



Winter 2026

TAFE Newsletter

Texas Association of Future Educators

Monica Oliver, TAFE State Program Director

TAFE State Office, 1833 South IH-35, Austin, TX 78741

Phone (512)443-2100 ext. 8512 | Fax (512)442-3343 | E-Mail: monica@tassp.org



From Our President: JOSIAH PONCE, COLLEGIATE HS, CORPUS CHRISTI

Hey Future Educators!

We are right around the corner from the 2026 Teach Tomorrow Summit, and I could not be prouder of our members. To those advancing—congratulations, we can't wait to see you shine. To those who didn't advance but gave this season your all—your growth, effort, and dedication matter just as much, and we are incredibly proud of you.

As you reflect on your conferences, I hope you remember not only the competitions, but also the friendships, leadership skills, and experiences that helped you grow. With State Competition approaching, take a moment to look back on how far you've come and what you'll take with you as you continue to bloom in the garden of education.

Usually in this section of my newsletter, I would include education-related news. Instead, I want to pause and offer a few reminders of why this field matters:

- Strong student-teacher relationships are essential to learning—one teacher can make a lasting impact.
- Students with passionate teachers show greater motivation, confidence, and excitement for learning.
- For many students, a teacher is the first person to truly believe in their potential.

Each of these moments—big or small—helps shape the garden we are all growing in.

While this season may be coming to a close, it also marks new beginnings. To our seniors, an exciting chapter awaits—we can't wait to see the educators, leaders, and change-makers you become, and we hope you continue growing as a collegiate TAFE member. To our underclassmen, step boldly into what's next. Plant new seeds, challenge yourself, and let this next season be one of growth.

Before I close I wish to reflect on my time as your 2025 - 2026 TAFE State President. One thing is for sure - I am filled with gratitude. From growing alongside fellow State Officers, to meeting our TAFE Teacher Leaders, to connecting with inspiring members across Texas—each experience has helped shape who I am today and no memory or experience is better than the last. Throughout my tenure, serving you has confirmed that this is the right field for me, and I cannot wait to impact students the way you have impacted me.

I will forever hold each of you in my heart. It's incredible to think that TAFE has given me the platform, support, and confidence to grow not only as a leader, but as a person. By this time next year, I hope to be pursuing my degree in Elementary Education, while continuing to support this organization in any way I can.

Though this chapter is ending for me, it is not the end of the journey. I will always be here to support you as you continue to grow. If you ever need anything, feel free to reach out at josiah.ponce123@gmail.com or on Instagram @josiahp_101.

Keep growing, stay rooted, and be yourself.
Until next time, future educators...

With Lots of Love,
~ Josiah Ponce,
TAFE State President



College Connections:

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

As I prepare to end my term as a TAFE State Officer, I want to send my heartfelt well wishes to all competitors and thank every member, teacher leader, and officer who made this year so special. Serving in this role has been an unforgettable experience and one I will always cherish. One of my favorite memories was attending Nationals and spending time with fellow state officers and TAFE members, especially connecting the day before and enjoying a fun day at Universal Studios. I've always known I wanted to become a teacher, from playing school as a child to being inspired by my 4th grade teacher, Ms. Hong, who made a lasting impact on my life. TAFE has helped me grow in my public speaking and social skills, preparing me to be a confident future educator.



Next year, I plan to attend Texas State University or the University of Houston to pursue a degree in Elementary Education. I wish all competitors the best of luck and continued success to the TAFE family!

- Jasmon Sampy, State VP



KUDOS

PEYTON STEWART - KINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, HOUSTON TAFE SECRETARY

I want to send my heartfelt wishes to all of our candidates, good luck, have fun, and enjoy every moment of this amazing experience! To my fellow state officers, it's been such an honor serving alongside you. I couldn't picture a different group to spend these Tafe moments with. Thank you for all the memories, support, and laughter this year.

Favorite Memory of the Year:

My favorite memory this year has to be all the sleepovers I had while rooming with my girl bestie officers. Those nights were full of laughter, making sure to keep the tv going all night, and moments I'll never forget.

What/Who Inspired Me to Go Into Teaching:

I first realized I wanted to go into teaching during a breakout room session at TAFE State my first year! It really opened my eyes to how impactful a teacher's job can be and how much of a difference they can make in students' lives.

How TAFE Has Helped Me:

TAFE has helped me grow in confidence, leadership, and communication while preparing me for my future.

What's In Store for Me Next Year:

Next year, I plan to continue my education at the University of Arkansas!!

CLARK TAFE

Clark Tafe, you truly go above and beyond with your fundraising efforts for State! *Nacho average commitment to TRAFLES!*

**CAST TECH TAFE**

Congratulations to CAST Tech TAFE for spreading awareness of diverse learning challenges among children and being recognized at the Speak Up, Speak Out Civics Fair.

**FRISCO ISD CTE CENTER TAFE**

Phoebe So of the Frisco ISD CTE Center TAFE demonstrates strong leadership through her initiative to apply to sing the National Anthem at TAFE State. Way to go for instilling the true TRAFFLE values. Great job!



Another outstanding example of our Trafles leadership is Reese Bryant, who will be leading the National Anthem at our TAFE State Conference! Way to go after your goals and take initiative!!



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FOR FREE**

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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

Graduate prepared and confident to lead your own classroom.

Transfer up to 60 credits – you don't have to start over!

**READY TO START?
LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN.**

 **APPLY TODAY**

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

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PICTURE THIS: Virtual TAFE Scrapbook

APRIL FERNANDEZ – SILVERTON HIGH SCHOOL
TAFE HISTORIAN

As this TAFE season comes to an end, so does my state office journey. I had such an amazing time being your TAFE State Historian! I will never forget the amazing people I had the privilege of working with! Thank you to everyone who made this year possible. Good luck to everyone competing at this year's State competition. Ta-ta for now!

→ **Montwood TAFE** goes on a field trip to La Nube.

↓ **Clark High School** raises money by working at the concession stand.



→ **Stephen F. Austin TAFE** members use a booth to explain what TAFE is.



→ **Timber Creek High School** throws a soccer mom vs. BBQ dad themed meeting. How creative!



→ **Cleburne High School** shows their appreciation of their school board with a hot chocolate bar.



↖ **Kingwood High School** volunteers with Kids' Meals and packs lunches!





From the Director

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



We are thrilled to share that this year's conference has welcomed over **3,800 attendees** and received **2,520 competitive event entries**. What an incredible turnout. Your dedication, leadership, and commitment to developing future educators on your campuses make this possible. Thank you for the guidance, mentorship, and passion you pour into your students every day.

A special shoutout to the **2025–2026 State Officer Team**. Their creativity, enthusiasm, and unwavering dedication to TAFE's mission have shaped a remarkable year of connection and leadership.

As we prepare for the **42nd Annual Teach Tomorrow Summit**, we can't wait to see you in Dallas. Please keep the following reminders in mind:

- **Dress code is required at all times** for students, guests, and teacher leaders—whether competing, assisting, or attending sessions. This includes the closing session.
- **No awards will be presented on stage**. All awards will be distributed in packets at the conclusion of the ceremony.
- If your school is not staying for the ceremony, awards will be mailed once postage is paid.
- **Photo stations** with award titles will be available to help you capture memorable moments.

A quick note about the venue: **The Hilton Anatole is a cashless resort**. Cash-to-Card kiosks are available for students to load prepaid cards, and the hotel accepts credit cards, debit cards, and mobile payments such as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

We look forward to an inspiring and unforgettable Summit!



TAFE Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:

- 1/27/26 Officer Training Workshop Registration Opens
- 3/6/26 TASSP Academic Excellence and Teens Serving Texas Scholarship Deadline
- 7/13/26-7/14/26 Teach Leader Workshop
- 3/4/27-3/6/27 43rd Teach Tomorrow Summit
- 2/14/28-2/26/28 44th Teach Tomorrow Summit
- 2/12/29-2/14/29 45th Teach Tomorrow Summit

Educators Rising Upcoming Dates and Deadlines:

- 2/1/26 Early bird registration for EdRising Conference opens
- 2/1/26 National competition applications open
- 2/17/26 Honor Society Opens
- 2/24/26 Student officer applications close



Scholarship Opportunities

• Academic Excellence Award

The [TASSP Academic Excellence Recognition Program](#) was established to honor and recognize high school seniors who have demonstrated excellence in areas of academic achievement, test scores and writing skills. The program will recognize twenty graduating Texas seniors with an unrestricted scholarship of \$500. In addition, these twenty winners will be introduced at the general session of the TASSP Summer Workshop held in Austin in June and also honored there with a luncheon featuring the students, parents and their principals. Thirty finalists will be recognized locally with plaques donated by Jostens.

Who is Eligible?

Each Texas high school whose principal is a member of TASSP may nominate ONE graduating senior for this recognition.

What is the Selection Process?

The TASSP Academic Excellence Committee will review and score the applications according to this weighted value:

- 65% of total score on their G.P.A. and SAT or ACT score.
- 35% of total score on the essays portion of the application
- Scoring of the essays is done without knowledge of authorship.
- The top twenty will be selected as the All-State Academic Team and will be given a \$500 unrestricted scholarship. The next thirty will be selected as Finalists and will be sent a plaque.

[2025-26 AcadEx Application.pdf](#) *(Complete this form and upload with your online submission)*

Deadline: Submit to TASSP.org [website link HERE](#) by March 6, 2026, 11:59 PM [CST]

• Teens Serving Texas Awards

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals and its members recognize that students' achievements often go beyond academic accomplishments. The [TASSP Teens Serving Texas Recognition Program](#) was established to honor and recognize high school seniors who have demonstrated excellence in areas of community service, leadership, and personal accomplishment through unique endeavors, obstacles overcome, or special talents. The program will recognize five graduating Texas seniors with an unrestricted scholarship of \$500. In addition, these five winners will be introduced at the general session of the TASSP Summer Workshop held in Austin in June and also honored there with a luncheon featuring the students, parents, and their principals. Twenty-five finalists will be recognized locally with plaques provided by TASSP.

Who is Eligible?

- Each Texas high school whose principal is a member of TASSP may nominate ONE graduating senior for this recognition. Each student nominated should meet the following qualifications:
- Has a minimum cumulative grade point average equivalent to 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the previous three years (freshman, sophomore, and junior years).
- Is required to be pursuing the Distinguished Graduation Plan.
- Submits the application packet according to the guidelines and by the specified deadline of March 7, 2025.

[2025-26 Teens Serving Texas Application.pdf](#) *(Complete this form and upload with your online submission)*

Deadline: Submit to TASSP.org [website link HERE](#) by March 6, 2026, 11:59 PM [CST]





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