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Texas School Alliance

www.TexasSchoolAlliance.org

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**Board of Directors*

February 2, 2022
 Superintendent & Strategic Staff Agenda
 Hilton Austin Downtown - SALON J | 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10:30 – 10:45 a.m. | Welcome and Opening Remarks
<i>Dr. Michael Hinojosa, President</i>
<i>Dr. Curtis Culwell, Executive Director</i> |
| 10:45 – 11:15 a.m. | Beto O'Rourke, Guest Speaker
<i>Democratic gubernatorial candidate</i> |
| 11:15 – 11:45 a.m. | Mike Collier, Guest Speaker
<i>Democratic lieutenant gubernatorial candidate</i> |
| 11:45 – 12:00 p.m. | School Finance Update
<i>Tracy Ginsburg, Amanda Brownson, Janet Spurgin, TASBO</i> |
| 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. | Lunch
<i>Presentation by 'My School Votes'</i> |
| 12:45 – 1:30 p.m. | Consultant Updates:

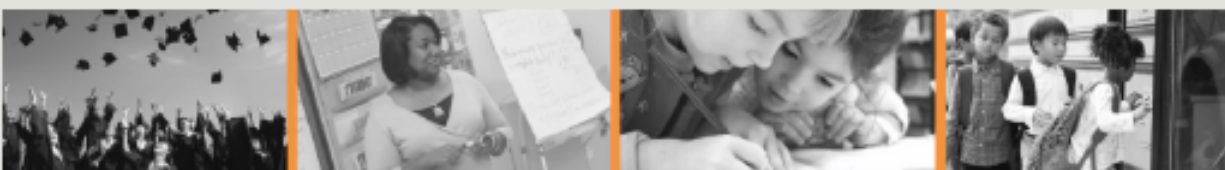
Public Relations / Media Update
<i>Eric Bearse, Catherine Frazier, Clout Public Affairs</i>

Legislative Update
<i>David Anderson, Todd Webster, Kate Kuhlmann, HillCo Partners</i>

Accountability & Assessment Update
<i>Dee Carney, HillCo Partners</i> |
| 1:30 p.m. | Adjourn |



SAVE THE DATES: In-Person TSA Meeting at SXSW EDU – March 9
 TSA Strategic Staff Meeting – April 6 ZOOM
 TSA Supt & Strategic Staff Meeting – April 13 ZOOM
 In-Person TSA Meeting (location TBD) – May 11



TEXAS SCHOOL ALLIANCE - UPDATE

from Executive Director Dr. Curtis Culwell

Commissioner's Presentation & An Opportunity for TSA Staff Members

As requested...attached is Commissioner Morath's STAAR Redesign presentation from the TSA Superintendent ZOOM meeting last week.
Download the slides [here](#).

Also, the Commissioner has generously offered to provide another **ZOOM presentation on Friday, February 4, from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.** for all TSA staff members who are interested in learning more about the next iteration of STAAR.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Friday, February 4, 2022
Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82733327254>

Thanks,

Curtis

Dr. Curtis Culwell
Executive Director



Join Us for SXSW EDU 2022

Join us for the [SXSW EDU 2022](#) Conference & Festival (March 7-10) & Texas School Alliance Superintendent and Strategic Staff meeting (March 9) in Austin, Texas.

From March 7-10, experience unparalleled discovery, learning, professional development, and networking with thought-leaders from around the world. The event features [Conference sessions](#), Film screenings, world class [Exhibitions](#), [networking](#) opportunities, [competitions](#), and much more.

Please note that while TSA will meet during the SXSW EDU Conference, you do not have to register for SXSW EDU to attend the TSA meeting. **However, SXSW EDU is providing a special conference registration rate** specifically for Texas School Alliance members who want to attend this exciting event.

Log into the [TSA member webpage](#) to learn more about the special registration rate.

SXSW EDU SCHEDULE





MARCH 7-10, 2022

COMMUNITY NUMBERS

52

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED
BY REGISTRANTS

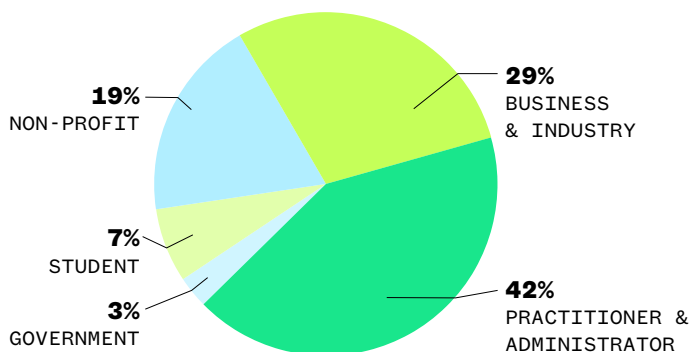
8,000+

IN-PERSON TYPICAL
ATTENDANCE

5,000+

ONLINE TYPICAL
ATTENDANCE

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION



OVERALL COMMUNITY FOCUS AREAS

55% K-12

45% HIGHER ED

*Data from SXSW EDU Online 2021

**We believe that
education has the
power to inspire,
elevate, and change
the future.**



PHOTO BY KYLE KENEHAN

MORE THAN A DECADE OF WORLD-CLASS PROGRAMMING

PAST SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Alaa Murabit • Anant Agarwal • Andrew Ng • Arne Duncan • Ayah Bdeir • Bill Gates • Bob Santelli • Brené Brown • Charles Best • Chris Evans • Christopher Emdin • Connie Britton • Dan Rather • danah boyd • Darius Baxter • David Brooks • David Hogg • David Epstein • Evan Smith • Goldie Hawn • Guy Kawasaki • Henry Louis Gates Jr • Jane McGonigal • Jeb Bush • First Lady Jill Biden • Kimberly Bryant • Lee Ann Womack • LeVar Burton • Secretary Miguel Cardona • Mimi Ito • Oprah Winfrey • Paula Kerger • Rehema Ellis • Reshma Saujani • Rod Paige • Russlynn Ali • Sal Khan • Temple Grandin • The Moth • Tim Ferriss

Learn more at sxswedu.com



Texas School Alliance Meeting Schedule for 2021 - 2022

NOTE: Labor Day | Sept. 6, 2021

TASA/TASB | Sept. 24-26, 2021 in Dallas, TX

TASA Mid-Winter | Jan. 30-Feb 2, 2022 in Austin, TX

AASA | Feb. 17-19, 2022 in Nashville, TN

Easter | April 17, 2022

Strategic Staff:

October 6, 2021 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

November 3, 2021 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

February 2, 2022 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

April 6, 2022 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

May 4, 2022 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Superintendents and Strategic Staff:

September 1, 2021 – Austin, TX | TIME: 10:00am – 1:00pm (in-person) @ Holdsworth Center

October 13, 2021 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

November 10, 2021 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

February 2, 2022 – Austin, TX | TIME: 10:30am – 12:30pm @ Hilton Austin Downtown Hotel

March 9, 2022 – Austin, TX | TIME: 10:30am – 12:30pm @ SXSW EDU

April 13, 2022 – ZOOM webinar | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

May 11, 2022 – Austin, TX | TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm (in-person) @ TBD

Special Agendas

August 4, 2021....Officers & Board of Directors Only..... Austin, TX | Hilton Austin Airport Hotel

TBD | September 25, 2021 – TSA Luncheon at TASA/TASB...Convention Center, Dallas, TX

There may be unscheduled ZOOM meetings during the 87th Legislative Special Sessions

TSA meeting agendas and resource packets are posted on TSA's website in advance of the meeting. To access the meeting information log onto <http://texasschoolalliance.org/>, select the Members tab and enter the password: TSA#20.

Gov. Greg Abbott taps into parent anger to fuel reelection campaign

Abbott promises a “parental bill of rights” amendment to the Texas Constitution. Current education code already provides an array of parent protections when it comes to schools.

BY **BRIAN LOPEZ** JAN. 26, 2022 5 AM CENTRAL

COPY LINK



Gov. Greg Abbott made a pitch last week to solidify parental rights as an amendment to the Texas Constitution. Because state law already grants parents rights related to their children’s education, some see the proposal as a

way to score political points with pandemic-weary Texas parents. Here, Abbott is seen speaking to a retirement community in Georgetown, on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022. 📷 Jordan Vonderhaar for The Texas Tribune

[Sign up for The Brief](#), our daily newsletter that keeps readers up to speed on the most essential Texas news.

Last week, Gov. Greg Abbott made a promise to Texas parents.

In the midst of continuing Republican-led political fights over what is allowed to be taught in public schools — namely over race, gender and sex — Abbott has put parental rights at the center of his reelection platform. Last week, Abbott made a pitch that he wants to solidify parental rights as an amendment to the Texas Constitution.

“Parents will be restored to their rightful place as the preeminent decision-maker for their children,” Abbott assured those at his campaign event last week at a charter school in Lewisville.

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Abbott’s announcement on Thursday has been a building up over the past two years as two things have placed public schools in the sightlines of conservatives: the move by public schools to include a more comprehensive approach when teaching American history — one that includes a frank discussion of racism and its impact — and parental stress over school closures caused by the pandemic.

So far, Abbott's promise is light on details. But it's not the details that are remarkable, but the gesture itself. Experts — and [current law](#) — say that parents already have rights — and the announcement can be seen by some as a way to score points with pandemic-weary Texas parents.

“‘Parental rights’ has become a proxy for the anger people feel about government, specifically towards public schools,” said Brandon Rottinghaus, a political science professor at the University of Houston. “This ‘bill of rights’ is mostly a repackaging of policies already in place, including current law and recently passed regulations, but the bright bow on the package is politically attractive.”

For the past year, many parents have felt like schools let them down and Abbott has seen a window to capitalize on that, Rottinghaus said.

Abbott has quickly become more outspoken about the actions of school boards and how schools approve books in their libraries as well as social studies lessons, particularly when it comes to teaching about history and slavery's long-term on American society.

And with last week's speech, Abbott is following a recent national conservative roadmap that is proving successful.

Across the country, conservatives are campaigning more on the notion that “critical race theory” is taught in secondary public schools and it must be eradicated because, as they say, it unfairly makes white children feel bad. Most notably, [Virginia's newest governor](#) campaigned on a pledge to ban the teaching of so-called critical race theory, which in actuality is an approach to thinking about history that is so far not being taught at all in Texas schools.

In his speech in Lewisville, Abbott touted how he stood firm against schools requiring mask-wearing during the pandemic and how his administration pushed for the reopening of schools. Last fall, Abbott signed a bill regulating how race is taught in schools. He and others continue to label it a law that bans critical race theory but the measure never mentions it. Critical race theory is the study of how race has influenced not only human behavior but shaped laws and policies.

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Regarding the state constitution, the Texas Legislature would first have to approve a joint resolution before such a measure goes before voters for final approval.

The “[Parental Rights and Responsibilities](#)” section of the state education code gives parents a wide range of access and veto powers when it comes to their children. They can remove their child temporarily from a class or activity that conflicts with their religious beliefs. They have the right to review all instructional materials, and the law guarantees them access to their student’s records and to a school principal or administrator. Also, school boards must establish a way to consider complaints from parents.

Rebecca Deen, a political science professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, said the governor is most likely trying to mobilize voters before the primaries, where he is being challenged by Don Huffines, a former state senator who also has made so-called parental rights and limits on how race-related issues can be discussed in classrooms a part of [his campaign](#). “This fits under the broader umbrella of concerns that social conservatives have about schools,” Deen said.

Rottinghaus also believes Abbott is setting the stage for the next legislative agenda, in which Republicans could use the parental “bill of rights” to make changes to the public education system.

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"I don't think Greg Abbott has a real horse in that race but he's smart enough to see that this is what the Republican Party wants," Rottinghaus said.

Education advocates and political opponents have criticized Abbott's proposal, saying that it distracts from the real issues teachers, students and families are facing.

Zeph Capo, president of the Texas American Federation of Teachers, said in a statement that Abbott is playing politics and creating more division. He said Abbott should instead be providing respect and support in a time where the pandemic continues to stress schools.

Shannon Holmes, executive director of the Association of Texas Professional Educators, said in a statement that the governor's proposal won't give parents any new rights and fears it will be used to place new mandates on schools.

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“On behalf of the state’s largest community of educators, I urge voters to compare their personal experiences with Texas public schools to the governor’s rhetoric —and make up their own minds,” Holmes said.

Beto O’Rourke, a Democratic candidate for governor, said Abbott’s agenda serves only as a distraction to the real problems that public schools are facing during the pandemic, such as the lack of resources available to them and teachers facing burnout.

Republicans focus on schools

In the past six months, Republican lawmakers have continued to target discussions about race and sexuality in schools.

In late October, parents at a [North Texas school](#) district pressured officials to remove a book from a high school library: “[Gender Queer: A Memoir](#)” by Maia Kobabe, a 239-page graphic novel depicting Kobabe’s journey of gender identity and sexual orientation. The book contains a few pages of explicit illustrations depicting oral sex, which outraged parents in the district.

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During the same month, state Rep. [Matt Krause](#), R-Fort Worth, sent a list of some 850 books about race and sexuality — including Kobabe’s — to school districts asking for information about how many are available on their campuses.

Then, in November, Abbott asked the Texas Education Agency to [investigate criminal activity](#) related to “the availability of pornography” in public schools, saying that the agency should refer such instances “for prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.”

Abbott has also asked the agency, along with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the State Board of Education, to [develop statewide standards](#) preventing “obscene content in Texas public schools.”

The TEA responded by [opening an investigation](#) into the Keller Independent School District and whether it gave students access to books with “sexually explicit content.”

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Meanwhile, Texas Republicans are pushing to be more involved in school board races. On Dec. 6, the state Republican Party formed the [Local Government Committee](#) to work with county parties on backing candidates in nonpartisan local elections, where hot-button issues like mask mandates and the teaching of so-called critical race theory have become political stances.

It’s not surprising, Deen said, that schools are a campaign target this election season. In the 1980s, there were debates over creationism and evolution and how sex education should be taught. Now, campaigns are focused on how racism and sexual identity is discussed.

"Schools in general and school board meetings specifically have re-emerged as a hotbed for politics," Deen said.

Disclosure: Association of Texas Professional Educators, University of Texas - Arlington and University of Houston have been financial supporters of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in the Tribune's journalism. Find a complete [list of them here](#).

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Quality journalism doesn't come free

Perhaps it goes without saying — but producing quality journalism isn't cheap. At a time when newsroom resources and revenue across the country are declining, The Texas Tribune remains committed to sustaining our [mission](#): creating a more engaged and informed Texas with every story we cover, every event we convene and every newsletter we send. As a nonprofit newsroom, we rely on members to help keep our stories free and our events open to the public. Do you value our journalism? Show us with your support.

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PARENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Governor Abbott has prioritized education since taking office. During his tenure, he designated Pre-K funding as his first emergency item as governor in 2015. He led efforts to reform the school finance system, creating a student-focused educational structure where the needs of a child will determine funding allocation while also providing outcomes-based incentive funding. However, many parents in Texas have watched as their roles in the classroom have diminished. Governor Abbott pledges to bolster the Parental Bill of Rights, ensuring that Texas parents remain the primary decision makers in their child's education.

PARENTS ARE PRIMARY DECISION MAKERS

Amend the Texas Constitution to reinforce that parents are the main decision makers in all matters involving their minor children. Parental decisions cannot be overridden without due process of law.

Common sense dictates that parents are, in fact, the main decision makers in matters involving their children. However, some have challenged this historic right of parents. Under the Parental Bill of Rights, Governor Abbott proposes amending the Texas Constitution to ensure this principle is a guaranteed right in Texas for generations to come.

ACCESS TO COURSE CURRICULUM

Expand parents' rights to access course curriculum and all material that is available in any education setting for their student through online posting and other methods so parents know what topics will be taught.

In order for parents to be involved in their child's education, they must know what their children are being taught. Under the Parental Bill of Rights, Governor Abbott would require schools to provide course curriculum at the beginning of every semester, and to make that information available through online posting or other methods—making it easily accessible for parents.

Ensure that a parent's concerns with school curriculum or policies are considered quickly and respectfully and that parents are given the respect they deserve by teachers, school administrators, and all other school employees.

Local school districts and schools have local grievance procedures when parents file a formal complaint with a school. However, each school district has its own timeline and complaint forms, resulting in a lengthy process. Additionally, there have been reports of some school districts prohibiting parents from voicing their concerns about school curriculum and policies. Under Governor Abbott's proposal, parents would have a right to voice their concerns to school officials, including school administrators, and those officials would be required to consider parents' concerns quickly and respectfully.

PROTECTING STUDENTS

Require that schools are not collecting unnecessary personal data about students and that schools are not sharing or selling any student data outside of the Texas public education system.

School districts may collect data on students to assist them in making more informed policy decisions, increasing accountability, and determining school funding. Under Governor Abbott's proposal, the privacy of each student would be protected by prohibiting the selling or sharing of students' personal data outside of the Texas public education system.

Ensure that any educational personnel convicted of providing minors access to pornographic materials lose all their educational public credentials and state licensing, forfeit their retirement benefits, and be placed on the do not hire list.

Recently, Texas parents found pornographic materials in school libraries, prompting Governor Abbott to direct the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, and the State Board of Education to develop statewide standards to prevent the presence of pornographic books in school libraries. Under the Parental Bill of Rights, any educational personnel convicted of providing minors access to pornographic materials would lose their public credentials and state licensing. In addition, those individuals would lose their retirement benefits and be placed on the TEA's "Do Not Hire Registry," ensuring that they never teach at a Texas public school again.

NOTIFYING PARENTS OF THEIR RIGHTS

Empower parents by ensuring school districts provide them the Texas Parental Bill of Rights, including providing parents with information and options for sending their children to charter schools, magnet schools and schools in other districts.

Governor Abbott proposes on bolstering parental rights by requiring schools to post the Texas Parental Bill of Rights online so parents have access to all their rights as they relate to their child's education. Additionally, school districts would be required to provide parents with information and options for charter schools, magnet schools and other public schools for their children.

Give parents the option to decide if their child should repeat a course or grade level, instead of leaving that decision in the sole hands of the school district.

Last year, Governor Abbott signed a law giving parents more say in whether their children should repeat a course or grade level, instead of being promoted to the next grade. Though this law is permanent for students in Pre-K-3rd grade, it was only an option for older students going into the 2021-2022 school year. Under Governor Abbott's proposal, parents would retain the ability to make this option for their child all throughout their Pre-K-12 grade career.

Abbott
GOVERNOR

SECURING THE FUTURE OF TEXAS

POL. AD. TEXANS FOR GREG ABBOTT