



2023 SPRING SPONSOR



# SHOWCASE

WACO CONVENTION CENTER - FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1

# TEXAS

High School Athletic Directors Association

Spring 2023 Newsletter

# Texas High School Athletic Directors Association 2022-2023 Board of Directors



## THSADA Publications Committee

### **Regions**

Region 1  
Region 2  
Region 3  
Region 4  
Region 5  
Region 7  
Region 6  
Region 8

### **Members**

Andrea Fluhman-Chair  
Scott Campbell  
Grace McDowell  
Michael Mackeben  
Dena Scott  
Henry Cantu  
Deena Bosier  
Sonia Almanza

### **School District**

Amarillo ISD  
Stephenville ISD  
Frisco ISD  
Clint ISD  
Fort Bend ISD  
Rio Grande City ISD  
Pflugerville ISD  
Northside ISD



# Executive Director's Report — Rusty Dowling



Welcome to the 3rd annual Spring Sponsor Showcase. We appreciate all our members and THSADA sponsors who have made the effort to support this event and the athletic administrators throughout the State of Texas. We are about halfway through the 2nd semester and as we all know the spring sports calendar has events and activities pretty much six days a week until mid-May. The challenges that await athletic administrators during the 2nd semester are always significant and seem to be never-ending. Personnel, Budget, Re-scheduling events, end of year Banquets and Award Ceremonies, Summer Planning and beginning of the school-year staff developments. We hope this mid-semester Showcase event will afford you the opportunity to re-charge, engage with your colleagues and provide that push going into the last part of the school year.

This past December 6th and 7th the THSADA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs met in Houston at Challenger-Columbia Stadium in Clear Creek ISD to conduct the business of the THSADA. As it always does, the Board meeting provided an opportunity for Officers, Region Directors and Committee Chairs to not only conduct the affairs of the THSADA but also provided Board members the opportunity to discuss issues specific to athletic administrators during several social gatherings held in conjunction with the Board meeting. PBK Sports acted as a host for the annual Board/Committee Chairs dinner held Wednesday, December 6th.

Several significant items and actions came out of the Board meeting. The THSADA Board Strategic Planning Committee had its first meeting and began the process of creating a roadmap for the future of the THSADA. The last Strategic Plan developed by THSADA was in 2015. The Strategic Planning Committee is made up of the Region Directors.

The nominations and election for a President-elect is currently underway and with the new leadership proposal that was approved by the Board back in 2020, all eight regions are eligible to nominate someone from their region to run for president-elect. To allow all regions the opportunity to have someone serve as a THSADA officer, whatever region wins the president-elect election this Spring, will not be able to nominate a candidate for two years. This will ensure that the larger regions in the state don't dominate every election.

To further raise the profile of the THSADA, the Board of Directors unanimously approved two new Board positions that will sit two ISD Superintendents. Selected for those two positions are Dr. Roland Hernandez-Superintendent of Schools-Corpus Christi ISD and Dr. Joe Young-Superintendent of Schools-Brownwood ISD. These Board positions take effect immediately.

In other Board action, raises were approved for identified members of the THSADA staff. The time, effort and production of all full-time and part-time staff members were recognized by the Board of Directors. THSADA is very lucky to have such a hard-working and dedicated staff that oversees and facilitates all programs, events, alignments and administrative procedures. THSADA has grown exponentially over the past several years and much of that can be attributed to the work of our staff.

THSADA Committee Chairs all gave updated reports on the work of their respective committees. THSADA committee's are very important in the overall work of the THSADA as they lean on the experience and knowledge of all committee members to address any and all issues facing athletic administrators. The service each committee member provides is genuinely appreciated and makes a difference in the effectiveness of THSADA.

The financial report was presented to the Board and approved. THSADA is in a very sound financial position and looks to improve upon that in the upcoming year.

In closing I again want to thank everyone for your continued support of THSADA, have a great last half of the school year and we look forward to seeing everyone at the State Conference, June 11-14 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Round Rock!



# Assistant Executive Director's Update – Bob DeJonge

Springtime is always welcome, because it usually means a break in the cold weather so surely that will be the case very soon. It also is by far the busiest time of year for coaches and Athletic Administrators. A lot of business professionals talk about their 9-5 job Monday through Friday. I think most of you are 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at least six days a week. Many of those hours are not just paying bills and working on schedules and budgets, there spent developing coaches and their programs to give student athletes opportunities to grow into productive young adults. It's pretty obvious that in today's world those opportunities we provide have never been more important. Keep up the good work!



A - Aspiring Athletic Administrators in attendance. Additional highlights include a Tuesday evening reception and a Mid-Day Mini Tradeshow for all sponsors and attendees. We'll offer appetizers at the reception and serve a light lunch at the Mini Tradeshow. Our Executive Director Rusty Dowling will close out the show with a THSADA update on Wednesday afternoon.

## THSADA State Conference

This will be the 52<sup>nd</sup> THSADA State Conference! Things have changed quite a bit over the years – the first event was held in 1971 at La Mansion Hotel in San Antonio. The event was attended by 50 eager AD's. Many thanks to those visionary men and women for giving us our start. This year's event will be June 11-14 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Round Rock Texas. Sunday we'll begin the event with the PBK Sports – THSADA Hall of Honor Celebration. Tickets are now on sale as noted on the THSADA website and a link will also be sent to all attendees after registering for the conference. This year's award winners and inductees include:

## National Association Awards

**NFHS Citation** – Dr. Susan Elza, formerly-Director of Athletics University Interscholastic League

**NIAAA Distinguished Service Award** – Sandra Howell, Retired Athletic Director from Little Elm ISD

**Frank Kovaleski Distinguished Service Award** – Pam Lea, Retired Athletic Director, Cleburne ISD

**Kelly Reeves State Award of Merit** – Ray Zepeda, Director of Athletics Cy Fair ISD

## THSADA Awards

**PBK Sports- THSADA Athletic Director of the Year** – Debbie Fuchs, Retired Athletic Director Clear Creek ISD

**Joe Bill Fox Distinguished Service Award** – Jim Walsh, Shareholder - Walsh Gallegos, Trevino

## Outgoing Region Directors

Region 3 Leslie Slovak – Executive Director of Athletics Richardson ISD

Region 7 Rey Ramirez -Director of Athletics Rio Grande City ISD

Region 6 Lynn Pool – Assistant Director of Athletics Austin ISD

Region 1 Max Kattwinkel – Director of Athletics Lubbock-Cooper ISD

## THSADA Hall of Honor

Dr. Susan Elza – formerly-UIL Director of Athletics

Shawn Pratt – Assistant Superintendent McKinney ISD

Rodney Chant – Executive Director of Athletics – San Angelo ISD

David Kuykendall – Retired Frisco ISD Director of Athletics

Content for the conference will include 15 or more TAAC classes, several QUAD A-Aspiring Athletic Administrators sessions, a very special keynote address and of course informative sessions provided by the UIL. We will also feature 3 tradeshow opportunities on Monday and Tuesday. The midday tradeshow on Tuesday will also include lunch! The event will conclude around noon on Wednesday with our always exciting Mega Drawings! Hope to see you all in June.

## THSADA Fall Forum

We will begin the next year with our Annual THSADA Fall Forum. The event is scheduled for October 9-10 and will be held at the Estancia del Norte

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Hotel in San Antonio. We are still working on the agenda, but you can expect to see several TAAC sessions focusing on relevant topics that will give athletic administrators around the state a chance to begin their year prepared to meet any challenges that the new school year may present.

## Region Meetings

The Foundation of THSADA is made up of two things – Our membership and our Region Meetings. Our eight regions each meet 5-7 times per year. The purpose of these meetings is to engage membership on the relevant topics that pertain to state and regional needs. Our Region Directors do an outstanding job preparing an agenda that best fits the needs of the members in their specific region. Content may include – special guests such as Superintendents, CFOs, and guest speakers. We also welcome state associations such as THSCA and TGCA to present information on their associations. Also, part of all meetings are reports from our eight committees, presentations by State Sponsors and of course relevant THSADA State Business. These meetings are attended by well over 2500 members over the course of the year. Professional development doesn't just happen at our three events – we really feel like a region meeting is a great place to network and learn. Contact your Region Director for more information.

Congratulations on being a member of the greatest Athletic Administrator Association in the Country. Hope to see you at a Region Meeting or one of our three cornerstone events soon!

# President's Message – Debbie Fuchs

**H**APPY 2023 to each and every one of you!! I hope the new year is going great for you, and your Spring Sports are moving forward successfully.

The Fall Forum back in October was a huge success and we had great attendance from Athletic Directors, Athletic Coordinators, and Coaches from all over the State of Texas.

Our sessions were very informative and on point with what you are dealing with on a daily basis. We had great panelists who shared and communicated their expertise with all of us. We had our THSADA Board of Directors /Committee Chairs meeting in December at the beautiful Clear Creek ISD Challenger Columbia Stadium community room. (I had to mention that!!!!) We had great discussion and brainstorming to continue to move this association forward for all of us. We approved our 2023 NIAAA Awards, the THSADA Awards and of course, our THSADA Hall of Honor Inductees. Congratulations to David Kuykendall, Rodney Chant, Shawn Pratt, and Dr. Susan Elza. We look forward to celebrating their induction in June!!

We are excited about our upcoming Spring Sponsor Showcase at the Waco Hilton-Convention Center on February 28th-March 1st!! We hope you are planning on attending as we have a strong agenda for you. Thanks to our many vendors for sponsoring this event. I would



like to focus on the Aspiring Athletic Administrators Academy – QUAD A sessions that Past President David Kuykendall and myself are leading with our Executive Director Rusty Dowling. We will have an orientation session to inform and educate our attendees about QUAD A and the association as a whole to start the showcase. We will also

have 2 sessions the next morning that we feel will be extremely beneficial to you as aspiring administrators. Our first session is “Preparing an Athletic Budget” and our second session is “Hiring Coaches/Athletic Staffs”. These 2 sessions will be presented by Athletic Directors who will provide excellent information on these topics. We will continue our sessions for QUAD A in June at our State Conference. Stay tuned for those agenda session topics. Our hope for QUAD A is that it provides and presents a pathway for coaches who would like to eventually pursue a career as an athletic administrator in Texas. David and I hope to see and visit with you in Waco at the Spring Sponsor Showcase.

I want to thank you again for your leadership and service that you provide for your school districts. You make such a positive impact on your coaches and athletes daily! I am honored to serve in my capacity as President of the THSADA and am looking forward to a strong 2023!!



# THSADA Membership & Benefits – Ellissa Unger-Director of Administrative Services

The Texas High School Athletic Directors Association serves as the professional association and advocate for all Athletic Administrators in the state of Texas. THSADA provides professional education opportunities and serves as a vehicle in networking and the exchange of information conducive to all Athletic Administrators. We are close to 2,000 members.

When you become a member of THSADA your membership includes the following:

- A membership is required to attend Spring Sponsor Showcase, State Conference and Fall Forum.
- Your membership card can be downloaded by going to [www.thsada.com](http://www.thsada.com)

and logging in under Member Resources Tab

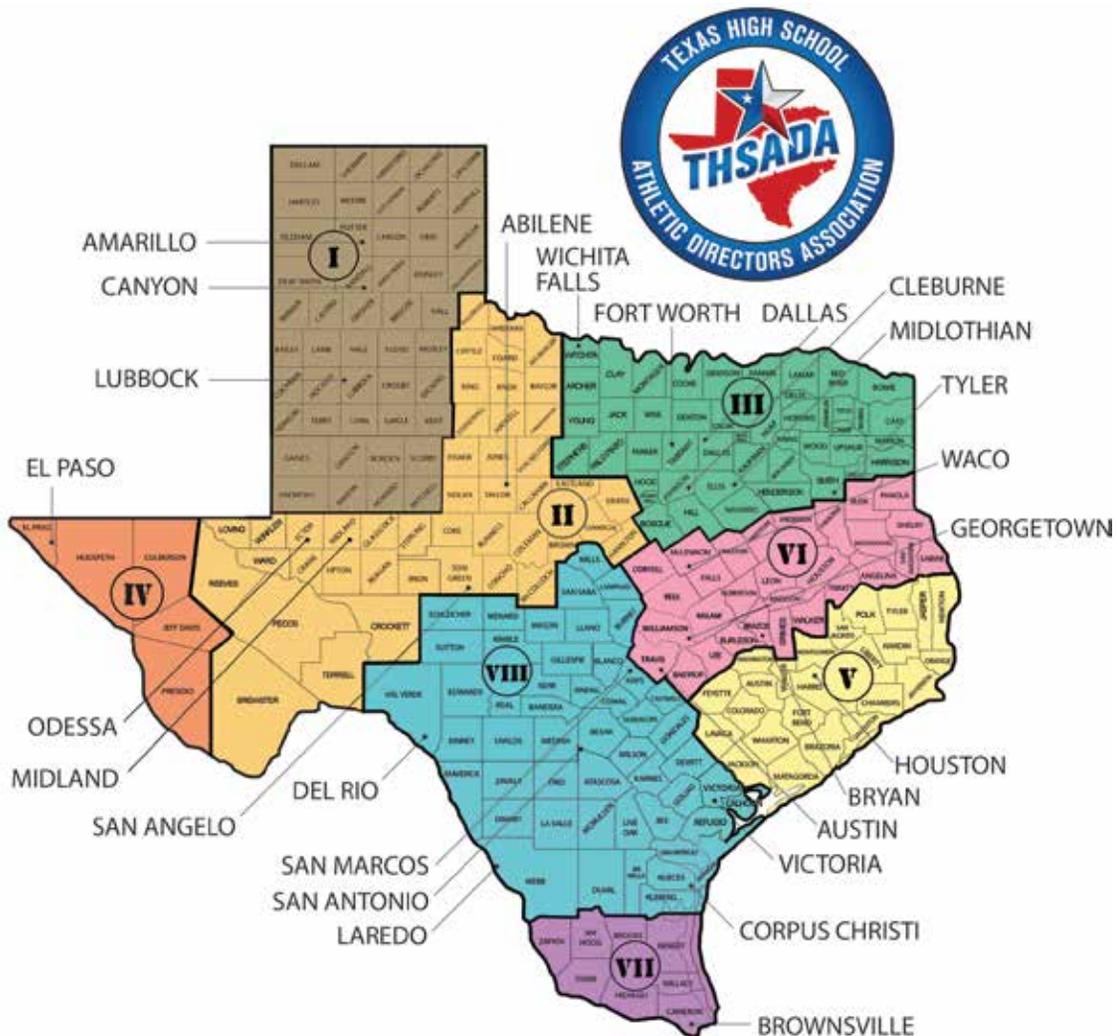
- You must be an Active THSADA member to serve the THSADA in any capacity.
- You must be an Active/Associate member, and you must have registered and paid for the State Conference to view any TAAC videos.
- Membership for the 2022-2023

year began on August 1st, 2022, and will conclude on July 31st, 2023.

- The new membership year will begin on August 1st, 2023.
- Please be advised: No matter the date of when you join the association, all THSADA memberships will expire on July 31st. No exceptions.

## Reminder:

Once you have joined to become a member, no membership can be transferred or refunded after payment is made. If you move jobs or district, please try your best to update your profile so we always have a current ISD, Region and email on record.



# Highlighting Facilities Across Texas – Deena Bosier

## Abilene ISD

High school tennis courts, High School football field, High School softball fields, High School baseball fields, Shotwell Stadium, Shotwell Annex all received Musco lighting.

## Shotwell Annex

Shotwell Stadium Football; Fieldturf, new score boards and new 40 second clocks; Daktronics, Seating; Sturdy Steal, storage, rest rooms and concession stand on site; Dybaco and 8 lane track; Beynon, Abilene and Cooper high school football field, softball field (infield) and baseball field (infield); Fieldturf.



## Construction in Progress

Abilene and Cooper high school Indoor workout facility 75 yard field; Jacob and Martin architect, construction Teinert



## Four Middle Schools

Clack, Craig, Madison and Mann received new grass fields - Dybaco, weight rooms; Jacob and Martin architects, and four lane tracks; Dybaco and Beynon,

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## San Benito

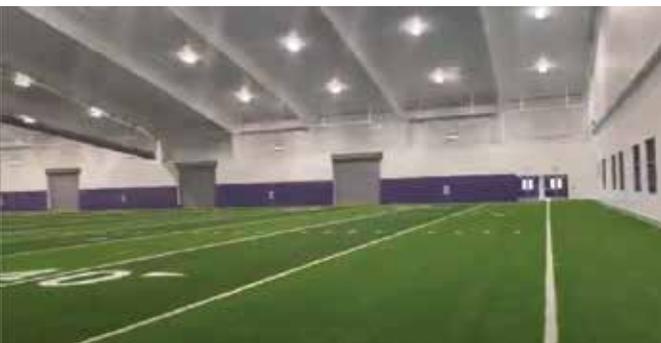
10,000 sqft weight room / 80 yard field-regulated width of a football field plus 10 feet off of each sideline. Field is marked for softball/baseball and soccer. There is a dividing net that can be dropped to split the field as well as a batting cage that can be dropped. This facility is located on our high school campus and sits in the center of our football stadium, baseball/softball stadiums, locker rooms and practice fields. Hellas Construction



Indoor multi-use practice facility 90-yard artificial turf practice field enhanced field markings to include: Football with endzone, soccer, baseball, softball and expanded sidelines. Lobby with additional support rooms: office, increased storage, sports medicine, multiple wall trophy cases in the lobby and a store front entry to the lobby.



Ten mechanical rollup doors, field routine divider, drop netting for baseball/softball and catwalk for viewing and instruction. Weightroom facility 10,000 sq. ft. weight room enhanced floor logos.



40 equipment place mats with logos for the 10,000 sq.ft. weight and condition room

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## Stephenville ISD - Stephenville High School

Designed by Huckabee Architects and built by ICI Construction

New Gandy Gymnasium Seats 1400 Full side by side courts. New locker rooms for both boys and girls sports.



## KellerISD

Each Keller ISD HS (Central, Fossil Ridge, Keller, and Timber Creek) are building 100 yard indoors on each campus. In addition, each indoor will include four drop-down baseball/softball hitting cages, drop-down net/goal post on the north end, and turf inlays for baseball, soccer, and softball. Central will be the first completed within the next couple of weeks. Fossil Ridge by the end of the school year. At the latest, Keller and Timber Creek should be completed by the first day of school, 2023-24.



Central HS indoor on campus (Builder VLK and Candace McShane).



# Division Of Labor : Organizational Hierarchy In High School Athletic Departments – Scott Campbell

No matter the size of the school district the primary goal of an athletic department is to provide the student athletes with the best experience possible. In order to do this in larger school districts efficient planning and organizational hierarchy is at a premium. As school districts continue to grow across Texas we took a look at how some of these larger districts divide out the work amongst the athletic administrators in order to effectively allocate human resources within the district. It becomes a team effort and the staffing must be in place to ensure coverage of all areas. These areas include finances, staffing, facilities, officials, team travel, game workers, scheduling, conflict resolutions and many other day to day operations of a department. In recent years athletic departments have extended their services to include online ticketing and live streaming of athletic events. Each athletic department will have a point person. Titles for this point person will vary from Executive Director of Athletics, Central Athletics Administrator or the most commonly used Athletic Director. No matter what the title says one of the most important roles that this individual plays is to assemble a staff to be an extension of themselves. The director must know the strengths of these individuals and place them in positions to succeed. Getting the right people on the bus and in the right seats is critical. From there, the Director shares the vision of the school district and drives the bus.

In North Texas, Prosper ISD is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state. Enrollment district wide has eclipsed the 25,000 mark. They are led by Executive Director of Athletics Valerie Little, Assistant Athletic Director Michael Sain and Athletic Events Supervisor Nick Sharp.

Steady growth has seen the district add a second high school in recent years and a third coming soon. In order to provide coverage over these schools the Athletic Department divides roles between Executive Director, Assistant AD, Events Supervisor, Natatorium Manager, Athletic Construction Consultant, Assistant to the AD and Budgeting Secretary. In addition to these District level directors, each campus has a MS Coordinator (2) Licensed Athletic Trainers (3), HS Campus Coordinators (2) and various Head Coaches. In order to get on the same page Prosper ISD holds weekly meetings that include MS and HS Coordinators, monthly meetings that include LAT's, Director of Maintenance and Transportation. Annual meetings are held with Booster Clubs, Spirit Groups and Campus Principals to review policies. Prosper ISD has fifteen sports available for students to participate in. In order to provide coverage to all sports; major duties are distributed amongst the Athletic Administration within the district. Prosper ISD divides major duties of the District resulting in about 20 assigned areas to each athletic administrator. Major duties include but not limited to : MS Personnel, Awards and Recognition, Sports Medicine, Rank One, Character Curriculum and 7-12 Alignment. The Executive Director oversees big ticket items such as budgets, officials, school board presentations, DEC's and UIL reports. At the campus level Campus Coordinators are a catch all for all sports and work directly with



**Abilene ISD Athletic Director Jim Garfield**

campus level administration and coaching staff. In an interview with Asst AD Michael Sain he stated “The role of the assistant athletic director is to assist in fulfilling the vision and mission of the department they serve. In order to accomplish this task, the assistant athletic director must “own” every aspect of the areas they are assigned while always ensuring the way they are run fits into the department’s overarching vision.”

Just down I-20 in Abilene, Texas sits Abilene ISD home to 15,000 students. AISD is under the leadership of new Athletic Director Jim Garfield who oversees two high schools and four middle schools. In his first year he has focused on setting clear expectations for staff, UIL and district level compliance and relationship building. This past fall Assistant Athletic Director Del Van Cox oversaw much of the game coordination at the school district’s shared multi-purpose facility Shotwell Stadium. This included Thursday and Friday Night Football games. This Winter, construction is underway on a new press box for Shotwell Stadium as well as indoor facilities on each high school campus. Both AISD athletic

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administrators are overseeing these construction projects. Coach Del Van Cox's role as an assistant extends to MS scheduling with the MS Co-Op, hosting of various tournaments, track meets and game officials. In 2022 Del Van Cox was awarded Region 2 Athletic Administrator of the Year for his efforts. Some would say that the role of the Assistant Athletic Director is to "take some things off the plate" of the Director. However in most districts no one is too big for the many jobs that need to be done for the overall athletic program to be successful. That is what makes the



**Prosper ISD Athletic Administration Staff**



**San Angelo ISD Stadium**

teamwork of an athletic department so unique. Everyone is pulling in the same direction for the good of all student athletes. In most cases athletic administrators have coaching in their background. This experience of being on the sidelines or in the dugouts help them better serve the needs of their respective head coaches.

Further West in the Concho Valley is another larger school district with multiple high schools. San Angelo ISD Athletics is under the direction of Rodney Chant. San Angelo Central HS and Lake View HS fall within this district. His assistant is

longtime athletic administrator Mark Baker. As Director of Athletics, Chant oversees High Schools, High School Coordinators, Facilities, Trainers, Officials, Purchasing and Transportation. Assistant Mark Baker tackles Middle Schools and their staffs along with stadium events including district football games, playoff games and the well run San Angelo Relays held annually in March. Baker's work even extends to Little Olympics and the FitnessGram for the younger levels in San Angelo ISD. We would be remiss if we didn't recognize the importance of athletic secretaries. From answering phones, record keeping, UIL and DEC paperwork and oftentimes being

the face of the athletic department offices. The athletic administrators are often at events, speaking to groups and very visible within the community. Often overlooked by outsiders but always appreciated by those they serve, these administrative support teams are the backbone of a successful athletic program.

As the State of Texas continues to grow so will the need for quality athletic administrative staff to see the need and meet the need. Student athletes are the top priority in all athletic programs. It's our job as athletic administrators to provide our athletes with the best experience possible. From staffing, to security, to scheduling and everything in between districts are prepared to make this experience positive. Districts are recognizing the need to expand athletic departments, to divide the labor and look for opportunities to grow as a district.



# Benefits of the NIAAA – Lisa Langston, CMAA

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) seeks to preserve, enhance, and promote educational-based athletics through the professional development of interscholastic athletic administrators. This mission aligns perfectly with that of state associations like the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association (THSADA). Like the THSADA, the NIAAA appreciates the challenges that athletic administrators face and provides resources to help its members grow and succeed in their profession. NIAAA members can benefit tremendously from the extensive education, networking, and leadership opportunities that the organization offers.



Texas ADs attend the 2022 NIAAA conference in Nashville, TN.

## Education

The NIAAA Leadership Training Institute (LTI) and Certification Program provides a wide variety of educational opportunities for NIAAA members. Leadership Training Courses (LTC) are available year-round via webinars and online courses, and the annual NIAAA National Athlet-

ic Directors Conference (NADC) offers workshops and courses that specifically target the needs and interests expressed by NIAAA members via a membership survey. As an accredited educational institution, the NIAAA ensures that workshop speakers are fully vetted, and all courses are taught by trained and experienced members of the NIAAA National Faculty.

In addition to the LTI courses, the NIAAA also offers a certification program for its members. The NIAAA Certification Program has been granted “full registration” by the National Certification Commission, thereby recognizing the program as one that meets the commission’s rigid standards of excellence. By completing a certification program, an NIAAA member not only furthers their education, but also strengthens their resume – particularly for job postings that state a preference for NIAAA certification.

## Networking

Through membership and involvement at the national level, NIAAA members have the unique opportunity to connect with other athletic administrators across the country. These networking opportunities can be vital to career growth – providing not only a means to exchange ideas about best practices, but also a way to stay abreast of new career opportunities. By taking full advantage of networking opportunities, an NIAAA member can benefit greatly from the diverse perspectives and vast experience present within the organization.

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Leslie Slovack, Executive Director of Athletics for Richardson ISD, presents at the 2022 NIAAA conference in Nashville, TN.



## Leadership

“A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there.” Through a variety of leadership positions, the NIAAA provides its members with the opportunity to stretch beyond their comfort zone and lead at the national level. Serving on a national committee, facilitating a workshop at the national conference, becoming the THSADA’s next appointment to the NIAAA Board of Directors, or even becoming the NIAAA president – leadership opportunities abound within the NIAAA. By serving others on the national level, an NIAAA member not only strengthens their leadership skills, but also brings positive recognition to their school district and school community.

As a THSADA member who joins the NIAAA, you’ll gain access to these extensive education, networking, and leadership opportunities that the organization offers. Along the way, you’ll have the chance to contribute your unique perspectives to the national discussion, positively impacting coaches and students throughout our great nation. It’s truly a “win-win” situation!

To learn more about NIAAA membership, visit <https://members.niaaa.org/page/Membership>. For more information about the benefits of the NIAAA, see the following:

<https://members.niaaa.org/page/Accreditation>

<https://members.niaaa.org/page/LeadershipTraining>

<https://members.niaaa.org/page/Certification>



**Sandra Mader, Director of Athletic Services in Aldine ISD, receives the NIAAA Frank Kovaleski Award. Brenda Marshall, Athletic Director for Corpus Christi ISD, receives the Bruce D. Whitehead Distinguished Service Award.**

## Athletic Trainers – The Key to Medical Care in Secondary Schools – Josh Bowles

In light of the recent NFL event that occurred on Monday Night Football with Damar Hamlin, the spotlight has never been brighter on the importance of appropriate medical coverage and facilitating care for athletes. As the events unfolded that evening in front of thousands in the stadium and millions more watching on their screens, there was a group of medical professionals that were prepared and responded to the crisis as it transpired. Among those medical professionals were the athletic trainers for both teams. Athletic trainers are highly trained allied health professionals who specialize in the prevention, recognition, evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of athletic-related illnesses and injuries.

Many athletic trainers hold a certification from a rigorous national board of certification agency and in the state of Texas, all athletic trainers must be licensed and maintain continuing professional education to retain and improve upon their knowledge and skills, and to keep their license. Athletic trainers can be employed in a variety of settings, including being a critical component of the secondary education setting. Student-athletes deserve the appropriate care and access to skilled professionals that collegiate and professional athletes receive. After the events unfolded in that NFL stadium, many saw the significant value athletic trainers provide at every event. The advanced training, the knowledge of emergen-

cy action plans, the skills needed for safeguarding athletes through illness and injury, and the facilitation of students to appropriate medical care both non-emergent and emergent. The great state of Texas has seen a fair share of athletic-related emergencies over the years and in many cases, could have had significantly different outcomes without the availability and quick intervention of qualified and skilled healthcare professionals. Some events, unfortunately, have ended tragically; while not in all cases, some situations may have had a different result with access to skilled professionals and equipment. The value of services that athletic trainers provide

*Bowles Continued on next page*



in the secondary school setting are too numerous and expansive to mention in this column, however, from the provision of medical care and the availability of emergency management for those “just in case” moments, athletic trainers at the secondary level are invaluable. Non-emergent injury care and treatment, injury prevention, risk management services, and medical education are a few other examples of the important resources athletic trainers provide to not only their patients but to the school system and the community. Athletic trainers serve essential roles as facilitators of injury and crisis management. Many scenarios that involve campus-wide health matters, including infections, illnesses, multiple injury situations, and medical emergencies involving adult staff, all fall under the active role that the athletic trainer can provide. The continuum of healthcare from patient to other medical services in the community often involves the athletic trainer as the professional who is usually first on scene in injury scenarios. Because athletic trainers are skilled in medical care coordination, a network of healthcare professionals is often established which creates an efficient

healthcare continuum in the community between the school and the rest of the medical community.

The UIL understands and recognizes the value that athletic trainers bring to the secondary school setting as they recommend secondary schools should have access to an athletic trainer. Additionally, the UIL established the Medical Advisory Committee in 2001 which develops position statements along with providing guidelines and recommendations concerning all sports medicine issues. These guidelines are difficult to implement however if the school district does not make the athletic training position in their district a priority. In recent years, secondary schools have seen an increase in athletic trainers employed by school districts however, the increase still leaves too many young athletes without adequate access to medical care on their campus. According to a recent services and locations project conducted by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association in 2020, only 49% of all districts in the state employed full-time athletic training services, and 25% of school districts in the state of Texas did not have any access to an athletic trainer. While this

number places Texas near the top of the pack comparatively with the rest of the United States, there is still room for improvement. All student-athletes in every sport should have access to high-quality and skilled medical care at their games and events. The risk is just too high.

As athletic directors, you understand the importance of safety for all involved in the events and games you manage each season. As administrators and leaders within your organization, you have the privilege in addition to the responsibility to recognize and appreciate the value athletic trainers bring to your school organization. This invaluable resource is often overshadowed by the more positive publicity of state championships and individual or team accolades. Medical emergencies are never a situation any school district wants to face. However, the reality is safety should always be a priority. Let us continue to advocate for athletic trainers for all our athletes in our school districts. Athletics is a high point for so many students and stakeholders for the communities we live in. Let’s keep it that way. Every athlete deserves an athletic trainer.

## Your Signature – Stan Laing

Northside ISD honored Kevin Hamilton as a Northside Hero by dedicating the Clark High School Gym in his memory. Kevin, a long time Northside Coach and Assistant Athletic Director, left his signature with many colleagues and students. Clark High School Gym will now be called Hamilton Gym to honor his legacy.

With the “eligibility” you and I have left, let’s be mindful each day wherever our feet are planted, be it a classroom, in the hallway, in the gym, on the field, wherever we are, we have the opportu-

nity to leave our “signature”.

Being a lefty, I don’t think I will ever have a perfect signature, but I need to keep trying... I shared in my remarks that we are all broken. Kevin, like many of you, are modern day saints, coaches, and teachers that coach the right way for the right reasons. But my best definition of a saint is a sinner who keeps trying, keeps trying to do things the right way for the right reasons. You can only do this if you get to know your own personal signature, what it stands for, and understand how incredibly

important it is what you do for a living. What kind of “signature” do you aspire to leave? My hope for you is that it is a signature like Kevin’s. You can see from the picture of Kevin’s granddaughter Nellie sitting next to his signature placed on the floor.

Nellie should give us all hope for the future. But as we know, we need to embrace the power we have in the present to make certain our “signature” is something we want to be paid forward through those we are responsible to.



# Brownsville Independent School District - Trail Blazers for Implementation of Inaugural RGV Unified Interscholastic Basketball and Track & Field Seasons – Sandra Powers – Asst. Athletic Director (Brownsville ISD) (NIAAA Certified)

After law makers passed Senate Bill 776 during the 87th Texas Legislature, cited as Zariah's Law, took effect on September 1, 2001, BISD Superintendent Rene Gutierrez directed the Athletic department to establish a new division of University Interscholastic League (UIL) athletics. Historically, Brownsville ISD is a pioneer of providing students and parents with inclusion opportunities, as it was the first Rio Grande Valley (RGV) district to transition from a volunteer-based Special Olympics Program to hiring certified teachers to coach their 16-secondary school's SOTX bowling and track teams. At the thirty four elementary schools, students with disabilities invite a friend to partake in adapted physical education activities, and participate in an annual Buddy Fun Meet.

Brownsville ISD Superintendent Dr. Rene Gutierrez's passion to provide the utmost opportunities for inclusion, along with the Board of Trustees, full support for equity, has started a revolution in the RGV interscholastic athletic world. It was no small duty to establish and finance six early college high school unified interscholastic basketball and track and field teams, with 10 middle school unified programs. As districts have statewide report shortages of teachers and coaches, Brownsville ISD has committed to hiring fully certified teachers as coaches who become fully trained and UIL/NFHS certified. This goal sets the district, principals, coaches, athletes and parents as the trailblazers to share best practices that minimize risk and promote meaningful participation



opportunities for all students.

As the assistant athletic director, and director for unified interscholastic sports for Brownsville ISD, I share the following: When I was asked to start this new division of UIL athletics, for our district, I was so excited as I knew I would be given the opportunity to work with so many principals, administrators, general education teachers and coaches who would say "Yes" to working collaboratively in spite of already having a full load of work. The key was to build positive relationships with all stakeholders, as the impact to a student's participation in these programs will forever change their lives and all those that made the commitment to "Include All".

- Step 1. Remain positive and set a clear vision with goals
- Step 2. Form a planning committee (A heart of a champion committee) with all stakeholders
- Step 3. Meet with general education teachers and coaches first so they can share their feelings
- Step 4. Meet with unified coaches and express the importance of teamwork and commitment
- Step 5. Conduct a collaboration meeting together with both the general and unified head coaches
- Step 6. Meet regularly with coaches during the inaugural season and constantly be prepared to make changes
- Step 7. Communicate effectively with all stakeholders
- Step 8. HAVE FUN

Note: The goal of incorporating Unified Sports® programs in UIL and Unified Champion Schools is a joint effort between UIL and Special Olympics Texas to recognize and offer opportunities for students with and without disabilities to compete in UIL sanctioned competitions and activities. The Brownsville ISD Porter Cowboys won the Inaugural Unified Interscholastic Rio Grande Area Basketball Tournament and will compete at the South Region Unified Interscholastic Regional Championship on February 22, 2023, in Corpus Christi, Texas, at Tuloso -Midway High School. Porter HS received a bye and will play the winners of H.M. King ECHS vs. Judson High School at 6:00 p.m.

# Several Key Factors to Consider When Opening a New School – Dena Scott and Grace McDowell

Opening a new school and starting a new athletic program can be a daunting task for an Athletic Director. As a district begins planning to open a new school, regardless of what level, middle or high, it is important to enlist the help of all of those who will be involved with the process. It takes a great deal of teamwork between various departments and staff members to successfully open a school. As the responsibility of establishing the athletic program at a new school falls on the Athletic Director, he or she should be involved in several aspects, including construction, ordering of equipment, and hiring of staff to name a few. Valerie Little, Prosper ISD Executive Athletic Director who has been involved with the opening of two high schools and two middle schools, shared that her top priorities when opening a new school is to “hire a great staff, order equipment, and ensure that facilities are finished on time.”

During the construction phase, it is important to visit the site on a regular basis and address issues as they arise, rather than waiting until construction is complete. A countless number of things can be overlooked during the construction process, including minor or obvious things such as fencing or light switches. The sooner issues are identified during the construction process, the easier they are to correct. Valerie Little advised that athletic directors need to “STAY ON TOP OF IT! Do not wait until after you move into the building to find the issues.” As construction approaches the finish line, Fort Bend ISD Athletic Director, Dena Scott, advises athletic directors to conduct walkthroughs with vendors to plan and maximize space for areas like weight rooms, training rooms, locker rooms, storage rooms, etc.

In the planning stages, it is imperative to establish some timelines for purchasing of equipment and for hiring staff. The timeline for ordering equipment needs to be set based on equipment that takes longer, such as uniforms, wrestling mats, and weight room equipment. The timeline must also align closely with the estimated completion date for the facilities. It is also important to order equipment according to season, with equipment and uniforms for fall sports such as football and volleyball to be ordered first. Dena Scott suggests that athletic directors opening new campuses should “work with vendors to come up with a list of equipment and supplies that will be needed, then have coaches review the lists to ensure everything is covered.” She also advises athletic directors to have a process for receiving shipments of equipment and supplies, as well as a process and location for storing equipment and supplies delivered before the building is open. It is important to keep track of shipments received, ensure proper storage, and arrange for delivery to the campus or pickup by staff.

The hiring of staff is an integral part of establishing an athletic program at a new school. The hiring timeline and hiring process for each type of position should be determined in advance. The athletic director will likely need to work closely with human resources and district administration to establish the timeline, hiring process, and number of coaching positions that will be available. The grade levels a school opens with will determine the levels of sports that will be offered. If a campus opens with 9th and 10th grades only, they will likely only compete at the freshman and junior varsity levels for team sports. In this case, the number of coaches may not be equal to

a full campus with all grade levels.

Coordinators traditionally should be hired first, especially if the hiring process for head coaches and assistant coaches include the Campus Coordinator. Prosper’s athletic director targets hiring the Coordinator in December, while Frisco ISD has historically posted the Coordinator’s position in December, interviewed in January, and hired the final candidate at the February Board meeting. For both Prosper and Frisco ISD, the next athletic hire is the Assistant Coordinator. Head coaches are typically hired next, followed by assistant coaches. It is advisable to hire sports by season similarly to ordering of equipment, beginning with fall sports and working to the spring sports.

Once boundaries are decided for the new campus, it is important for the new coaches to begin identifying student athletes who will be attending the new campus. If possible, staff should visit current feeder pattern campuses to provide information about upcoming athletic program events such as summer strength and conditioning dates, sport specific tryouts dates, and parent/student athlete meetings. Providing the coaches hired for the new campus as many opportunities as possible to work with their student athletes during the spring and summer prior to the school opening is critical to begin building relationships and community before the first day of practice or school. Athletic directors should be careful to wait until a coach is officially hired before allowing them to have contact with students.

It’s important to work with coaches at both the campuses the students are coming from and the new campus to establish positive working relationships. The expectations should be

**Scott** Continued on next page



clearly communicated to both groups. The coaches from the new school need to be sensitive when working with the coaches from the previous school to help make it a smooth transition for the students, parents, and the commu-

nity. In addition, the coaches from the sending school should be encouraging, supportive, and positive with their current student athletes about their move to the new school.

Beginning the process of opening a new school is an exciting, challeng-

ing, and rewarding experience for an athletic director. When done well, it can create a special community culture where students, staff and parents can come together and find a common connection that will last a lifetime.

## Regional News: Official Shortages Across Texas – Michael Mackeben and Michael Bass

There probably isn't a district or sport in Texas that hasn't felt the effects of official shortages over the last few years. Mike Fitch, TASO Executive Director, recently shared that shortages are wide spread, especially with the rural chapters where the population is less and distance is more wide spread. The urban areas have shortages, but have a larger population to recruit from. Some sports like football, that had their highest count in 2018, saw a 10.5% decline in 2020, but have been rebounding with increases of 6.1% in 2021 and 6.3% in 2022 bringing us to 100 officials below 2018. TASO is hoping football will exceed 6000 officials statewide for the first time in 2023. Volleyball also saw decreases during COVID, but has seen increases of 5.0% and 5.2% over the last two years.

In surveying chapters across the state, the winter sports are reporting more shortages. Several of the urban soccer chapters have reported that they are struggling to cover the usual Tuesday and Friday sequence of games. They have had to reduce the number of officials covering games and many areas are having to spread games throughout the week, such as playing Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in order to cover all of the games. Mike Fitch reported that one challenge with soccer is that the high school season goes head to head with the club season, therefore officials have to choose whether to make more per game with UIL games or make less and officiate more games with club where

they can take home more money, but work considerably more games.

In a random sampling of areas across the state to include places like El Paso, Austin, San Antonio, Rio Grande Valley, College Station, and Houston, the various associations are consistently 20-100 below the number of officials needed to cover games during the normal game schedules such as Tuesday-Friday games. Fall sports seemed to fare better than winter sports and most areas didn't report softball or baseball as they are just getting started and still enrolling members.

Chapters across the state are adapting to the shortage by reducing the size of the crews who officiate games. Many areas have had to vary the days that games are held, with some playing Tuesday-Friday and others Wednesday-Saturday. In sports like basketball, sixers have been used to maximize officials at one site. Single games continue to be a challenge for all sports as it uses a crew for a single game, creating the need for more officials at another location. Spreading games out to multiple days has helped many chapters. However, this becomes a challenge for school districts where transportation departments are short drivers and already taking athletes to games much earlier to allow drivers to return to run school dismissal routes.

Recruitment of officials is ramped up statewide. Chapters are using all forms of advertisements to include social media, newspapers, setting up tables at local recreation parks and

club leagues, as well as getting coaches and athletic directors to encourage high school and college students to continue their athletic careers by going into officiating (which could provide an excellent income for someone on a school schedule). Mike Fitch pointed out that every new school that opens will require 30-35 additional officials over the course of a school year. He pointed out the Battlefields to Ballfields scholarship program, that was founded by Mike Pereira (former VP of NFL officiating), is an opportunity to provide scholarships for active and former military to become officials. Getting this information to our active military and veterans could help them to save the officiating cost of equipment, uniforms, and membership fees while helping to improve high school athletics in your area. Information can be found at: <https://www.battlefields-2ballfields.org>

Chapter recommendations are to avoid last minute changes and especially additions which stretch crews that are already thin. Later starts help with officials working full-time jobs to arrive on time. Prompt payment is a reoccurring theme that pops up among chapters. For many officials, this is their main source or a supplement to their income, so they need consistent pay through the seasons. Application of the TASO Abuse of Officials Policy that is supported by UIL, THSADA, THSCA, and the TGCA is an initiative

Regional News Continued on next page



we can all help with, to improve the game environment.

Moving forward, the pay increase will likely help to retain officials, according to Mike Fitch, but probably won't have as much impact in attracting new officials. Officiating is an important aspect of any game, but unless we add to the pool, we will continue to

have partial crews, added transportation costs, and more late nights. Creating a positive game experience for fans, players, coaches, and officials will help to attract new officials into the field. Adding the Team Sport Officiating course that TEA approved could help to attract high school students while providing a good paying job that works well with college and trade

school schedules while keeping our athletes involved with the games they love. Chances are you know several current or former student/athletes who we could refer to your local chapter. Imagine if every coach and athletic director could recruit just one student/athlete to become an official!

# THSADA Financial Report

## August 2021 - July 2022

<b>THSADA Revenue</b>	<i>8/2021-7/2022</i>
Sponsorships	\$586,521.50
Conference Registration	52,600.00
Exhibitor Fees	125,840.00
Additional Badges	2,200.00
Golf Tourn.	10,500.00
Raffle Tickets	4,080.20
Hall of Honor Banquet	4,100.00
Fall Forum	7,350.00
Spring Sponsor Showcase	15,765.00
Memberships	86,215.00
Sale of Merchandise	1,260.00
NIAAA Webinar	2,893.00
Interest-Savings	10.14
Misc.*	137.00
<b>Total Net Income</b>	<b>\$899,471.84</b>

<b>THSADA Expenses</b>	<i>8/2021-7/2022</i>
State Conference Exp.	\$31,494.18
Fall Forum	16,847.60
Spring Sponsor Showcase	28,610.09
Scholarships	2,500.00
Hall of Honor Banquet	815.00
NIAAA	232.29
Contracted Services	381,713.00
Operations	89,394.37
Meals-Entertainment	9,172.87
Advertising	2,668.38
Board	2,969.31
Travel	18,471.26
Dues	125.00
Misc.,	-
Registrations	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$585,013.35</b>



