarter, PDK International publishes a set of guided discussion questions for specific articles within that quarter's Kappan issue. These can be found under the ["Activities Calendar with Monthly Resources"](#) on your Teacher Leader Resources tab within the membership portal. This quarter's issue is centered on understanding today's students. Discuss this important topic with your chapter.

As an Educators Rising member, you have access to three free articles from Kappan magazine each month. [Join PDK today](#) to access more than three articles each month.

New Policies for Teacher Leader Facebook Group

We have outlined new community guidelines to ensure our Teacher Leader Facebook Group remains a helpful and supportive resource. Please review them before posting. Educators Rising reserves the right to remove members who repeatedly violate these guidelines. You can read the [full guidelines on the Facebook group](#) if you are a member.

Thank you for being part of the Educators Rising community! Your engagement makes a difference, and we appreciate your partnership in fostering a positive, supportive, and productive space.

If you are not a member of the Teacher Leader Facebook Group yet, [join today on Facebook](#).

Listen to the Newest "There's Power in Teaching" Podcast

In the 13th episode of PDK International's podcast, PDK speaks with two Educators Rising National Ambassadors about their lives since they left high school. Kaylea Patterson is a second-year student at the University of Delaware and Calvin Plante is a first-year student at American University (Washington, D.C.). Prior to starting college, both students were involved in Educators Rising.

[Listen to this and other episodes of the podcast](#)

Educators Needed to Assist Bilingual Students in California

The California English Learner Roadmap serves as benefit for multilingual learners and the educators who serve them. To sustain and expand this work, one of PDK International's partner organizations, Teach+ is looking for PK-12 educators across the state for the Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Network (EBCAN) Cohort 5.

If you or anyone you know is in California and would like to join this cohort, applications are open through April 21.

[Learn more about the program on the Teach+ website.](#)

Mark Your Calendar!

2025-2026 TAFE CHAPTER AFFILIATION

Opens July 1, 2025: TAFE State Chapter dues \$95.00 • Educators Rising Student Dues \$15.00

• EDUCATOR'S RISING NATIONAL CONFERENCE

June 26-29, 2025, Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando FL

• TEACHER LEADER WORKSHOP - July 14-15, 2025 Renaissance Dallas Addison Hotel

Registration \$200.00 Registration information online, [Teacher Leader's Workshop](#) (tafeonline.org)

• FCSTAT ANNUAL CONFERENCE - July 14-18, 2025 (Monday - Friday) Renaissance Dallas Addiston, TX

Registration on the FCSTAT website [Click Here](#)

• AREA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION - October 1-15, 2025

Area 1 – Dec. 6 @ Texas A&M Kingsville
Area 3 – Dec. 2 @ Mary Hardin Baylor
Area 5 – Nov. 3 @ Sam Houston
Area 7 – TBD
Area 9 – Dec. 6 @ Bowie High School
Area 11 – TBD

Area 2 – TBD
Area 4 – Nov. 14 @ Lone Star College-University Park
Area 6 – Nov. 14 @ Stephen F. Austin
Area 8 – Nov. 8 @ South Plains College
Area 10 – Nov. 15 @ Tarleton State University Ft. Worth

• DEADLINE FOR STATE & NATIONAL AFFILIATION TO COMPETE AT AREA CONFERENCES - November 1, 2024

Chapters must pay their \$95.00 state affiliation and \$15.00 individual dues for all TAFE Members prior to competing at Area Conferences.

• DEADLINE TO PAY NATIONAL AFFILIATION DUES - December 1, 2025- \$15.00 per student.

• APPLICATION FOR STATE OFFICER BOARD OF DIRECTORS DUE - Uploaded by January 12, 2026

• DEADLINE FOR EARLY REGISTERING FOR TAFE TEACH TOMORROW SUMMIT - January 23, 2026

• DEADLINE TO UPLOAD PRESCORED MATERIALS LINKS FOR COMPETITIVE EVENTS - January 30, 2026, 5:00 PM {CST}

• CAPITOL LEADERSHIP IN AUSTIN, TX - Late January/Early February 2026

• TAFE TEACH TOMORROW SUMMIT - February 26-28, 2026, Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX



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