

***I think you will agree that the 2012 TASA/TASB convention knocked it out of the park!*** From the informative best-practice sessions presented by educational leaders including international school reform guru, Phillip Schlechty, to networking opportunities and general session keynoters such as educational policy analyst and former Assistant Secretary of Education, Diane Ravitch – this conference truly ranked at the top in terms of impact and relevance.

My leadership role in the TASA organization offered a rare opportunity to view this year’s convention through a different lens and look critically at its creation from start to finish. I was always aware that it took planning, but this time my perspective was unique. Behind the scenes, I observed the commitment, creativity, and collaboration required for quality results: an important reminder of the critical components necessary to reach our desired goal of transformation.

The promise of a new educational system is poised to begin with the naming (through SB1557) of the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium. Twenty-three school districts have accepted the challenge of working together, beginning in late October, to create a pilot for transforming the standards, assessments, and accountability systems currently in place. We will need a united front from everyone, not just the selected districts, as we all have a stake in the outcome.

If your district is among the 80+ percent of school districts in Texas that have passed the high stakes testing resolution, I applaud you! That number is commendable; however, our organization’s goal is to achieve 100 percent participation by the time the legislature convenes in January so there will be no question about the message we want our elected officials to hear. You can also help to expand our outreach efforts by asking your city officials or local chambers of commerce and parent teacher organizations to pass a resolution of their own. More information and sample resolutions may be found on the TASA website at [www.tasanet.org](http://www.tasanet.org).

General Looney paralleled our work with his and described it as, “...creating America’s tomorrows today,” while Diane Ravitch applauded our “incredible courage” for saying “no” to high stakes testing. All our speakers brought powerful and pertinent messages. As the momentum for change continues to build, my wish is that this convention has left you reflecting on what inspires and motivates you as an educator. I also hope that it serves to reaffirm your commitment to transformation – the dream to help all students be successful *for their future!*