



Finding Your Voice:
Advocating for children
in public schools



Finding Your Voice: Advocating for Children in Public Schools

Presenters:

- **Kristin Tassin**, Board President
- **Jim Rice**, Board Member and TASB Board Secretary/Treasurer



Who we are. Why we serve.



Kristin Tassin
President



Jason Burdine
Vice President



Addie Heyliger
Secretary



KP George
Member



Grayle James
Member



Jim Rice
Member



Dave Rosenthal
Member



Charles E. Dupre, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Why is advocacy by School Board members so important?

- We are the primary advocates for public education
- Our primary function is governance
- We are guardians of the public trust
- We are advocates for educational excellence for the community's youth and we must put those interests first (Texas Ed Code Chap. 11)



Our responsibility as advocates.

- Entails difficult choices, self-sacrifice and exposure to criticism
- Crucial responsibility and closeness to voters
- Purest example of democracy
- Responsibility includes advocacy to other local elected officials and state/federal lawmakers



How can you be the most effective in Finding your Voice?

- **Be proactive**
- **Be committed**
- **Build relationships**
- **Be good storytellers**
- **Be bold, persistent, courageous and passionate**



How do you as a Board develop Legislative Priorities?

Our Fort Bend ISD story:

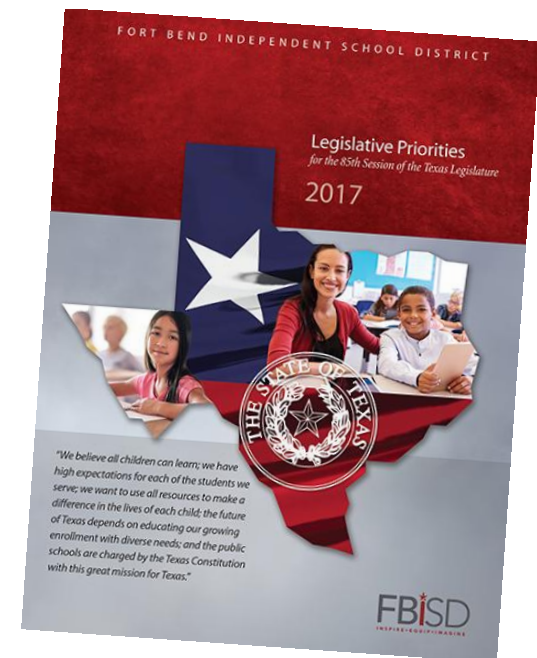
- The way we were ...



How do you as a Board develop Legislative Priorities?

Our Fort Bend ISD story:

- The way we are now ...





How does our Board develop Legislative Priorities?



**Reform and
Adequately Fund
the Texas School
Finance System**



**Support Uniformed
Standards/Requirements
for All State Funded
School Systems**



**Overhaul State
Accountability and
Assessment Systems**



**Streamline
the TEKS**



**Fund Senate
Bill 507**
(cameras in special
education classrooms)





Where to share our legislative priorities and practical solutions

Locally

Business Community

Fort Bend Chamber Education Division

Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council

Local elected officials and Community

Fort Bend County Elected Officials Legislative Retreat

City and School District Joint Public Meetings





Where to share our legislative priorities and practical solutions

Regionally

Go Public Gulf Coast
Gulf Coast Association of School Boards
Greater Houston Partnership

Statewide

Austin visits to state legislators
Texas Association of School Boards – actively involved
Collaborate with the Equity Center, Fast Growth Schools
Coalition, Texas School Alliance, Texas Association of School
Administrators, others





Where to share our legislative priorities and practical solutions?

Federal

Washington trips and local visits to Congressmen and Senators
National School Board Association (NSBA)





Power of the OpEd in the public square

I am not an 'educrat': an open letter to Dan Patrick

I am a parent and a proud Texas conservative

Kristin Tassin, Fort Bend ISD | January 20, 2017



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Education proposal skepticism

By Jim Rice

During the 84th Texas legislative session last year, state lawmakers considered two voucher or school choice bills, Senate Bill 276 and Senate Bill 642. Though nothing came of these bills, there is a movement afoot to again consider vouchers under the new name of "Education Savings Accounts" during the upcoming 85th session, which begins in January.

restrict student enrollment to only those students whom they want. "Education Savings Accounts" or "vouchers" will hurt, not support, the state's public schools and will jeopardize the quality of education available to most students.

The Legislature has a constitutional duty to support and maintain a system of public schools in this state (Texas Constitution Article 7, Section 1). State statute imposes a further duty upon

documented disabilities required?
Etienne Olson, The Woodlands



HOUSTON★CHRONICLE



The Communications and Social Media Strategy



Set the basics – goals and objectives

Collect Insights – audience and platform

Make choices – define the journey

Develop the story – develop content

Plan Ahead – align with overall communications strategy

Communicate – Tell the Story

Measure Results - Validate and readjust as needed

#SupportTXPublicED



What are the issues?

“It is very important that the community hears the voice of this Board loud and clear, which is unanimous in the adoption of all five of these resolutions. ”

Kristin Tassin, Board President



Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

- **Superintendent Communications** – frequent messages and blogs to staff, parents and community
- **Board President Interview about Legislative Priorities in media**
- **Magazines mailed to all FBISD taxpayers sharing legislative priorities information**
- **Board Listening Tours** – four outreach meetings held throughout of District
- **Presentations and face-to-face meetings** at Board Meetings, Chamber events, meetings with state legislators, joint meetings with cities to discuss priorities
- **Social Media** - (included hash tags and tags for legislators)
 - Thank legislators that support public education
 - Post messages in support or opposition for bills
 - Share positive stories on Facebook and Twitter



How did it work?

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Patrick's 'educrat' label sticks in craw of suburban school leader

By Mike Snyder, Houston Chronicle | January 26, 2017 | Updated: January 26, 2017 7:21pm

“She's a poised, thoughtful woman whose interest in education issues was triggered by her experience as the mother of three daughters in Fort Bend County public schools.”

Houston Chronicle columnist Mike Snyder about his interview with Kristin Tassin.





Thinking Bigger: Speaking with one voice

Texas State Representative Dan Huberty, House Public Education Chair, asked that groups supporting public education put aside differences and speak with one voice to advocate for legislation supporting public schools in the 85th Legislative Session



Representative
Dan Huberty -
House Public
Education Chair



Thinking Bigger: Building a coalition



Houston area school districts join forces for Texas legislative session

Coalition taking legislative agenda to statehouse

By Sebastian Herrera and Margaret Kadifa, Houston Chronicle | February 24, 2017 | Updated: February 24, 2017 10:07pm



Photo: Houston Chronicle



Thinking Bigger: Building a coalition





Advocacy In Action

How can you advocate for public education?

In your group, discuss some practical ways you can advocate for public education.

Thank you!