



# Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators

Dr. Alejandra (Alex) Martin, Executive Director  
406 East 11th Street, Suite 105 • Austin, TX 78701  
Phone (512) 494-9353 or 1(800) 346-4111 • Fax (512) 494-9354  
[amartin@taspa.org](mailto:amartin@taspa.org) • TASPA Website: <http://taspa.org>

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## Officers

### President

Sue Sansom  
Assoc. Supt. for Personnel Services  
Judson ISD  
210-945-5610  
Fax 210-945-6922  
[ssansom@judson.k12.tx.us](mailto:ssansom@judson.k12.tx.us)

### President Elect

Jed N. Reed  
Dir. of Staffing and HR Services.  
Lewisville ISD  
(972) 691-4991  
Fax (972) 691-8221  
[reedj@lisd.net](mailto:reedj@lisd.net)

### First Vice President

Marcia Daniels  
Director of Personnel  
El Paso ISD  
(915) 779-4120  
Fax (915) 779-4280  
[mbrown@episd.org](mailto:mbrown@episd.org)

### Second Vice President

Susan Moore-Fontenot  
Dir. of Pers., Elem. & Junior Schools  
Goose Creek CISD  
(281) 420-4860  
Fax: (281) 425-3623  
[sfontenot@gccisd.net](mailto:sfontenot@gccisd.net)

### Secretary

Pamela Hall  
Dir. of Recruitment & Staffing  
Austin ISD  
(512) 414-2713  
Fax (512) 499-0270  
[phall@austin.isd.tenet.edu](mailto:phall@austin.isd.tenet.edu)

### Immediate Past President

Bob Presley  
Deputy Supt. HR/Admin.  
Hays Consolidated ISD  
(512) 268-2141  
Fax (512) 268-2147  
[presleyb@haysisd.net](mailto:presleyb@haysisd.net)

## District Representatives

### District I

Mildred Balanciere  
Director of Classified Personnel  
North East ISD  
(210) 804.7025 ext 392  
Fax (210) 804-7056  
[mbalan@neisd.net](mailto:mbalan@neisd.net)

### District II

Bob Crager  
Director of Human Resources  
Pearland ISD  
(281) 485-3203  
Fax: (281) 412-1540  
[cragerb@pearlandisd.org](mailto:cragerb@pearlandisd.org)

### District III

Penny Benz  
Associate Exec Dir  
Round Rock ISD  
(512) 464-5196  
Fax (512) 464-5043  
[Penny\\_Benz@roundrockisd.org](mailto:Penny_Benz@roundrockisd.org)

### District IV

Dr. Neil Dugger  
Director of Personnel  
Irving ISD  
(972) 215-5225  
Fax (972) 215-5221  
[NDugger@irvingisd.net](mailto:NDugger@irvingisd.net)

### District V

Mary Helen Muñoz  
Asst. Supt. for Special Programs  
Abilene ISD  
(915) 671-4064  
Fax (325) 671-4072  
[maryhm@aisd.org](mailto:maryhm@aisd.org)

### District VI

Melva V. Cardenas  
Exec Dir HRS  
Midland ISD  
(432) 689-1922  
Fax: (432) 689-1932  
[mcardena@esc18.net](mailto:mcardena@esc18.net)

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I present the following testimony on behalf of TASPA (Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators) regarding SB 387 relating to school district employment policies.

We appreciate and thank Senator Wentworth for his concern that the largest number of qualified applicants be found for any given opening in Texas public schools. It is indeed the objective of personnel administrators throughout the state and in schools of every size to accomplish this very goal. However, TASPA is opposed to SB 387 for the following reasons:


1. Every day of instruction is a valuable day. To mandate that a job be kept open and thus have a substitute in the class for ten days, or for ANY specific number of days, is sacrificing the learning opportunities of the students. A vacancy should remain open only for as long as it takes to find a qualified candidate for that vacancy.
2. Holding a vacancy for ten days, whether for a teacher position or for other possible vacancies, may well cost a district losing the most qualified individual for that position to another district where the ten-day cycle is closer to a close for the same or similar position. This will be particularly true for the hard-to-staff areas and for hard-to-staff schools.
3. It is in the districts' and HR offices' vested interest to have the highest number and the best qualified applicants apply for any given job; therefore, districts are using the methods deemed most effective for their specific district to get those vacancies filled. Mandating what vehicle is best for all districts will remove the local control of districts to serve their community in the ways they have found to be most effective in meeting their students' needs.
4. Posting all openings in the district's central office will be time-consuming and staff-intensive to maintain in larger districts, and the impact of increasing the number of applicants to a given position may be minimal, as it is an ineffective way to scan through many openings for the limited number of positions for

which a given candidate may be eligible, and it will not be of any value to prospect candidates who are not close to that location to begin with. For smaller districts this would likely be mandating something they may already be doing, so it is thus unnecessary. Posting at every campus would burden campus staff and increase the labor and time cost by the number of campuses, again without increasing the application opportunity for those outside of the campus area.

5. Personnel administrators utilize a range of recruitment tools in staffing their schools, including but not limited to hosting district recruiting and transfer fairs, internet job postings, online job applications, attending educator preparation program job fairs, posting openings at various district and community locations, having year-round acceptance of employment applications which remain valid for a full year, and utilizing national recruitment services such as Agent K-12, Teachers-Teachers, and Teachers Support Network, to name a few. Mandating a specific list of two or three methods limits the ability of administrators to find the best possible staff to meet the needs of their students, given that methods not currently used in a district but required by SB 387 will take away financial and staff resources that have been otherwise allocated in meeting local needs.
6. Individuals seeking other positions within a district or at other districts can make their interests known to HR or to the principal of the school in which they are interested through their application form and through the multiple venues already in place—Administrators want teachers who want to be at their campus. Many districts already have formal provisions for allowing district employees an opportunity to participate in a process for transferring to another school or position with the district, such as hosting a district recruiting and transfer fair, or having staff fill out forms to indicate their grade or school preference for the next school year. While other districts may not have a formal or structured process, all of them certainly consider and allow staff to participate in transfers insofar as is possible given district needs. As one administrator put it: “If one of my teachers is looking, I’d rather have her look here first!”

Hard-to-staff schools still need to be staffed, and students in those schools deserve quality and experienced educators as much as students at any other school. The ultimate and primary concern in meeting the staffing needs of a district is and should remain fulfilling the educational needs of all students in the most efficient and effective way. Senate Bill 387 does not enhance a district’s ability to do so.

Testimony respectfully submitted March 1, 2005 by:

  
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Dr. Alejandra Ajuria Martin, TASP A Executive Director