

Myth Buster: Facts About How Policy Service Supports Texas School Boards and Education Leaders

Get the facts on how TASB Policy Service is helping Texas school districts navigate education policy with expert guidance, legal resources, and personalized support.

Myth: “TASB Policy Service’s Legal Framework is an unnecessary interpretation of the law, and districts can just reference the Texas Education Code or other laws for guidance.”

This is false.

It’s essential that school leaders know how to reference the Texas Education Code or other applicable laws for guidance. However, it is not feasible for volunteer school board members, administrators, parents, and members of the community to read through and analyze dozens, if not hundreds, of pages of laws or regulations for every question they might have. This is particularly true for administrators seeking guidance during an incident or crisis.

That’s why TASB Policy Service’s copyrighted Legal Framework was developed nearly 48 years ago. Since that time, the goal has always been to provide an accessible and accurate compilation of applicable laws that affect school districts, educators, administrators, parents, and boards and that relate to district governance, management, and operations. The framework draws from many sources of law that have an impact on school districts, including Texas Education Code, Administrative Code, Government Code, federal laws and rules, Commissioner rulings, court cases, and attorney general opinions. Of course, references and citations to source materials are always provided should additional information be needed or if someone wants to dive deeper into a topic.

Additionally, the Legal Framework is especially helpful to the estimated 980 school districts in Texas that don’t have in-house legal counsel to provide assistance.

Notably, the Legal Framework also organizes applicable laws by topic and subtopic in a user-friendly format that matches the organization of a district’s local policy manual, making it easier for readers to find the relevant portions of the law that relate to local policies.

Myth: “TASB Policy Service mandates policy changes to districts that must be approved as written by member school boards.”

This is false.

TASB Policy Service offers districts model language for compliance with applicable laws and regulations, but member school boards are always encouraged to customize their local policy language to align with district needs and practices.

In fact, since 1975, TASB Policy Service has helped its member districts meet the challenges of a rapidly changing statutory and regulatory framework for school district governance and management. That extensive expertise includes a team of policy consultants whose primary mission is to provide customized support to each member school board through policy reviews, edits, and updates. These consultants can help address policy concerns and help save time, money and effort by drafting policy revisions that are tailored to a district's needs based on conversations with district representatives. This individualized support helps ensure policies reflect the district's unique needs as documented in their customized policy manual.

During the 2024 TASB Member Survey, satisfaction among respondents with Policy Service was 4.6 out of 5, reflecting that commitment to quality and service.

Myth: “Districts don’t need regular policy updates to keep up with changes in law.”

This is false.

Education laws are constantly evolving and changing based on many sources, including the Texas Legislature, U.S. Congress, agencies such as the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or U.S. Department of Education, court rulings, commissioner decisions, and attorney general opinions.

In fact, during the 2023 Legislative Session, out of the 1,246 bills that passed, at least 237 had relevance for school district operations and governance. A core responsibility of school boards is making informed decisions about policy that comply with law and reflect district goals, values, and practices.

To support school boards in this work, TASB Policy Service issues updates twice a year to help ensure locally elected boards understand relevant changes in law, rules, and guidelines.

In each of these numbered updates, TASB Policy Service recommends revisions to local policies based on changes in law and district practices. However, each board is free to adopt, reject, or amend those policy updates to best match district needs.

Over time and without regular reviews and updates, local policies may become out of date, no longer align with district practice, or fall outside of what is allowed by law or regulation. Regular updates help minimize legal risk and ensure school boards have the policies in place to fulfill their governance responsibilities.

Myth: “TASB Policy Service offers an interpretation of the law that is “woke” and anti-parent.”

This is false.

TASB Policy Service encourages all member school boards to customize their local policies to align with district practice and needs. Local policy language is wholly within the control of the local school board.

TASB doesn’t make the law; legislative bodies and courts do. The approach taken by TASB’s Policy and Legal Services is legally prudent so that school districts can minimize the risk of costly lawsuits or other legal distractions. This conservative approach means TASB does not encourage operating on the margins or the edges of the law. TASB policy consultants help districts develop local policies for adoption that meet the needs of the district while staying aligned to recent court decisions and regulatory updates. Many districts use the model local policies as a starting point to develop their own customized policies that best meet the needs of their school communities.

Myth: “TASB Policy Service is too expensive and not worth the cost for districts.”

This is false.

TASB Policy Service provides tremendous value and saves member school boards time, money, and effort. The average cost of Policy Service, including membership, Policy Online®, and all updates during a legislative year is \$7,200, a small investment to gain access to high-quality and legally vetted policy language and resources.

In fact, consider the two numbered updates issued annually by TASB Policy Service to capture changes in laws and regulations that impact public education in Texas. Each update, on average, takes more than 200 hours of legal time to create. At a conservative cost of \$250 per hour, this legal work provides an approximate value of \$50,000 per numbered update — or \$100,000 per school year. This amount does not take into account the one-on-one support provided by the district’s policy consultant.

Should every Texas school district decide to do this work on their own, that could potentially divert millions in school funding away from students and classrooms to attorneys and staff. It would also be an inefficient use of taxpayer money.

In short, TASB believes TASB Policy Service is well worth the minimal cost as it provides an unparalleled level of policy expertise and customized support while also providing the best value for public education dollars.