

TEXAS

Athletic Administrator

November 2024

Newsletter



Message from Executive Director — Rusty Dowling

As the Fall seasons start to come to a close and the election season, for better or worse, is upon us, we think back to late July and early August when we all were looking forward to the excitement of the start of school and Fall sports season and now we are just a short time away from finishing it up and heading into the Winter seasons. I continue to be amazed at the resilience and character of Texas Athletic Administrators as they rely on each other for support and advice as they tackle the day-to-day issues with which they are consistently confronted. This speaks to the camaraderie and relationships that athletic administrators have established with each other around the State of Texas. It will be a resilient group that will again respond to the concerns and dictates that the 89th State legislative session will pres-



ent to them. As the 89th prepares to get underway, THSADA will be vigilant and attentive to what is going on and we will continue to keep our members abreast and prepared to “rally” should the opportunity present itself. There is no doubt that some state legislators will continue to make the job of athletic administrator continually difficult with some of their uninformed decisions and mandates.

One of the great opportunities for Athletic Administrators to stay informed as to what is going on at the 89th session is their Region meeting. A lot of great and up to date information will be available at your Region meeting and it would benefit all our athletic administrators to make sure you can attend your monthly meeting. Region meetings continue to be a valuable source of information for athletic administrators and attendance is highly encouraged for those who want to be at the forefront of athletic issues.

THSADA membership currently sits at 1,400 members with all Regions reporting an increase in both Individual and Group membership. There is also an increase with ISD Superintendents as well as the Athletic Director/Head Football Coach who are joining. Reminder that you must be a THSADA member to attend any of the 3 THSADA events.

This past summer THSADA was in a position to hire a new Assistant Executive Director as Bob DeJonge was promoted to Associate Executive Director. After a search and interview process THSADA was very fortunate to be able to hire former Leander ISD Director of Athletics-Jody Hormann. Jody Hormann will collaborate directly with Senior Director Johanna Denson with the Professional Education programs of THSADA. Jody will also have responsibilities with committees and agenda content for all THSADA events.

The THSADA Board of Directors will be hosting their annual meeting on December 4-5 at the Double Tree Hotel-League City, Texas. The Board of Directors consists of two officers, eight region Directors, two ex-officio Superintendents, committee chairs and designated THSADA mem-

November

- 1st-Texas High School Coaches Appreciation Day
- 6th-8th-THSADA State Conference Planning Meetings-Kalahari Resort
- 11th-First day to file bills for the 89th Legislative Session
- 19th-Athletic Committee meeting (TEAMS)
- 21st-THSADA/NIAAA Award nominations due-Committee meeting (TEAMS)
- 27th-29th-Thanksgiving Holidays (THSADA Office Closed)

December

- 4th-5th-Board of Directors Mtg-THSADA Office (Double Tree Hotel-League City, Texas)
- 5th-Spring Sponsor Showcase Pre-registration opens
- 6th-Athletic Director/Head Coach Committee meeting (TEAMS)
- 13th-17th-NIAAA National Athletic Directors Conference-Austin
- 18th-THSADA Office closed for Christmas Break

January (2025)

- 6th-THSADA Office opens
- 14th-89th Texas State Legislature convenes.
- 31st-Superintendents TAAC Committee Meeting (TEAMS)

February

- 1st-THSCA Region meetings
- 5th-6th-President-elect nominations-submit to THSADA Office
- 9th-Spring Sponsor Showcase Hotel Deadline
- 10th-Spring Sponsor Showcase Registration closes
- 10th-Publications Committee meeting (TEAMS-Showcase Edition)
- 11th-12th-President-elect elections
- 11th-State Conference Registration opens
- 13th-TAAC Committee meeting (TEAMS)
- 13th-14th-President-elect elections (runoff)
- 24th-THSCA Leadership Summit (Arlington)
- 24th-25th-Region Athletic Administrator of the Year nominations
- 27th-28th-Region Athletic Administrator of the Year elections

Dowling Continued on next page

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
	Members	School District
Region 1	Andrea Fluhman-Chair	Amarillo ISD
Region 2	Cecilia Keller	Ector County ISD
Region 3	Kody Groves	Mesquite ISD
Region 4	Michael Mackeben	Clint ISD
Region 5	Dena Scott	Fort Bend ISD
Region 7	Henry Cantu	Rio Grande City ISD
Region 6	Megan Symank	College Station ISD
Region 8	Sonia Almanza	Northside ISD



bers. The Board agenda will consist of regular business such as THSADA Award approvals, Finance report, Committee and Board Committee reports, information on upcoming Spring elections and update on the Texas Cup as well as other business items. Spring Sponsor Showcase pre-registration

will begin on December 5th and will feature both TAAC and QUAD A classes. Showcase will be held at a new venue this year. Margaritaville on Lake Conroe will host Showcase on March 3-4, 2025.

THSADA would like to congratulate Dr. Charles Breithaupt on his outstanding career with UIL. Dr. Breithaupt announced his retirement at the June 2024 Legislative Council meeting and the June 2025 Legislative Council meeting will be his last. Dr. Breithaupt has been one of the most influential voices in the history of Texas High School Athletics and Activities and every athletic administrator and coach owes Dr. Breithaupt a great deal of appreciation for all that he has done to make Texas activities what they are today. THSADA is proud to call Dr. Breithaupt a friend and colleague, and we wish him the best in his deserved retirement.



THSADA Board of Directors 2024-2025

Front Row L-R: Tom Lee-Mission CISD, Dr. Silvia Salinas-Del Valle IS, Stan Leech-Boerne ISD, Andrea Fluhman-Amarillo ISD, Joe Bill Fox-1st President-THSADA
Second Row L-R: Mike Bass-Alvin ISD, Jim Garfield-Abilene ISD, David Cervantes-El Paso ISD, Jay Govan-Northside ISD, Rob Davies-Harlingen CISD/Dr. Roland Hernandez-Corpus Christi ISD, Dr. Joe Young-Brownwood ISD, Jennifer Frazier-McKinney ISD, Jason Dean-Georgetown ISD, Rusty Dowling-THSADA
Top Row L-R: Jody Hormann-THSADA, Bob DeJonge-THSADA, Leslie Slovak-Richardson ISD, Andre Walker-Houston ISD
Not pictured: Brenda Marshall-Corpus Christi ISD/Johanna Denson-THSADA

Texas High School Athletic Directors Association 2024-2025 Board of Directors

Officers	(Board Committee)
President-Leslie Slovak-Richardson ISD	(Finance Committee)-Chair
President-elect-Andre Walker-Houston ISD	(Finance Committee)
Region Directors	
Region 1-Toby Tucker-New Home ISD	(Operations)
Region 2-Jim Garfield-Abilene ISD	(Strategic Planning)
Region 3-Jennifer Frazier-McKinney ISD	(Operations)-Chair
Region 4-David Cervantes-El Paso ISD	(Strategic Planning)-Chair
Region 5-Mike Bass-Alvin ISD	(Operations)
Region 6-Jason Dean-Georgetown ISD	(Strategic Planning)
Region 7-Rob Davies-Harlingen CISD	(Operations)
Region 8-Jay Govan-Northside ISD	(Strategic Planning)
Ex-Officio	
Superintendent-Dr. Roland Hernandez-Corpus Christi ISD	(Resolutions)
Superintendent-Dr. Joe Young-Brownwood ISD	(Strategic Planning)
THSADA Committee Chairs	
Membership: Tom Lee-Mission CISD	(Resolutions)
Awards: Dean Colbert-Aldine ISD	(Operations)
Policy: Silvia Salinas-Del Valle ISD	(Resolutions)
Publications: Andrea Fluhman-Amarillo ISD	(Resolutions)
Athletic: Stan Leech-Boerne ISD	(Resolutions)-Chair
Officials: Mike Bass-Alvin ISD	(Strategic Planning)
Professional Education: Johanna Denson-THSADA	
NIAAA: Brenda Marshall-Corpus Christi ISD	(Resolutions)
Executive Staff	
Executive Director-Rusty Dowling	(Finance Committee)
Associate Executive Director-Bob DeJonge	(Operations)
Assistant Executive Director-Jody Hormann	(Strategic Planning)
Senior Director-Johanna Denson	(Resolutions)

THSADA President's Message – Leslie Slovak

I hope you're all enjoying a wonderful fall! I know you're juggling many responsibilities, and your impact on your athletic programs is truly invaluable. Amidst the daily challenges, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the great things happening in your programs.

It's an honor to serve as the president of THSADA, an association I've been proud to be part of since 2000. I've learned so



much from the incredible leaders in our organization, and I urge you to stay actively involved. Together, we are stronger, and your participation in regional meetings, the Fall Forum, the Spring Sponsor Showcase, and our State Conference will help you grow as a leader.

I'm immensely proud of our organization and the dedicated leadership of Rusty Dowling, Bob DeJonge, Jody Hormann, and the entire THSADA board and staff. Their hard work ensures we continue to have opportunities for growth as athletic administrators. A special thanks to everyone who attended our recent Fall Forum on October 8th and 9th. It was a fantastic opportunity for leadership development, and

Slovak Continued on next page



we appreciate our vendors who support our organization and make events like this possible.

I also want to challenge each of you to prioritize self-care. As leaders, it's easy to focus on others and neglect our own mental and physical health. Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup. By taking care of yourselves, you'll be better equipped to serve your families, coaches, athletes, and communities. Leadership can be heavy, but you're not

alone—our association is filled with incredible people who are just a phone call away.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Sponsor Showcase on March 3rd and 4th. It promises to be a fantastic opportunity to network, grow, and connect with fellow members. If I can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Keep leading with love and grace!

2024 October UIL Legislative Council Recap

2024 October Athletic Committee Reports

STAFF/STUDY REPORTS

- Basketball Shot Clock
 - Superintendent's Survey Post Spring Break
- MAC Update
 - Heat Subcommittee to meet later this fall
 - AED/Catastrophic Injury Reporting (Portal)
 - 25-26 Require Forms Released in December

2024 October Athletic Committee Passed Proposals

- Amending of 1204- Reporting Time for officials (48-24 hours)
- TABC Summer Showcase (1/25)
- Removal of pilot program status
 - Allowance for use of school district resources
 - Only students enrolled prior to the end of the school year or that has a PAPF submitted to the UIL can participate.
- Amending of Section 1205 – Student participation after found to have changed schools for athletic purpose (25-26)

2024 October Athletic Committee Rejected or No Action Proposals

- Mixed Relays
- Activities: Boys Volleyball, Flag Football, Rugby, Lacrosse
- Allowance of Guardian Caps in UIL football contests
- Limitations on Audio/Visual Effects in Stadiums and Arenas
- Allowance of pyrotechnics at athletic events
- Allowance of noisemakers at indoor athletic events
- Allowance of tethered drones at athletic events

2024 October Policy Committee Passed Proposals

- Amendment to Section 443/1205 – New Student Eligibility Questionnaire (Page 1)
 - All Students that require a PAPF would need to have page 1 fully completed and on file prior to participation at any level of play.
 - If approved by C.O.E., would be effective 8-1-25
- Amendment to Section 26-SEC jurisdiction regarding large # of PAPF's
 - Gives SEC specific authority to investigate schools that are receiving a high number of new students participating in athletics.
 - Establishment of a process to formally investigate if a program is gaining a competitive advantage through processes related to student transfers/mobility in an unnatural way.
 - If approved by C.O.E., would be effective 8-1-25
- Amendment to Section 27-SEC involvement in DEC processes
 - Allows SEC to appoint an independent chair and/or additional DEC members if necessary if it finds that a DEC is not acting in accordance with the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules.
 - Additionally, would give the chair ability to refer cases directly to the SEC if he/she saw fit.
 - If approved by C.O.E., would be effective 8-1-25
- Amendment to Section 465 & 468 – Foreign Exchange Student process – DEC review
 - Mandates approval of the DEC before foreign exchange students can apply for a foreign exchange waiver.
 - No pattern or past history of obtaining foreign exchange students in any one sport.
 - Not changing schools for athletic purposes.
 - If approved by C.O.E., would be effective 8-1-25



Regional News Updates

Region 1

Region 1 athletic departments align with the UIL, THSADA and THSCA initiative called the Texas Way from Canadian over Claude down to Lubbock and the schools in between. Lubbock ISD hosted keynote speaker, Stephen Mackey, in August 2024

Region 2

Permian High School is excited to be the 2025 Region III and State Gymnastics Meet Host.

Region 3

Legendary Football Coach and Texas High School Football Hall of Famer and THSCA Hall of Honor Coach Sam Harrell of Ennis HS will retire at the end of the season. Congrats to Coach Harrell on a great career and we wish him the best moving forward. Congrats to Celina HS football for making the playoffs for the 31st first year in a row leading all Region 3 teams in that category. That is a big accomplishment and deserves recognition. Lastly, Region 3 has many new faces this year who were hired into new roles over the past several months and are now leading their new school districts; Here are a couple of the names from Region 3 who have transitioned into new Athletic Director positions within the past 6 months. Jared Womack - Mansfield ISD, Riley Dodge - Carroll ISD, Lonnie Jordan - Plano ISD, Jeremy Gilbert - Highland Park ISD, Jeff Smith - Prosper ISD, Brian Rogers - Waxahachie ISD, just to name a few.

Region 4

Fabens ISD welcomes Jason Blair as their new Athletic Director. Blair was previously the head football coach and athletic coordinator at Hanks HS. Ysleta ISD welcomes Ivan Cedillos as their Assistant Athletic Director. Socorro ISD has seen a great start to playing football in their new SAC 2. They already are hosting the Greater El Paso Football Showcase All Star Game in December and the NFL Girl's Flag Football Tournament in May.

Region 5

There is some exciting news to share about Region V! The membership numbers have nearly doubled from the month of August to the month of September! The TEA Sports Officials course has grown in the number of school districts that are offering the course this school year with several districts considering offering the course for the 2025 - 2026 school year. Additionally, several districts/schools are participating in the Texas Way.

Region 6

Austin ISD welcomed new Executive Athletic Director, Jason Glenn, in June. After an 11-month search, AISD announced on X that Glenn would be joining from Willis ISD. Welcome to Region 6 Coach Glenn!

Longtime Leander ISD AD and coach Jonathan Lamb is now the Athletic Director at Pflugerville ISD. Lamb replaces Mike McEachern who served as Pflugerville ISD's athletic director since 2022. McEachern is now in Humble ISD.

Region 7

Region 7 has been promoting an increase of participation in the THSADA. Presently, we have 78 members that include HS and MS coaches and athletic administrators. This is up 12% from last year's final count. Based on the yearly growth, we expect to have 100 members within the next two years. In addition, we welcomed Thomas Lee (Mission CISD), Craig Foster (La Feria ISD), Oscar Salinas (Edinburg CISD) and James Wheeler (Hidalgo ISD) as new Athletic Directors to Region 7.

Region 8

Congratulations to the new Athletic Director for Laredo ISD, Luis E. Escamilla. Mr. Escamilla replaces longtime Athletic Director Sylvia Barrera who retired at the end of last school year.

For the 3rd year, NEISD in San Antonio will host the UIL State Water Polo Tournament at the Josh Davis Natatorium October 25-26, 2024.



College Station ISD's Athletic Bond Timeline: Bringing a Community Together

By: Megan Symank, CSISD Assistant AD

For College Station ISD, the election process for facility needs has been a normal part of operating in a growing community. Nestled in the heart of the Brazos Valley and Aggieland, the school district has seen consistent growth over the past 2 decades. During this time, CSISD has grown from a single high school town into a community that boasts two proud 5A high schools in A&M Consolidated HS and College Station HS with 3 middle schools. Thanks to recent bond propositions that passed in November 2023 and May 2024, College Station ISD is preparing to tackle a number of newly approved projects with radiating enthusiasm. However, the election process for these needs has not been an easy one. The College Station community truly put down the competition swords as Tigers and Cougars for a greater cause for all student-athletes of College Station ISD.

2021 Bond Information: Failed Proposition D

Consideration for some of these needs began in July 2021. In the 2021 election, Proposition D, which designated funds to renovate a tired and aged A&M Consolidated fieldhouse and press box in the amount of \$5.035 was denied by voters with a differential of 47.19% for and 52.81% against.

CSISD called a bond election in November 2021 for the amount of \$83.16 million with proposed athletic renovations totalling \$8.005.

- Proposition A: General - \$70.630 million
- Proposition B: Technology (Personal Devices) - \$4.525 million
- Proposition C: Natatorium Renovations - \$2.970 million
- Proposition D: Stadium Facility Renovations - \$5.035 million
 - AMCHS Fieldhouse Renovations and Addition - \$4.320M
 - AMCHS Pressbox Renovations - \$0.580M
 - Sound System Upgrades at AMCHS and CSHS - \$0.135M

2023 Bond Information: Passed Proposition A and Failed Propositions C & D

Despite the harsh denial from a divided community the previous year, CSISD began a long-range facilities

assessment to address facility needs of the district in the Fall of 2022. After much thought and consideration from the long-range planning committee made up of teachers, community members, and parents, the group identified November 2023 as the opportune time to address all of the school district's facility needs again. These needs included expansions and renovations to existing high school main buildings which included athletic components, renovations to A&M Consolidated HS fieldhouse and pressbox, and turfing baseball and softball complexes at each of the 2 comprehensive high schools. With solid backing, propositions A and B passed. However, Proposition C stadium renovations and Proposition D baseball/softball turf failed by again narrow margins.

CSISD called a bond election in November 2023 for the amount of \$83.16 million.

- Proposition A: General - \$126.167 (\$13.160 Athletics)
 - Consol Main Building weight room comparable to sister HS
 - CSHS Main Building locker room additions to alleviate space issues in fieldhouse
 - MS athletic turf and LED lighting (3 campuses)
 - MS athletic bleachers/restrooms/concessions redesign (3 campuses)
 - MS track resurfaces (2 campuses)
- Proposition B: Technology
- Proposition C: Football Stadiums & Fieldhouse (\$38.475 million) For: 47.48%, Against: 52.52%
- Proposition D: Baseball/Softball Turf (\$13.270 million) For 47.54%, Against 52.46%

Main Building Renovations will begin Spring 2025.

2024 Bond Information: Passed Proposition A & B

After the second failed attempt for stadium and fieldhouse renovations to A&M Consolidated and the first failed attempt for baseball/softball turf (Nov. 23) for both A&M Consolidated HS and College Station HS, CSISD reconvened the bond steering committee in January 2024. The committee, made up of community members, stood firm in taking it back to the ballot immediately. They felt strongly that the failed propositions were not simply "wants", but rather "needs" that needed to be addressed. They also felt strongly that the community would come together to get the results needed in a May election.

College Station Continued on next page





Middle School Turf Design (same for all 3 campuses)

Prior to the election in May 2024, CSISD along with a political action committee led by the 2 high schools booster clubs also took a different approach to make voters better informed. Social media platforms were used to provide small bits of information that would provide voters details of the proposed renovations. The example in the QR code was posted on April 17th. The political action committee was instrumental in advertising the proposed bonds in neighborhoods in the months leading to the election, speaking at public engagements, and incorporating signage throughout the community. This PAC truly brought the community together regardless of which high school their child was zoned for. As a result of the tremendous efforts, the results for the May 2024 elections were staggeringly different. The “For” votes for both propositions were swayed nearly 10% from the previous election just 6 months before.



- **Proposition A: Football Stadium & Fieldhouse Renovations - \$40.2 M For 56.59%, Against 43.41 %**

Consol Fieldhouse:

- 8,000 sq ft addition to accommodate growth
- Weight Room expansion & upgrade
- Enlarged Sports Med facility
- Renovated baseball locker rooms and offices
- 2 fieldhouse classrooms



High School Track Resurfaces-completed August 2024

Consol Stadium:

- Increase stadium capacity from 5,238 to 6,300
- New press box, concessions, and restroom structures
- Track resurfacing
- Digital Scoreboard
- Turf D Zone

CSHS Stadium:

- Increase stadium capacity from 4,573 to 6,300
- Add restrooms
- Repair and upgrade existing press box
- Track resurfacing
- Digital Scoreboard
- **Proposition B: Baseball/Softball Turf- \$13.27 M For 56.27%, Against 43.73%**
 - Turf all 4 CSISD diamonds
 - Add LED lighting at all 4 diamonds
 - Consol Softball: expand seating
 - Consol Softball: new press box and ticket booth



Stadium Renovations will begin Fall 2025, Baseball/Softball turfing will begin Summer 2025.

In the end, the election process in a 3-year span showed how a community can come together for the good of their children. When considering the election process to address athletic facility needs, CSISD would recommend taking a thoughtful and intentional approach to reaching voters. It could make all the difference to passing a bond. For questions regarding any of these projects, reach out to Kevin Starnes, Athletic Director or Megan Symank, Assistant Athletic Director.

The Texas Way is the Only Way

By Dena Scott, CMAA
Director of Athletics, Fort Bend ISD

The Texas Way is a joint campaign between THSCA, THSADA, and 2Words Character Development to:

- (1) **IMPROVE** the level of sportsmanship at UIL sporting events.
- (2) **DECREASE** the number of ejections at UIL sporting events.
- (3) **IMPROVE** the relationship between coaches, athletes, officials, and fans.

With the support of the UIL, THSCA, THSADA, Stephen Mackey with 2Words and powered by Mammoth Sports Construction, this initiative consists of 3 pillars:

(1) **Respect for Others** is a commitment to give respect to all participants (coaches, players, officials, and fans) because of who I am, not because of what they do. Respect, The Texas Way, is given generously.

(2) **Control of Self** is a commitment to give boundaries your thoughts, words, and actions, and to control your anger in the face of competition and adversity. Self-Control, The Texas Way, is to handle adversity with class, and keep your anger in check.

(3) **Spirit of Competition** is a commitment to give everything you have to be the absolute best you can be; to work to put your team in the best position to win; and to not sacrifice your character in the process. Competition, The Texas Way, is about more than a scoreboard.

As the school year started, many athletic administra-



tors began to roll out their plan for supporting this new statewide initiative.

Mesquite ISD has signed up to be a part of The Texas Way. We have ordered some separate signage for our different facilities already from the resource guide. We have partnered with each individual campus including our 5 HS's and 10 MS's and our communications department to help get this initiative up and running district wide. Our communications department has helped us create PSA announcements in English and Spanish and these have been filmed using our own athletes from all our different sports and schools. We also purchased t-shirts for all our coaches to wear at practices and games as they desire and shirts for our stadium workers. We are trying to get people to see them ask about the Texas Way. I am not over cheer and drill but they also have shirts and have had performances together with other MISD schools and are trying to actively be a part of the Texas Way as well. Booster clubs have added the messaging into their programs, and we have promoted this to the community in

Texas Way Continued on next page



Mesquite ISD supporting the Texas Way initiative.



parent letters and on social media. We have had several officials appreciation games as well at many of our events. We also purchased the 2Words curriculum to try to give our coaches the resources they need to better implement the principals of the Texas Way daily. We are currently gathering feedback by doing a follow up survey to see how the coaches think this is going district wide so far this year.

Weslaco ISD has also signed up and has implemented the program into their parent meetings, PA announcements, and Newsletter. Coaches from each program and level are implementing it throughout their campus.

Northside ISD participates in the Texas Way initiative by sending weekly emails to head coaches, then the head coaches of each sport share and discuss with their assistant coaches and team captains. Then, the team captains share the weekly message with their team. The Texas Way message is also shared at their *student leadership in action* and *coaching in action* meetings. The Weekly message is also posted on social media.

Fort Bend ISD has supported the Texas Way initiative in several ways since the beginning of the school year. Shannon Rideout, Assistant Athletic Director, or-



Weslaco ISD Supporting the Texas Way Initiative.



ganized and planned a community pep rally called “The Texas Way Day” where all 12 high schools were represented by student athletes as well as fine arts members. It was held at the district stadium, While the community was enjoying the opportunity to support their campus, they also learned about the Texas Way expectations at the competitions. Additionally, each high school campus created a Texas Way PSA with their student athletes and the district SALC team is creating sportsmanship signage to display in the gyms that reinforces the Texas Way expectations during competitions. The district has also embedded the Texas Way information on all online ticket purchases so that those who purchase a ticket will be familiar with the Texas Way expectations prior to attending competitions.

As schools and districts continue to sign up and begin participating in the Texas Way initiative, the level of participation varies. Bringing attention to good sportsmanship will ultimately have a positive impact on the entire athletic program. If you would like more information, please visit the THSADA website: <https://www.thsada.com/member-resources/the-texas-way/>

If you are interested in free Texas Way signage, please click on the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZlfs8NLF4Wn-bAfSoKqw3-Qz5nEwLF4OC5Ng-1jr6-w1oz7Rg/viewform>

Fort Bend ISD supports the Texas Way initiative.

Athlete Leadership Academy: Empowering Future Leaders

By Lydia M. De Leon
(B.L. Gray JHS)



My name is Lydia De Leon, and I am the Girls Junior High Athletic Coordinator and Lead Ambassador for the 1st Annual Athlete Leadership Academy at B.L. Gray Junior High in Sharyland ISD. The idea for the Athlete Leadership Academy began to take shape after I participated in our district's first Leadership Cohort Class, an accelerated program for aspiring leaders within the district. During that process, I thought, why not apply the same concept to our student athletes?

The Athlete Leadership Academy is a program designed to empower and develop our future leaders. These individuals were selected based on criteria established by our teaching staff and administration. Not only did these students excel in their athletic environments, but they also thrived academically. My Boys Coordinator and I compiled a list of athletes who participated in more than two sports. After gathering the list, we consulted with school sponsors to identify students involved in other extracurricular activities or clubs. We wanted athletes who were active in multiple organizations, as they have the opportunity to plant seeds of leadership growth in others. The teachers then made the final nominations by submitting a boy and girl through a Google Form, ensuring that selections were not solely based on athletic performance.

The curriculum we used was based on Stephen Mackey's Two Words Character Development. Our athletic department encourages us to use it throughout the year, but since middle school sports seasons are short and fast-paced, we often don't have enough time. April, being our downtime, provided an opportunity

to implement the curriculum. For the academy, I selected five topics I felt were appropriate for middle school students. Each session included lectures and student-led discussions. Our first session began on April 15th, and we met with the athletes every Monday for five weeks.



1st Topic: Leaders Lead

- Students defined what it means to be a leader.
- They were presented with scenarios to practice taking on leadership roles.

2nd Topic: Character vs. Talent

- Students learned the importance of doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.
- They collaborated in groups to brainstorm ways to give back to their school or community. Many students created back-to-school pamphlets, which were used by our administration during August registration.

3rd Topic: Today's Work

- Students had the opportunity to organize their tasks and responsibilities.
- They used organizational charts to prioritize their commitments.

4th Topic: Rise and Grind – Make the Right Choice

- Athletes engaged in discussions led by central office administration.

- Hands-on scenarios addressed topics like partying, alcohol, hazing, and drug use.
- Nutrition: how to fuel the body properly.
- Developing a positive mindset.
- Social media dos and don'ts.
- Student-athlete expectations:
 - Attending sports camps.
 - Maintaining good grades.
 - Knowing when to ask a coach for help.

5th Topic: Fire Failure – Goal Setting

- The Sharyland High School principal spoke to the students about setting achievable goals, emphasizing that freshman year sets the tone for the next four years.
- Students completed their Goal Action Plan.

At the end of the five weeks, we held a small graduation ceremony for the first class, attended by their parents and administration. It was a rewarding experience, and we received a lot of positive feedback. This year, we plan to involve both junior high campuses in our district. If you have downtime in your program, whether it's the offseason for high school or middle school, this is something you can implement. We are fortunate to have a profession that allows us to teach not only skills on the playing field but also in the game of life.



Student Leadership Summits

By Sonia Almanza, Northside ISD

Northside ISD Athletics in San Antonio has partnered with character and leadership development coach, Stephen Mackey to host a student leadership summit. The summit consists of a hundred high school student leaders from across the district. The summit will meet five times throughout the year to discuss ten leadership traits over five sessions (two per session) and will encourage, equip, and challenge students in their role as a leader. During the summit, students will learn, practice, then lead on their campus the content that was discussed during the summit. Students and coaches were also given a workbook that consists twenty-six lessons to complete throughout the school year. Lessons include: “How do leaders build discipline” to “How do leaders serve their teammates”. Each session broken down into 4 steps: Warm-Up with lesson overview, learn, reflect, and practice. This workbook give students the opportunity to continue to grow in between meetings and meet with fellow coaches and students.

Corpus Christi ISD and Southwest ISD have both partnered with 360Athletics to hold student leadership academies. The speakers relate to the students and issues that



Southwest ISD students during their D.R.E.A.M Leadership Academy

directly affect their student population.

In Corpus Christi ISD, they had athletes meet for thirty minutes and then participated in team exercises. Corpus Christi had over 150 athletes from their middle and high schools participate in their student leadership academy. This group helps students learn how to overcome obstacles and teach them leadership skills, all while keeping their mental health in mind.

Monday, October 14, 2024 was a school holiday for Southwest ISD, however, SWISD Student Athletic Leadership Team used it as an opportunity to grow. SALT leaders from their four middle schools and two high schools came together to spend the day with 360 Athletics Josh Perez at their D.R.E.A.M Leadership Academy held at McAuliffe Middle School. It was an exciting day of personal growth, team bonding and coming together as a District to help our young leaders grow.

As student leadership summits begin to grow throughout the state and presented in different ways to adapt to our students, every district has the same goal to provide student athletes the opportunity to grow as a leader, have a voice in regards to athletics, and serve as mentors and role models for our younger athletes.



Corpus Christi ISD students participating in leadership activity.



Athletic Director Spotlight: Dena Scott, Fort Bend ISD

The words of Winston Churchill, “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give,” are a true statement of Fort Bend ISD Athletic Director, Dena Scott.



Coach Dena Scott is humbled by the opportunity to be named and serve as Director of Athletics in Fort Bend ISD, the school district that has supported her from student to teacher to coach to administrator. Fort Bend ISD is the sixth largest district in Texas with over 80,000 students and is one of the most diverse in the nation.

Dena graduated from Dulles High School where she was a three year varsity volleyball letterman and editor of the yearbook her senior year. After playing volleyball at Syracuse University for two years and then completing her undergraduate studies at Texas A&M University, she spent four years teaching and coaching volleyball on the east

coast in Virginia Beach, VA. Her ultimate goal was to come back home, and in 2002, Coach Scott returned to Fort Bend ISD.

- First Colony Middle School
 - PE & Health teacher
 - Volleyball/Basketball Coach
 - 2 years Campus Coordinator
- Dulles High School
 - Journalism Teacher
 - Volunteer coach
 - 6 years Head Volleyball Coach
- Assistant Athletic Director
 - 8 years
 - first female athletic administrator in Fort Bend ISD
- Director of Athletics
 - Started in July of 2020

In Coach Dena Scott’s words, “I am blessed with the opportunity to support coaches and student athletes on a daily basis in Fort Bend ISD. As a former FBISD student athlete, I remember putting on my uniform and representing my campus and my district with pride and admiration. We have several members of our athletic department team

who also graduated from FBISD schools. It is really special to be able to give back to the district that provided us so many awesome opportunities. This is my HOME!”

Coach Scott has kept her journalism background and creativity at work by serving as the THSADA Region 5 Publications Committee Member for over 10 years. She is currently on the awards committee with the NIAAA and serves as a mentor on their District AD Cohort. She also resides on the Texas A&M Coaching Academy Advisory Council and serves as a ROCK mentor with the THS-CA. In the Spring of 2024, Coach Dena Scott received the NIAAA Distinguished Service Award for Texas. This award is presented to NIAAA members in recognition of their length of service, special accomplishments and contributions to interscholastic athletics at the local, state and national levels.

Coach Scott is a mother to her daughter, Aidan, who is a freshman at The Ohio State University. Aidan is exploring down the same path of sports with an interest in Business with an emphasis in Sports Marketing.

Growing Your Own

By Cecilia Kellar - Ector County ISD

“How many positions do you still need to fill?” “What strategies are you employing to retain coaches?” “Are you successfully locating candidates with the required experience?”

These are common questions that may arise at any Conference, Forum, or when Athletic Directors gather. The THSADA Summer Conference offered a platform for discussion, featuring speakers who proposed ideas and potential strategies for Athletic Directors to address the challenges of retention and vacancies in coaching positions across our profession. We are currently witnessing the implementation of numerous programs aimed at cultivating prepared leaders.

Tracey Borchardt, Executive Athletic Director at Ector County Independent School District, has established a Coaches Academy that focuses on coaches with 0-3 years of experience in the District. “Our Athletic Department’s professional learning plan is

intentionally designed to provide a strategic framework aimed at enhancing coaching skills, knowledge, and effectiveness through ongoing education, training, and professional development initiatives.” With over 60 coaches participating in the Coaches Academy, Ector County ISD Athletics is committed to offering relevant professional knowledge, continued support in managing the dual responsibilities of coaching and teaching, and opportunities to cultivate relationships among the coaching staff. “The feedback we have received from our coaches has been outstanding, noting how informative and beneficial the sessions have been, along with requests for future session topics. We are dedicated to achieving success through this program by equipping our coaches with the knowledge and resources necessary for their professional growth and success in this field.”

In Midland ISD, Executive Athletic Director Wes Torres has identified the Aspiring Head Coaches Academy as the most appropriate option for their District. “It provides a

structured, comprehensive approach to developing athletic leaders. By investing in our current coaches, we are building a foundation for long-term success and sustainability within our athletic programs that aligns with MISD’s Strategic Plan, Grow and Develop Staff.” Through participation in the Aspiring Head Coaches Academy, MISD seeks to accomplish several key objectives. “To develop a pipeline of well-prepared leaders who can effectively manage both the competitive and developmental aspects of our athletic programs as well as cultivate a coaching staff that prioritizes building champions, fostering positive team cultures and strong character.

Through initiatives such as the Aspiring Head Coaches Academy, Coaches Academy, and various Leadership Programs, it is clear that Athletic Directors in Texas are actively and intentionally developing internal talent to address the challenges associated with recruiting experienced coaches.



Athletic Director Spotlight: Dean Colbert, Aldine ISD

1. What is your current role in Aldine ISD?

I am currently the Director of Athletic Services in Aldine ISD.



2. What differences do you see in the Athletic Director's job now as compared to 25 years ago?

Three significant differences are: 1. The impact that social media has had in athletics 2. Technological Advancements 3. A greater emphasis being placed on student-athlete safety.

Not only has social media provided a more convenient way for athletic directors to communicate and connect, but it also provides an effective way for athletic directors to promote their programs.

Technological advancements have led to breakthroughs such as digital ticketing and online scheduling platforms.

The increase of serious or life-threatening events such as concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat related issues require athletic directors to place a greater emphasis on safety. A considerable amount of time is spent in meetings discussing and teaching proactive measures to help prevent these types of incidents.

3. What do you see are the greatest challenges for both Athletics and the Athletic Directors in the future?

The possibility of private school vouchers. This could adversely affect athletics in the State of Texas. Vouchers could take money from public schools, which could lead to cuts in athletic programs and coaching positions. This could entice players to leave public schools for private schools. In short, vouchers would make it easier for private schools to recruit top athletes and coaches.

The possibility of NIL (Name, Image and Likeness) contributing to the development of a college - like transfer portal in interscholastic athletics.

The possibility of student-athletes transferring to different schools primarily for "money making opportunities".

4. What advice would you give a young coach in his first year on the job?

1. Put God first and prioritize faith and family.

2. To be the consummate professional in all aspects of teaching and coaching.
3. Seeking guidance from an experienced mentor. An individual who has gained a reputation for operating with honesty and integrity.

4. Develop a strong work ethic and become a student of the game. Attend coaching clinics and take advantage of professional growth opportunities.
5. To be flexible and be willing to do the job that is needed and not strictly what is on the list of duties.

5. What advice would you give to a first year Athletic Director?

1. To put God first and pray daily for wisdom and guidance.
2. To become a "Servant Leader" and an "Impactful Leader." To Be willing to work hard and go the extra mile.
3. To welcome professional development opportunities. Attend state and national conferences annually. To obtain certified athletic administrator credentials and to become a member of state and national associations like the THSADA and the NIAAA.
4. To learn how to lead in all situations and be willing to perform duties that go beyond the job description.
5. To learn how to plan properly.
6. To emphasize the importance of supervision.
7. To emphasize the importance of providing emergency care and to provide a safe physical environment for student-athletes.
8. Learn the basics of managing the athletic department budget.
9. Learning how to build professional relationships with coaches, administrators, teachers and stakeholders.
10. Develop the habit of leaving the office daily to visit campuses and evaluate coaches at practices and games.

6. What characteristics do you look for when hiring coaches and staff?

1. Coaches that are loyal and have the reputation of operating with integrity.
2. Coaches who enjoy being around young people and have a passion for teaching and coaching.
3. Coaches who have a strong work ethic and put the safety and well-being of the student-athlete first.

4. Coaches who are flexible and demonstrate the willingness to learn and grow professionally.

7. What was your career path, and what led you to becoming an athletic administrator?

I grew up the son of a football coach and learned the value of hard work and determination. My father, Jim Colbert, coached at the high school, collegiate and professional level. My mother, Cornelia Colbert, often worked two or three jobs while I was growing up in the Houston area. My parents modeled and taught our family to act with honesty and integrity.

In 1988 I started my career as an academic counselor for the University of Houston football program. This led to a graduate assistant football coaching position. In 1991 I landed my first high school position at Texas City HS under Rusty Dowling. This was a blessing as I was able to learn from one of the best. Under the leadership of Coach Dowling, I learned the value of professionalism, the importance of planning, being organized and paying attention to detail. I spent the next twenty-nine years teaching and coaching in various school districts across the State of Texas. For twelve of those years, I served as a head football coach (athletic director - athletic coordinator), opening Port Arthur Memorial HS in 2002 and Atascocita HS in 2006. In 2019 I was fortunate to become the Director of Athletic Services in Aldine ISD under the strong, dynamic leadership of Dre' Thompson, Executive Director of Athletics in Aldine ISD. Coach Thompson is an effective visionary leader who demonstrates a wealth of knowledge. I have also benefited from working alongside Sandra Mader, who is also a Director of Athletic Services at Aldine ISD. Coach Mader has over thirty-five years of experience in athletic administration and is also a member of the NIAAA Hall of Honor.

8. What experiences have you had in education, and as an athletic administrator, that helped you grow personally and/or professionally?

I have been blessed to work alongside great individuals during my career. I have been fortunate to learn from the

Colbert Continued on next page



following successful head coaches and athletic administrators: Cynthia Colbert, David Suggs, Todd McVey, Neal Quillin, Eric Jackson, Karl Terrebonne, Bruce Bell, Anthony Thompson, and Glenn Hill. I have experienced the highs and lows that are byproducts of the profession. I have been able to use each opportunity as a learning experience. These valuable lessons have helped immensely in my role as an athletic administrator.

9. What advice would you give to an aspiring athletic administrator?

1. To do the best job possible in your current position and to learn from the leaders on your campus.
2. To always operate with honesty and integrity and be considerate toward everyone in the profession.
3. To become a member of the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association and attend the state conference which

is in June in Round Rock. Especially sessions for aspiring athletic administrators.

4. To become a member of the NIAAA and attend the national conference in December which is in Austin.

Leading Forward.....

By Jennifer Frazier - McKinney ISD

The landscape of educational athletics is changing quickly. Words like vouchers, school of choice, transfer portal, and NIL are trending and becoming a part of our everyday vocabulary. However, we can all agree changes are coming so we must be ready to meet those changes head on. Easier said than done, right? One of the hardest parts of leadership is to plan for the unknown. How do you put procedures and policies in place when you aren't sure what legislation will be voted into action? We must commit to lead forward by focusing on the areas we can control. Most people can follow a path, but leaders can blaze a trail. Let's commit to the following because those individuals we lead deserve to be led well. They deserve our best!

We must bring people together:

Leadership isn't for the weak, it's for those who are strong in their spirits and beliefs. However, it's a lot easier to find encouragement when you are a part of a group of people that believe in you and the mission you are trying to accomplish. We currently live in a world where people quickly become polarized if others don't align with their ideas or beliefs. We must be mindful of those individuals that don't easily connect with others and work to bring them in a little closer, so they feel valued and a part of something bigger. When individuals become connected within a team, they can overcome any obstacles thrown their way.

We must trust the process:

If we reflect over the past several years, athletics in the state of Texas has overcome a lot. We found a way to play our sports during a pandemic when most organizations shut down. We've continued to offer strong programs despite not receiving additional state funding for the past several years. We have come together across our state to embrace the Texas Way, a sportsmanship initiative that partners with our state organizations to prioritize respect among teams, fans, and officials. Not only have we persevered, we've figured out ways to thrive. No matter the decisions that are to come, we must continue to trust our state organizations and rally around the stakeholders who support our athletic programs.

We must develop emotional capacity:

Leading organizations during a time when change is as consistent as the sun rising and setting can be exhausting. It is very easy to grow weary and want to wave the white flag of surrender. One of the first steps in building emotional capacity is to recognize the burden of leading through times of tension and the unknown. If we can first recognize it's going to be hard, we can focus our time and energy on the solutions. We must embrace the hard, we must encourage our coaches to embrace the hard. Let's not spend our time complaining about how difficult it is; instead, let's spend our time brainstorming new ways to adapt to the change that might be coming. When you shift your

mentality, you quickly become a leader that can shoulder more than most. Developing emotional capacity positions leaders to stay strong so they don't get drained with things that are out of their control.

We must remain flexible:

Leaders who can adjust to anything that comes their way are not only successful, but they also set the foundation for confidence among their teams. In competition, when coaches realize something different needs to be done, they call an audible immediately to implement change. Flexibility is key. A leader who can adapt their leadership style so they can best serve their team is important. We must be able to change our processes and procedures to match the reality of the situation. It doesn't mean we don't have consistent patterns and habits but should remain intentional in our willingness to adapt a little for increased productivity and creativity. Leaders can bend without breaking.

Leadership is a gift, but how we respond as leaders is our gift back to others. Times are changing, we don't know what's around the bend. But, if we can continue to stick together, trust the processes in place, work hard to develop our emotional capacity, and remain flexible, we will not only overcome, but we will take educational athletics in the state of Texas to new heights. Let's continue to lead forward, no matter what's thrown our way.



Put Your Faith in God, but Practice Punt Protection!

By Carl "Hank" Semler
Associate Head Football/Head Boys
Track, Lubbock High School



Faith has many layers, and means something different for each of us. We tend to think of faith in strictly religious terms, like Faith in God (or whatever higher power we look to for help), praying before games, after games, over injuries, etc., saying grace before we eat, or praying for health, prosperity, etc... When I talk to athletes who claim to put their faith in God to help them athletically, I am always reminded of a key principle of faith in scripture, "Faith without work is meaningless" (James 2:17-20). For me, faith involves a deep commitment to a Being or cause or group. I have faith in the Lord. I have faith in my fellow man (although my fellow man can make me question my faith on a regular basis!). I have faith in my family. I have faith in my coworkers and our students/athletes. I have faith in myself.

How we manage our programs is a direct reflection of our level of faith in our athletes to parents and community members. If our practice plans involve an obscene number and variety of drills, plays, schemes, and last a ridiculous amount of time, that could reflect a lack of faith in our athletes' ability (the mile-wide, inch-deep approach). On the other hand, if our plans involve specific drills, variations of core plays and schemes, and are efficient in time usage, that tends to reflect deep faith in our athletes' ability (the inch-wide, mile-deep approach). Even our dealings with other coaches on staff reflect our faith in each other. If your Head Coach spells out every minute detail in print on staff meeting agendas, there could be a lack of faith in the staff in general (or your Head Coach has been burned in the past by disloyal assistants who played the "show me where it says I was supposed to do that" card from the bottom of the deck, resulting in PTSD and a general lack of faith). If your Head Coach expects you to take your own notes on a bulleted list of talking points on an agenda, you are led by a Head Coach with an abiding faith in you and your staff.

Building our faith

So, maybe you're like the Head Coach I mentioned previously, who was burned by disloyal assistants, or something far worse,

like the loss of a player to cancer or possibly one of our worst nightmares like having to endure the tragedy of a school shooting like Santa Fe or Uvalde. We all experience "the wilderness" of fledgling or lost faith, where we struggle to find comfort and security and help each other through life's rough patches.

I'm not a psychiatrist, but I have found myself in the wilderness a couple of times in my career, and these were some of the ways I built and rebuilt my faith. Maybe some of these will help you:

1. Be up front and honest – Sometimes, really good kids are terrible athletes. Not every scheme we have is going to work. When you find yourself in tough conversations, rip the Band-Aid off and be honest.
2. Leaders should use trial and error to recover when their faith is broken. Sometimes you have to throw the spaghetti against the wall and see what sticks, then start eating again. The veer offense was created out of desperation at halftime!
3. Followers should allow themselves to be led again after losing faith in their leader, provided the leader is attempting number 2. This can be rough, but we work in a profession where we have to check our ego at the door, so if you really have doubts about your leader, have that conversation with your boss in private.
4. To rebuild the faith of others, try like crazy to praise them loudly and criticize them quietly. At times, this might feel like trying to make a soup sandwich, especially when that coworker keeps making the same mistake after you've shown him how to upload video 9 times. If he gets it right the 10th, let him know.

Gen X vs. Gen Z and Faith in Each Other?

Being a Gen X teacher and coach of Gen Z students is an exercise in faith for me and my students alike. They think I'm out of touch, and I think they might be living under power lines! However, when it comes to learning, they have faith in my metaphoric style of instruction, which flies in the face of how Gen Xers were taught – sit and get. Instead, I teach "Triple Option History," where

I teach my students how to find the answers, versus feeding them information. They "hand off to the dive" (search), "Keep" (explore further), and "Pitch" (show their findings). If they run into problems in their research, I call an RPO (differentiated instruction), and make them look for other ways to find what I need them to learn and show me they mastered what they learned. Each new learning is a TD. The Gen Zers love that I have faith in them to manage their behavior and learning, and they have faith in me to be there with help when they get stuck. This teaching style takes a TON of faith to stick with through the early part of the year, when personalities are colliding. I got the idea for this from Mike Leach and Bobby Knight, who always had faith in their game plans and stuck with their plans, knowing it would work out in the end.

Faith Results from Repetition

The teams that don't use reps to refine and perfect their game plans are usually the teams that lack faith in their plans. It doesn't take much in education to wreck our faith if it's not solid.

The trick is to bulletproof our faith. We have to work on our processes so much we can't see ourselves doing anything else. When we get stuck, we have to ask for help, and then take the advice to heart. We have to help those who ask, so their faith grows, regardless of our personal feelings. Finally, we have to work hard on our programs, not until we get it right, but until we can't get it wrong. When I was the Head Football coach at Aldine High School, our program was built on faith. The Kids had faith in us as their coaches and worked their tails off every day. The entire coaching staff was a family (complete with the weird uncles who "left a part of themselves in 'nam"), and we fought for each other and supported all programs. Talent-wise, we brought a knife to a gunfight most weeks, but that knife was a machete, and we always went down swinging and surprised a bunch of folks along the way. We always had faith that no matter the score, we were NEVER out of a game.

It's that way in life. If your faith is strong, you are NEVER out of a game, a test, a marriage. If your faith is weak or nonexistent, you were never in the game, the challenge, the marriage to begin with. In a profession as tough as teaching and coaching, faith allows us to keep going. Keep the FAITH!



Associate Executive Director Update — Bob DeJonge

Fall Forum Review:

The 5th Annual THSADA Fall forum was held at the San Marcos Embassy Suites and Conference Center on October 8-9. It was great to return to one of our favorite event venues. The hotel and conference center staff always do a great job of providing quality service to our attendees and staff. This year's event itself must be considered an unqualified success! Even in these challenging economic times we still had record numbers register and attend the event. We are pleased to share that we had 234 attendees and sponsors in attendance!



Fall Forum is just slightly longer than one day, but we do pack a lot of learning and fun into a short period of time! The professional development opportunities offered at our events are products of the work of our TAAC Committee, Senior Director Johanna Denson, and Assistant Executive Director Jody Hormann. This year we offered

seven outstanding sessions designed to offer insightful and useful information for today's athletic administrators. We led off the conference on Tuesday evening with a session on "The Texas Way," featuring Stephen Mackey, Ray Zepeda, Joe Martin and THSADA Executive Director Rusty Dowling. The overriding theme of sportsmanship in Texas Athletics is one of the most important initiatives we initiated in decades.

Day two began with a TAAC session on "All Things Media." Discussion highlights included the importance of establishing effective communication protocols with media at athletic events. The next session was a debrief on optional WBGT protocols that were initiated at the recommendation of UIL. The feedback provided during the class will no doubt prove to be beneficial to the UIL as we prepare for the mandatory protocols that will come next year. Our third TAAC offering was focused on digital solutions that can be transformational on how an event is managed to elevate the overall event experience. After lunch, Asst. Exec Director Jody Hormann shared best practices in effective management and support of booster clubs. Session six was a new offering centered on Hot Topics that athletic admin-

istrators face in current times. Discussion items included managing athletic events, addressing the official's shortage, strategies to create new budget streams, coaches' retention strategies, athlete eligibility, residence accountability and community support. The final TAAC class offered was the always popular UIL update provided by UIL Athletic Director Ray Zepeda and staff. This session featured an outline of the upcoming Legislative Council, sportsmanship initiative results, residency and eligibility challenges and the role of the DEC.

No event is possible without the support of our THSADA State Sponsors. This year's Fall Forum featured an elite group led by Presenting Sponsor HomeTown Ticketing, Daktronics, RFS Sports, DTN, Vital Signs Wall of Fame, Equitable Advisors, Huckabee, Paragon Sports Constructors and Musco

It is easy to see from this short summary that we had an exciting and meaningful event this year. Thanks to all of you who attended and of course to our great sponsors!

See you all at Spring Sponsor Showcase at Margaritaville Resort and Convention Center in March!

From the Assistant Executive Director — Jody Hormann

Greetings to the THSADA community! While I officially started my new role with THSADA in August, we thought this newsletter would be a great opportunity to let you know a little more about me! During my 20 plus years of coaching and athletic administrative service, I have had the privilege of assuming various leadership roles—from head coach to athletic director, to more recently the Senior Executive Director of Campus Activities. Each stage of my career has broadened my understanding of athletics and leadership, and I am excited to expand that knowledge in my new role as Assistant Executive Director for THSADA.

My journey in education began at my alma mater, Bloomington High School. After three fulfilling years coaching volleyball, basketball, and track at BHS, I transitioned to Edna High School where I served as the head volleyball and girls basketball coach, as

well as the girls athletic coordinator.

In 2009, my family and I relocated to Leander, where I joined the staff at Leander High School. The following year, I was honored to become the first head girls basketball coach for Vandegrift High School, a remarkable experience that allowed me to shape a new program from the ground up. In August 2012, I transitioned into an administrative role as Assistant Athletic Director for Leander ISD, marking the beginning of my journey in athletic administration.

My path took me to Prosper ISD in 2015, where I served as both Assistant Athletic Director and then the Athletic Director, before returning to Leander ISD in 2017 to assume the role of Athletic Director. In 2020, I stepped into the position of Senior Executive Director of Campus Activities, where I had the privilege of overseeing not just athletics, but also fine arts and health

services.

When the opportunity arose to apply for the THSADA Assistant Executive Director position, I felt compelled to pursue it. This role presents a unique chance to serve athletic directors across Texas and to give back to an association that has been instrumental in my own development as a leader.

In the months since taking on this role, I have gained valuable insights and learned from the exemplary leaders within our association. It is evident that THSADA is stronger than ever, guided by a dedicated leadership team, Region Directors, and Committee Chairs who embody excellence. There is not a day that goes by that we don't ask ourselves "what else can we do to support athletic directors" or "what can we do better?" I am honored to be a small part of this remarkable organization and look forward to contributing to its ongoing success.



THSADA Professional Education

— Johanna Denson-Senior Director-THSADA

Career qualifications change as professionals move through the decades of their lives. As professions evolve, so must the training and education of the future leaders in a specific profession. THSADA recognizes this need and the advantage of providing continued professional education to its members. You can no longer effectively lead a district athletic department by simply moving from the field or court to the athletic administrator position.

THSADA provides its members an opportunity to grow personally and professionally at the three events offered throughout the year: Fall Forum, Spring Sponsor Showcase, and the State Conference. During these events, THSADA provides various programs of study to help members to enhance their skills as athletic administrators or to grow as aspiring athletic administrators.

Three professional education programs are offered by THSADA to develop the skills of its members: JHAMS-Junior High and Middle School leaders, Quad A-Aspiring Athletic Administrators, and TAAC-Texas Athletic Administrator Certification Program. Current THSADA members can register and participate in any professional

education program offered at a THSADA event. All professional development opportunities require THSADA members to register for the THSADA event to access any program's instructional content.

The JHAMS program of study focuses on individuals working in the Junior High and Middle School programs. Members that seek opportunities to lead as an athletic administrator at this level or to advance to the high school or district level will benefit from this program's content. The content of this program is geared to educate the individual at an introductory level of instruction, as an athletic leader in the junior high school or middle school.

The second program of study offered through THSADA, is the Aspiring Athletic Administrator Academy (QUAD A). The "QUAD A" program of study continues the focus on athletic administration to a deeper level of instruction and application. The participants gain an understanding of athletic department best practices; budget development, athletic department organization and strategies in hiring quality personnel. An opportunity to participate in mock interviews and resume' review are offered to THSA-

DA members who register for THSADA events that include the QUAD A program of instruction.

The third program of study offered to THSADA members is the Texas Athletic Administrators Certification program (TAAC). A member must complete 30 TAAC courses from the seven sections of courses offered in the TAAC program, to be State certified by THSADA. Through this program, members can gain knowledge of UIL governance, community relations, health and safety, leadership, and best practices as an athletic administrator. Members must complete 6 TAAC courses every three years to maintain their status as a THSADA State Certified member.

THSADA offers three great opportunities to grow in the profession of athletic administration throughout the year. Take advantage of these opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills to effectively lead your district's athletic department or to prepare for a future career in athletics. For any questions about the three educational opportunities offered by THSADA contact Johanna Denson (johanna.denson@thsada.com) or Jody Hormann (jody.hormann@thsada.com).





2024 THSADA FALL FORUM

