

Summer 2025

TAFE Newsletter

Texas Association of Future Educators

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From Our President:

JOSHUA PONCE, COLLEGIATE HS, CORPUS CHRISTI

Hi Future Educators!

I hope you all had an absolutely amazing summer! Mine was both busy and enjoyable — I had the privilege of bonding with so many members, teacher leaders, and volunteers who help support TAFE. On top of that, the officer team spent much of the summer traveling together, which brought us even closer as a team.

As we return to our schools this year, the atmosphere feels a little different. HB 1481 (bill to ban phone usage in classrooms) has been introduced and implemented for the 2025–2026 school year. As future educators, it's crucial that we stay aware of laws affecting us now as students and consider how they may shape the future of education. Instead of focusing on the negatives, I encourage you to look at the positives. This change reminds us of the importance of unplugging, connecting face-to-face, and finding creative ways to adapt without relying solely on technology. Educators must always be adaptable to the law — and this is a chance for us to practice that skill early.

This summer, the state officer team attended several exciting events, beginning with the Board of Directors meeting in mid-June. Just days later, TAFE participated in the TASSP Summer Workshop and I was able to address all attendees. Soon after, we met again at the Educators Rising National Conference — where 1 in every 3 students in attendance was from Texas! Over 1,000 members proudly represented our state, competing and placing in numerous events. We couldn't be prouder of each of you!

We also hosted the Teacher Leader Workshop in Addison, Texas. It was wonderful to connect with both new and returning teacher leaders, answer their questions, and participate in engaging breakout sessions with special guests like our former National President, Journey Harris.

As you head back into the classroom, reconnect with friends, meet your new teachers, and get excited for the year ahead, don't forget to show your TAFE chapter some love — and recruit! Tell your friends about TAFE, host a social event (like "Learn About TAFE with Taffy"), or even start a middle school chapter! You can also participate in the brand-new Blooming Challenge. This year, each state officer has chosen a unique "Palm Pal" to represent their take on the theme "Blooming." You can see them all on the @tafestate Instagram, or your chapter can use your own unique palm pal. Be sure to tag us when you participate for a chance to be recognized and win awards at the area or state level.

Summer may be ending, but the excitement is just beginning. As you plan your year and attend your area conferences, remember to prepare, stay engaged, and — as always — do your best. We can't wait to see you there!

If you need anything or have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to me on Instagram @josiahp_101 or email me at josiah.ponce123@gmail.com, bye for now future educators!

Proudly,

~ Josiah Ponce, TAFE State President

www.tafeonline.org

College Connections:

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



I hope everyone had a fabulous summer, mine was truly unforgettable! I kicked things off in Dallas for the June Board Meeting with my fellow state officers, then headed to one of my favorite events of the summer! The Educators Rising National Conference in Orlando. I met so many amazing people, traded tons of pins, explored Universal Studios, and even placed 2nd in Project Visualize Service! I wrapped up my summer with multiple band camps, one with my school and another at the National Battle of the Band Camp, where I learned so much and made unforgettable memories.

- Now that it's back-to-school season, it's time to get ahead on scholarship opportunities!
- Keep a planner handy with all your important dates, and pace yourself so you don't get overwhelmed.
- Seniors, this is our year! Start taking college tours, researching admission requirements, and gathering your letters of recommendation now. Let's make it happen, Class of 2026! We've got this!



KUDOS

PEYTON STEWART - KINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, HOUSTON
TAFE SECRETARY

This summer has been full of growth, celebration, and exciting transitions for TAFE!

Our officers kicked off the season with Officer Training Camp, where they built leadership skills, strengthened teamwork, and prepared for an incredible year ahead. Educators from across the state joined us for the Teacher Leader Workshop, sharing ideas and inspiration to better serve their students and chapters.

A huge congratulations goes to our TAFE National Winners, who showcased their talent, dedication, and passion for education on the national stage — you make Texas proud!

We also mark an important moment in TAFE history: Archie E. McAfee, who has served with dedication and vision, is retiring as TASSP/TAFE Executive Director. We are deeply grateful for his years of leadership. Stepping into the role is Dr. Billy Pringle, whose passion for empowering student leaders and teachers alike promises an exciting new chapter for our organization.

Here's to the summer that was, and to the amazing year ahead!



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- ✓ Purpose - Driven Learning – Encouragement through a biblical worldview

Your Journey to the Classroom



Step 1: Apply for Free

Submit your application in just
minutes — no cost.



Step 2: Acquire Knowledge

Complete weekly assignments,
engage with instructors, and grow
your skills.



Step 3: Start Teaching

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don't have to start over!**

Affordable Tuition Designed for You

Tuition Plan	Monthly Tuition	Total Investment
Standard Tuition	\$222/mo	\$10,656 (48 months)
Scholarship Tuition	\$111/mo	\$5,328 (48 months)

- Books and materials included
- No application fees
- Qualification for Scholarship: Household Income Less Than \$ 45,000 USD.

Fast Answers

Start Dates: 5 terms per year

(Summer, Fall 1, Fall 2, Spring 1, Spring 2)

Assignments: Weekly deadlines — no self-paced drifting

Transfer Credits: Up to 60 accepted

Books: Always included in tuition

Certification Track: Eligible for Arizona Certification

READY TO START?
LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN.



APPLY TODAY

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TRAFLES CONNECTIONS



TAFE CLARK

We love yall's dedication to educational awareness with the beautifully flowered board for Prep Day! Not only are yall introducing students to TAFE, but you're helping create future servant leaders. Just like a butterfly effect, yall's efforts will inspire so much more than yall know!



NEEDVILLE TAFE

Y'all's officer meeting to prepare for Prep Day was a genius idea! Whether or not the pizza was an intentional pun, it was a sweet activity that truly showcased the value of recreation. Great job embodying the heart of TAFE with creativity and fun!



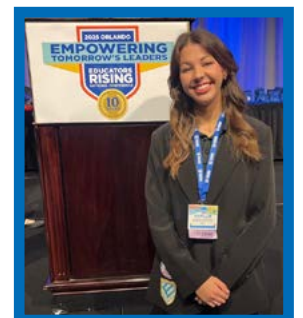
SACHSE HIGH SCHOOL

Thanks to Reese Bryant and Audrey Moore's presentation at the Teacher Leader Conference, we gained access to so many valuable materials for organizing and leading a successful TAFE chapter. Their leadership and insight were shining examples of excellence in action!



BIRDVILLE ISD

Y'all's appreciation posts during Nationals didn't go unnoticed! You're setting a high bar for what it means to be servant leaders. Thank y'all for spotlighting the amazing work of future educators who are already going above and beyond





PICTURE THIS: *Virtual TAFE Scrapbook*

APRIL FERNANDEZ – SILVERTON HIGH SCHOOL
TAFE HISTORIAN



TAFE state officers set off to Nationals.



Set up for teacher leader workshop is complete.



TAFE state officers set up to exhibit at the FCSTAT conference.



TAFE state officers and state ambassador in Florida, getting ready to go to a state officers workshop.

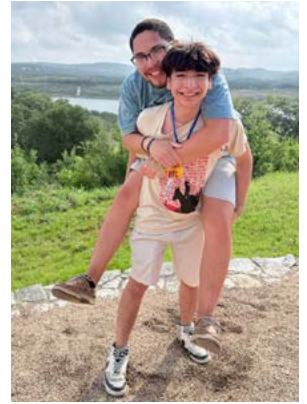


TAFE represents Texas at the delegate meeting in Orlando, Florida.





▲ TAFE shows out at Nationals in Orlando, Florida.

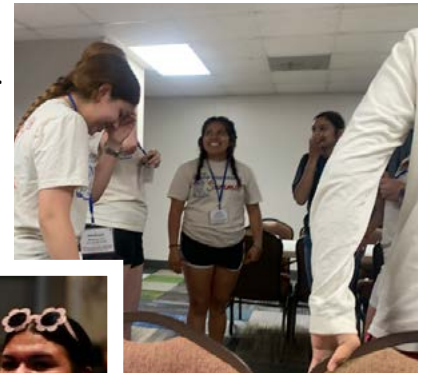


▲ Collegiate TAFE member, Noah Garcia gets a piggy back ride from Zane Lozono from area 3.



◀ Area 11 officers painted their hands to show off the pride they feel for their area.

◀ Zane Lozono from area 3 gets strapped in to ride the zip-line during officer training camp.



▲ Area 8 played a "get to know you" game at officer training camp.



▲ Georgetown High School decorates bulletin boards for the new school year.



▲ State officer April Fernandez finds TAFE members to take pictures with.

▼ Big turn out at officer training camp.





From the Director

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



SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHER LEADERS AND MENTORS

If you're a new chapter leader and would like guidance as you get started, feel free to reach out to me at monica@tassp.org. I'll connect you with an experienced mentor in your area who can offer support and help you navigate your new role.

TEXAS SHINES AT EDUCATORS RISING NATIONAL CONFERENCE

We're thrilled to share that Texas had the largest delegation at the Educators Rising National Conference—representing one-third of all attendees, with an incredible 1,123 participants! Our state received well-deserved national recognition thanks to the outstanding performance of our competitors. A special shoutout to Journey Harris, who led an inspiring and impactful conference for future educators across the country. We couldn't be prouder!

Overall Texas won big with:

- Top 10 - 213
- Blue Ribbons - 23
- Top 3 - 89
- Red Ribbons - 49
- Clean Sweeps - 8
- White Ribbons - 38



Summer flew by! It's hard to believe, but area conferences are just around the corner. We're gearing up for another exciting season of collaboration and growth. The state officer team are putting out the #Blooming Challenge "Dig Deep, Spread Kindness, and Blossom as a Leader" There are several ways to kick this challenge off:



- Recognize a student of the month who shows leadership or growth at your chapter meetings.
- Spotlight a teacher of the month with a note, treat, or small gift to show appreciation.
- Create a "Bloom Board" to highlight honorees or spread kindness with flower-themed notes.
- Do what fits your members best and let your garden grow!

2025-2026 Updates

Educators Rising Competition Updates:

- **New Rubrics & prompts will be released at the end of August.**
- **2 New Competitions:**
 - o *Lesson Planning and Delivery-Professional Development* - this event will be our State version of the event. It has yet to be decided if it will be an individual or team event.
 - o *A Child Development Associate* - competition that allows the competitor to work on their credentials while competing.
- **Adding the following language to rubrics:**
 - o Registering in the wrong division will result in disqualification
 - o Changes to competitors must be made 7 days prior to conference
 - o Spanish competitions must be entirely in Spanish, including Q&A; No English is spoken
- **Removing the following language from rubrics:**
 - o About recordings
 - o References to district in collegiate competitions
 - o About a Bulletin Board in Teacher Created materials (changed to Table display)
- **All rubrics are being overhauled and reviewed during the 2025-2026 school year.** When the new rubrics are released in the fall of 2026, rubrics will be differentiated for divisions.



TAFE Updates:

- **2025-2026 membership renewal is now open!** *Your state and national affiliation must happen BEFORE your students are allowed to compete at Area Conferences in the Fall. **This is not optional.** Educators Rising dues need to be paid by December 1st.* As a reminder all dues for Educators Rising students will be invoiced by our office to teacher leaders. Please review the [EdRising Membership](#) Info page for more details.
- **Beginning in September teacher leader resources and board meeting minutes will only be viewable by logging into the website.** We are also launching a new TAFE store order form in September. Be on the lookout for it!
- **Teach Tomorrow Summit Registration cost Increase:**
 - o Early Bird \$98 per attendee
 - o Late Registration \$120 per attendee
 - o Reminder: No unpaid attendees can attend any portion of the conference. This includes parents, judges and spectators.
- **Judges Fee Increase:**
 - o 1-4 competitors, one judge or \$200
 - o 5-14 competitors, two judges or \$400
 - o 15+ competitors, three judges or \$600
 - o Credit of \$50 for each additional judge brought to conference for up to a \$200 credit.
- **TAFE Housing Policy:**
 - o Approved by the board of directors in our June Board meeting there is a **NEW** housing policy.
 - o *"To ensure the safety, well-being, and effective management of participants during Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) events, we are implementing a policy that requires all attendees to stay at the officially designated conference hotel(s). This means all registered attendees of the Teach Tomorrow Summit, must be a registered guest at one of the conference hotels listed on the website."*
 - Exceptions will be granted only for documented medical or accessibility-related needs and must be submitted in writing 30 days to TAFE State director prior to the Teach Tomorrow Summit.
 - Compliance will be verified at check-in, and noncompliance may result in disqualification or removal from event participation.
- **Area conference registration is coming October 1st - October 15th**, with Area Conferences following soon after in November and December. Area conference dates and locations have been posted under each area tab on the www.tafeonline.org website.
 - o **Area Coordinators:**
 - Claudia Bell oversees Areas 1 and 2
 - Carrie Swisher oversees Areas 3 and 8
 - Connie Thornell oversees Areas 4, 5 and 9
 - Ann Grimes oversees Areas 6 and 11
 - Jerri Cox oversees Area 7 and 10
- **42nd Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit planning** is underway, and we are excited to be at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas February 26-28, 2026. As details are finalized, they will be posted on the [Teach Tomorrow Summit](#) events page, so check back periodically for information.
- Please continue to tag us on social media @tafestate on Instagram or submit your photos [here](#) to be included in future newsletters or on the website.



Mark Your Calendar!

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

July 14-18 • **FCSTAT CONFERENCE** • Renaissance Dallas Addison Hotel, Addison

August 31 • **DEADLINE FOR TAFE STATE AFFILIATION** • Chapters must pay a \$95.00 state chapter affiliation fee

October 1 • **REGISTRATION FOR AREA CONFERENCES AND COMPETITIVE EVENTS OPENS**

October 15 • **REGISTRATION FOR AREA CONFERENCES AND COMPETITIVE EVENTS CLOSES 5:00 PM CST**

November 1 • **DEADLINE FOR EDUCATORS RISING AFFILIATION**

All TAFE members must be registered with EdRising prior to competing at Area Conferences

December 1 • **DEADLINE TO PAY FOR EDUCATORS RISING AFFILIATION FEES THROUGH TAFE OFFICE**

\$15.00 individual dues for all TAFE members prior to competing at Area Conferences.

November – December • **AREA CONFERENCES:**

Area 1 – Dec. 6 @ Texas A&M Kingsville

Area 2 – Nov. 8 @ UTSA

Area 3 – Dec. 2 @ Mary Hardin Baylor

Area 4 – Nov. 14 @ Lone Star College-University Park

Area 5 – Nov. 3 @ Sam Houston

Area 6 – Nov. 14 @ Stephen F. Austin

Area 7 – Nov. 18 @ Angelo State University

Area 8 – Nov. 8 @ South Plains College

Area 9 – Dec. 6 @ Bowie High School

Area 10 – Nov. 15 @ Tarleton State University Ft. Worth

Area 11 – Dec. 5 @ Dallas College at Brookhaven

October 28-30 • **ELF TESTING FOR AREA 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10.**

November 18-20 • **ELF TESTING FOR AREA 1, 3, 9 and 11.**

December 10 • **TEACH TOMORROW SUMMIT REGISTRATION OPENS**

2026: January 12 • **APPLICATION TO RUN FOR STATE OFFICER POSTED BY 5:00 PM CST**

January 12 • **APPLICATIONS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY 5:00 PM CST**

January 23 • **TEACH TOMORROW SUMMIT EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION ENDS**

January 26 • **REGISTERING FOR COMPETITIVE EVENT TIMES AND STUDENT VOLUNTEER SLOTS OPENS**

January 30 • **DEADLINE UPLOADING LESSON PLANS, POSITION PAPERS, AND VIDEO LINKS**

For COMPETITIVE EVENTS BY 5:00P CST - REGISTERING FOR COMPETITIVE EVENT TIMES CLOSES @ 5:00P CST

February 2 • **EDUCATORS RISING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS**

Late January • **CAPITOL LEADERSHIP** • Austin, TX

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

April 6 • **EDUCATORS RISING COMPETITION APPLICATION AND EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION CLOSES**

April 8-15 • **EDUCATORS RISING COMPETITION VERIFICATION PERIOD**

April 23-25 • **LOCAL, AREA & STATE OFFICER TRAINING WORKSHOP** • Highland Lakes Camp & Conference Center

June 20-23 • **EDUCATORS RISING NATIONAL CONFERENCE** • Portland, Oregon

July 1 • **2026-2027 CHAPTER AFFILIATION OPENS**



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