Fall 2026

TAFE Newsletter

Texas Association of Future Educators

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From Our President:

JAXON TOMLINSON, CLEBURNE HIGH SCHOOL, AREA 10

Hello TAFE!

I hope everyone is having an amazing school year! I can't believe we're already in November. It feels like we were just getting ready to kick off the school year, and now we're already in the middle of area conference season. This year is flying by, and it has been so exciting seeing all the incredible things happening across Texas. I've loved seeing the events, projects, and activities that chapters have been sharing on social media. Keep it up, and don't forget to tag @tafestate in your posts so we can keep up with everything your chapter is doing!

One thing I've been especially excited about this year is the success of our Fall Workshops! What started with a few areas hosting their own workshops and it has grown tremendously, with so many areas expanding the opportunity this year. Alongside those events, TAFE State hosted a Virtual Fall Workshop to give members who couldn't attend an in-person event another opportunity to connect and learn. The State Officer Team loved getting to interact with members and share information about area conferences, leadership, and building successful TAFE chapters. We're so excited to see how well these workshops were received! If you missed a session or want to revisit one, all virtual workshop recordings and presentations are available on the TAFE State YouTube channel and through the Virtual Fall Workshop page on the TAFE website. Feel free to use these resources with your chapter!

As we make our way through area conference season, I want to wish everyone the best of luck! If you haven't competed yet, remember to take a deep breath, do your best, and enjoy the experience. Things might not go exactly as planned, and that's okay! At the end of the day, competition is about so much more than earning your ticket to state. It's about challenging yourself, developing your skills, and growing as a future educator. If you've already competed, I hope you take the time to reflect on your experience and use the feedback you received to continue improving. Even if you earned first place, there's always something new to learn or something you can do a little differently. I encourage everyone to take that feedback with you as you begin preparing for state!

Speaking of state, we are getting closer and closer to the 43rd Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit in San Antonio! Your State Officer Team has been working hard behind the scenes all year to help make this conference an incredible experience, and we couldn't be more excited to see everyone there. Whether this is your first time attending or you've been to TTS before, we hope you're ready for an unforgettable few days filled with competition, leadership, new friendships, and plenty of memories. March will be here before we know it, and we can't wait to see you all!

I also want to take a moment to encourage you to consider becoming a state officer! Applications for the 2027-2028 State Officer Team are officially open and will close on January 15th. While it's bittersweet knowing our term is getting closer to the finish line, we are so excited to see the next group of leaders step up and help shape the future of TAFE. Serving as a state officer has been such a rewarding experience, and I hope you'll consider taking that next step in your leadership journey. If you're interested, be sure to visit the TAFE website for application information and requirements!

As we wrap up the semester and head into the holiday season, I hope each of you takes some time to slow down, recharge, and enjoy the people around you. Whether you're celebrating with family, spending time with friends, or simply catching up on some much-needed rest, I hope your holidays are filled with happiness. You've worked hard this semester, and you deserve a little time to relax before we jump back into everything TAFE has in store!

If you ever have questions, ideas, or just want to say hello, feel free to email me at jaxontomlinson56@gmail.com or message me on Instagram @tafe.jaxon. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season, and I can't wait to see you all at the Teach Tomorrow Summit!

See you on the trail!

Connections

KATELYN COOKSY, OPPORTUNITY CENTRAL, FORNEY, AREA 11
TAFE VICE-PRESIDENT



Hey, TAFE Family!

Isn't this the best time of year?! The Texas heat is finally starting to cool off, school is in full swing, and we have so many fun holidays and exciting moments just around the corner! To all of our seniors, I hope you're taking time to soak up every last minute of this school year. Enjoy the little moments, make those memories, and celebrate all the exciting things happening around you. I'm trying my best to do the same! Although, I know it's hard to stay in the moment when there is SO much to look forward to... and let's not forget all those applications to fill out! With so many exciting opportunities ahead, I wanted to share a few things to help you take that next step toward your future as an educator.

Scholarship Spotlight:

Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers

The Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers is a wonderful opportunity for students who are passionate about becoming educators and plan to teach in Texas public schools. Not only does this scholarship help with the financial side of college, but it also provides support and encouragement as you begin your journey into the teaching profession.

Here's what makes this opportunity so exciting:

- Financial Support: Recipients can receive $8,000-$10,000 annually while pursuing teacher certification through participating Texas universities.
- Mentorship: Connect with experienced educators and professionals who can help guide you along the way.
- Professional Development: Build your skills and gain valuable experiences as you prepare for your future classroom.
- Networking Opportunities: Meet other aspiring educators who share your passion for making a difference!

Good news! Applications for the 2027–2028 academic year are OPEN! Keep in mind that deadlines vary by university, so be sure to check the requirements for your school.

Learn more about The Charles Butt Scholarship!
CLICK HERE

Charles Butt℠
FOUNDATION

University Spotlight:

Texas State University | San Marcos, Texas

Now let's check out Texas State University! If you're interested in becoming a teacher, Texas State has some great opportunities to explore through its College of Education. Whether you picture yourself teaching in elementary school, helping middle or high school students or supporting students through special education, there are plenty of pathways to help you get started.

Texas State offers undergraduate educator preparation programs in:

- Elementary Education
- Middle School Education
- Secondary Education
- Special Education

These programs allow students to work toward teacher certification while completing their university education.

You should add Texas State to your college exploration list because you can explore different grade levels and subjects, discover what you're most passionate about, and start building the foundation for your future career.

Explore Texas State's College of Education! CLICK HERE

TAFE Family! I know it can be a lot, I am right there with you but I want you all to remember that every big dream starts with a little step in the right direction. Whether that step is applying for a scholarship, researching a university, you're already moving toward something amazing!

Seniors make sure you're enjoying every moment along the way. I am cheering you on!



KUDOS

LIEV KUTEV, DENTON HIGH SCHOOL, AREA 10
TAFE SECRETARY



The fall months are finally here and they're always my favorite! I'm always grateful for this time of year because of the holidays, which allow me to spend time with friends and family, eat great food, and be able to go outside and not burn alive… As thankful as I am for fall, let's share gratitude for some other amazing TAFE people and places!

First, we want to thank all the TAFE area coordinators Monica Shaw, Carrie Swisher, Connie Thornell, Ann Grimes, and Jerri Cox for dedicating their time to their areas during conference season. Your hard work and time do not go unnoticed! Thank you for all that you do! These Area conferences couldn't be done without you.



Thank you for all the locations that have allowed us to host our conferences! We would also like to thank Austin Ince and a great, big thank you to Monica Shaw for dedicating so much time to TAFE. Your devotion is quite inspiring to many!

TRAFLES CONNECTIONS



Floydada HS: LEADERSHIP

Floydada TAFE attended EduCon and listened to a keynote speech from Aric Bostick! They learned so much from the sessions they attended.

Clark HS: SERVICE

Clark TAFE attended multiple trunk or treats, their first one being at Mi Casa Daycare. A great way to be active in their community, while having some Halloween fun!



Royse City HS: RECREATION

Royse City TAFE hosted a Halloween party within their chapter. Looks like some spooky fun!





PICTURE THIS: Virtual TAFE Scrapbook

COOPER SYKES, DUMAS HIGH SCHOOL, AREA 8
TAFE HISTORIAN

Hey there TAFE!

It's crazy to me that it's already fall! School is in full swing, fall workshops have wrapped up, and area conferences are just starting. I have loved getting to connect with more members as I've attended these events, and I can't wait to continue to make more memories as we continue through these busy months!

As each of these things have happened, we have been looking at everything you have posted or tagged us in! These events have continued to spark new connections, new opportunities to speak out, and new ways to truly change the future of education. Everyone looks like they have been thriving with their chapter this year, and I am so happy to see that! I have compiled a few photos of my favorite things I've seen online, as well as at my own area conference, and I'm excited to share them with you! As always, please keep showing off your chapter! If you have photos you would like to see featured in our next newsletter, tag the TAFE state account on social media, or send them directly to me at cooper.captures27@gmail.com!

Here's to "falling" into new opportunities,
Cooper Sykes, TAFE State Historian



Area 8 hands out their Trailblazer awards!



New and past Area 8 officers are recognized at their conference.



Royse City TAFE had a booth at their school's club fair to explain what TAFE means!



Students from Area 5 stand with their state qualifier certificates!



Willis High School TAFE at their area conference!



Clark TAFE hosted a Trunk or Treat for their community!



Lockhart TAFE set up a recruitment booth at their school's open house to attract new members!



Clark TAFE handed out snacks and drinks to their custodians! A great way to appreciate those in their school who often go unnoticed.



Area 5 recognized their outgoing and new officers at their conference!



From the Director

Monica Shaw | monica@tassp.org
(512)443-2100 ext 8512

Hello TAFE! The end of the year is approaching quickly, and before we know it, the 43rd Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit will be here!

This fall, our state office and area officer teams worked tirelessly to welcome more than 6,800 students to 11 Area Conferences across Texas. We are thrilled to see continued growth in every area, the addition of new chapters, and an increasing number of students stepping forward to serve in leadership roles. Thanks to the dedication of our officers, teacher leaders, and volunteers, we continue to build strong, consistent practices that help our conferences run smoothly and provide meaningful experiences for students. A huge thank-you and round of applause goes to our Area Officers and Teacher Leaders for a successful conference season!

Have You Considered Serving on the TAFE Board of Directors?

TAFE will elect one High School Teacher Leader representative and one Higher Education representative to the Board of Directors at the Teach Tomorrow Summit. If you are interested in serving, you can find information about the application process and review past meeting minutes at the **TAFE Board of Directors** webpage.

Student Leadership Opportunities

Student leaders are the driving force behind TAFE's growth and success. Their passion, ideas, and commitment help strengthen our organization and inspire future educators across the state.

Several areas are still seeking Area Officers to complete their leadership teams, and we encourage qualified students to apply. Additionally, **TAFE State Officer applications are due January 15, 2027**. More information is available on the **Running for State Officer** webpage.

EDUCATORS RISING UPCOMING DATES AND DEADLINES

- Nov. 16, 2026 – Breakout Session Proposal Submission Opens
- Dec. 1, 2026 – Scholarship Applications Open
- Jan. 4, 2027 – Student Officer Applications Open
- Jan. 18, 2027 – Breakout Session Proposal Submission Closes

Teach Tomorrow Summit Registration

Early Bird Registration for the 43rd Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit **opens December 9, 2026, and closes January 29, 2027**. Hotel information, registration details, and event updates are available on the **Teach Tomorrow Summit** webpage.

REGISTRATION REMINDERS

Before registering, please be prepared with:

- T-shirt sizes for all attendees
- Judge information for your chapter

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Judging Requirement/Fee
  - → 1-4 competitors: Provide 1 judge or pay a $200 judge fee
  - → 5-14 competitors: Provide 2 judges or pay a $400 judge fee
  - → 15+ competitors: Provide 3 judges or pay a $600 judge fee
- Student Helpers
  - → Each registered chapter will sign up for two volunteer shifts during January 26-28, 2027.
- Event Changes
  - → Opens December 9, 2026
  - → Closes January 28, 2027
  - → All changes must be submitted through your School Portal.

KEY COMPETITION DATES

Date	Activity
Jan. 26 @8:00a CST	ELF Testing Window Opens
Jan. 28 @5:00p CST	ELF Testing Window Closes
Jan. 26 @8:00a CST	Time Selection Opens
Jan. 28 @5:00p CST	Time Selection Closes
Feb. 1, 2027	Pre-Scored Submission Window Opens
Feb. 5 @5:00p CST	Pre-Scored Submission Window Closes
March 3, 2027	Originality Pre-Submissions Due

- Need help? Visit the **Teach Tomorrow Summit FAQ** for answers to commonly asked questions.
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the TAFE State Office.