



### ***TCWSE Mission***

***Our mission is to build and sustain a diverse community of women educational leaders dedicated to promoting equity and excellence through renewal, mentoring, and career advancement support.***

***TCWSE Reaches 700 Members Strong!  
Congratulations to all for setting a record in our organization! Spread the word and embrace your membership!***



***April 2026***

***"Shower the people you love with love. Show them the way that you feel."***

***~James Taylor***

## **MEMBER ALERT!**

The incredible leadership going on over the last month across our state is unbelievable.....flower bars, leadership lattes, the power of "we", women and the Tetris effect.....see the ideas, pictures and get inspired. The best flattery is stealing an idea for YOUR next meeting or leadership lesson! We are stronger when we learn from each other and take each other to new heights!



### ***Lifting Up...***

***Happy April!*** This month's focus is ***showering others.*** April showers come naturally and remind us of the needed rain allowing our gardens to grow. It is a good time of year to ask ourselves, "Who do we shower and help bring life to?" April is a good time to be the reason someone else grows. It is also a time to recognize that many in our school world are experiencing discomfort, change and adversity. Testing, budget planning during lean times, negativity toward public educators and more all add to stress for many. There are people in our lives that may need a gentle rain to help them ***spring into happiness.*** Is it a particular family member that needs us more than usual? Are we mentoring and helping another leader? Most of us have benefitted from others showering us along our journey. We need to take time to pay it forward. As you shower others, may your spring be filled with a renewed sense of accomplishment and joy for what lies ahead.

***They say April Showers bring May Flowers! May all the seeds you planted in April, watered by the gentle rain of life, bloom into beautiful flowers.***



### **Christie Whitbeck, Executive Director**

Check out this issue for: **President's message, exciting regional conference recaps** from across our state, **upcoming events in several regions, a tribute to a TCWSE Legacy Leader, a call for manuscripts** for our talented writers, **Texas Business Journal link** with TCWSE featured, relevant information from **Raise Your Hand Texas** to stay informed, a **congratulations to two of our members**, and new **Scriptures** of the month focused for the month of April and more! While we work in competitive fields, we must be women who **lift each other up!** Nothing can be more powerful than connecting with a colleague to help us listen, grow and be inspired! For questions about TCWSE contact Dr. Christie Whitbeck, Executive Director at [christiewhitbeck@yahoo.com](mailto:christiewhitbeck@yahoo.com) or [TCWSEexecdir@gmail.com](mailto:TCWSEexecdir@gmail.com).

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## President's Message

### **President's Message**

***Take Flight: Claim Your Power. Elevate Your Impact.***

A Leadership Journey with Sonja A. Brown

#### **April: Building the Runway – Access and Opportunity**

Welcome to this month's President's Message in our *Take Flight: Claim Your Power. Elevate Your Impact* series. Each month, I share reflections and encouragement designed to strengthen you as a leader and strengthen us as an organization.

#### **April is about access.**

In aviation, no flight takes off without a runway. No matter how powerful the aircraft or how skilled the pilot, without a clear path forward, movement is limited. The same is true in leadership. Talent alone is not enough. Preparation alone is not enough. There must also be access.

**“When women leaders have access, opportunity becomes inevitable.” -Sonja A. Brown**

Access creates visibility.

Access creates connection.

Access creates possibility.

And as women school executives, we carry both the responsibility and the opportunity to ensure that access is not limited but expanded.

Throughout our careers, many of us can point to moments when a door was opened, when a voice was invited into the room, or when someone saw potential in us before we fully saw it in ourselves. Those moments matter. They shape trajectories. They change outcomes.

As an organization, TCWSE is committed to creating those moments consistently and intentionally.

Access for all means ensuring that every member, regardless of where she is in her leadership journey, has pathways to grow, connect, and lead. It means being mindful of who is at the table. It also means being mindful of who is not at the table. It means extending opportunities, not just when it is convenient, but when it is necessary.

As we go and grow on our leadership journey let's remember that access is not only something we receive. It is also something we give.

This month, I encourage you to think about how you are building the runway for others:

- *Who are you inviting into spaces of influence?*
- *Who are you mentoring, sponsoring, or encouraging?*
- *Who needs an opportunity that only you can help provide?*

Because when we create access, we do more than support individual leaders. When we create access, we strengthen the entire profession.

Opportunity does not happen by chance. It happens by intention.

And when we are intentional about opening doors, sharing knowledge, and extending opportunities, we ensure that leadership is not limited to a few but expanded to many.

This month, take one action to expand access. Make the introduction. Offer the opportunity. Extend the invitation. You never know how that one act may elevate someone's trajectory.

Thank you for your leadership, your service, and your continued commitment to this organization. Together, we will keep rising, supporting one another, and shaping the future of educational leadership across Texas.

With gratitude and purpose,

**Sonja A. Brown**

President, Texas Council of Women School Executives

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## Honoring a TCWSE Past President (2002-03) and Trailblazer



**Shirley Marie Coleman**, an outstanding educator, mentor, and leader, passed away on February 28, 2026, at the age of 79.

Born in Blanco, Texas, Shirley dedicated her life to education and to the students and educators of Texas. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Sul Ross State University, where she later also obtained her Master of Education in Counseling along with numerous certifications. She began her career teaching kindergarten before moving into higher education and educational leadership, ultimately serving in a wide range of impactful roles over a remarkable 56-year career.

Shirley served as an elementary school principal, Title I/ESL/Bilingual Director, Executive Director of Operations and Special Programs, and Superintendent of San Vicente ISD, a unique school located within the boundaries of Big Bend National Park. She also taught both graduate and undergraduate students as an adjunct professor at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, a role she held from 1976 until her passing. Through her teaching and mentorship, she inspired generations of educators with her insight, experience, and unwavering belief in the power of education.

Known affectionately to friends and family as “The General,” Shirley was a respected and influential leader who, while never serving in the military, led with strength, vision, and compassion. She mentored countless students and educational leaders, leaving a lasting legacy not only through her own work but through the many lives shaped by those she guided.

Her influence extended far beyond her local community. Shirley held leadership roles in numerous professional organizations, including serving as president of the Texas Kindergarten Nursery School Educators of Texas, the Texas Council of Women School Executives, the Texas Association of Rural Schools, and the Beta Iota Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. She also served as president of three Beta Sigma Phi chapters, where she was honored as Woman of the Year in each. Additionally, she served as president of the Association for Compensatory Educators in Texas (ACET) and later as its Executive Director, retiring in 2023. Through these roles, she helped shape education policy, advocate for students, and support fellow educators across the state.

Shirley will also be remembered for her warm strength, gentle spirit, and the kindness she consistently shared with everyone she met. She touched countless lives with her generosity and compassion. Outside of her professional life, she was a consummate cook who found joy in bringing people together through meals, creating moments of connection and lasting memories for family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Bert and Lucille Coleman.

She is survived by her sister, Virginia K. Lee; her niece, Rebecca Lee; her nephew, Bennie Lee and his wife; and numerous cousins and extended family members. Her family, friends, colleagues, and former students will forever cherish her memory and the remarkable legacy she leaves behind.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity or school of your choice, such as Sul Ross State University for a scholarship or the STCH Ministries (originally South Texas Children’s Home) in Beeville, Texas.

A meaningful way to support STCH Ministries is through a gift in honor of loved ones on special occasions or in memory of those who have passed. All Honor and Memorial gifts are placed into permanent funds. A special hand-written acknowledgment will be sent to the person being honored. In the case of a Memorial Gift, the acknowledgment will be sent to the family of the deceased or to the person of your choosing. You may print an Honor Gift Form or a Memorial Gift Form to fill in and send in with your payment. You may also make these gifts online using the Honor or Memorial Gifts form. <https://www.stchm.org/give/#tab-id-3>

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*Let's Celebrate Each Other*

## ***Congratulations to:***

**Dr. Tracie Robinson named Superintendent of Clarksville ISD!**



Read article here:

<https://www.clarkvilleisd.net/index.php?pageID=smartSiteFeed&psqFeed=true&articleID=65905558>

**Congratulations, Tracie!**



***Cicely Alexander named YMCA Woman of Excellence in Lubbock, TX***

**Do you know of a female colleague who has been recognized or recently promoted? Send their name and recognition or new position information to Dr. Christie Whitbeck at [christiewhitbeck@yahoo.com](mailto:christiewhitbeck@yahoo.com) for possible inclusion in the next newsletter.**

## **TCWSE Regional Events Across the State**

**Region 4 Spring Conference, "The Power of We"  
220 in Attendance!**



Keynote Speaker Superintendent Dr. Dana Arreola

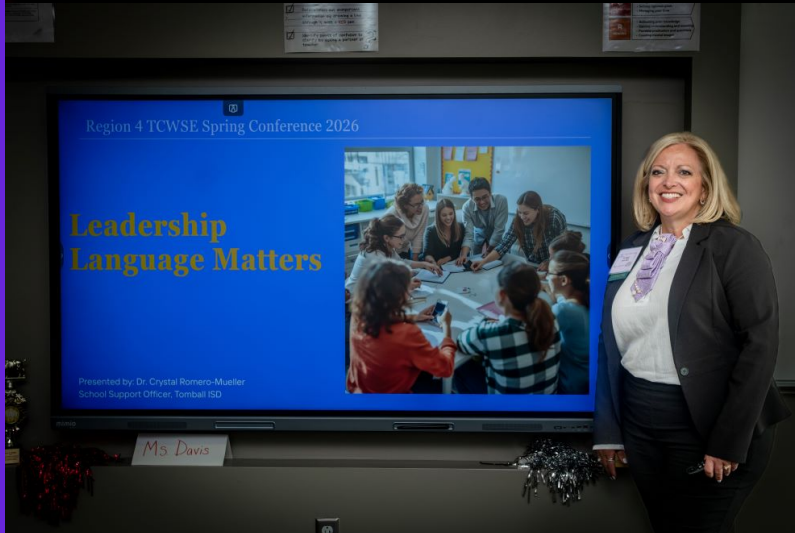


Keynote Speaker Superintendent Dr. Paula Patterson



Breakout sessions taught by local TCWSE members!





Leadership Panel...Beyond the Resume



Conference Leader and Newly Elected President Dr. Regina Sims with Conference Moderator Dr. Andrenetta Scott



Honorary Judge Lucia Bates swears in new officers!





**Region 6 Conference was Amazing in Montgomery!**  
Organized by Amy Busby



# TCWSE REGION 6 CONFERENCE


**FREE  
ENTRY!**  
\*Please Register

At the conference, we will have a day of networking, learning, and empowerment for you! Sessions include:

- AI - The Executive "Easy Button"
- Power of a Personal Brand
- The Happiness Advantage: Leading with Positivity and Purpose
- How Women Rise: Changing for the Better

Monday, March 30th 

9:00 am-1:00 pm 

1520 Lone Star Parkway   
Montgomery, TX 77316

For More Information Contact:  
[amy.busby@misd.org](mailto:amy.busby@misd.org)

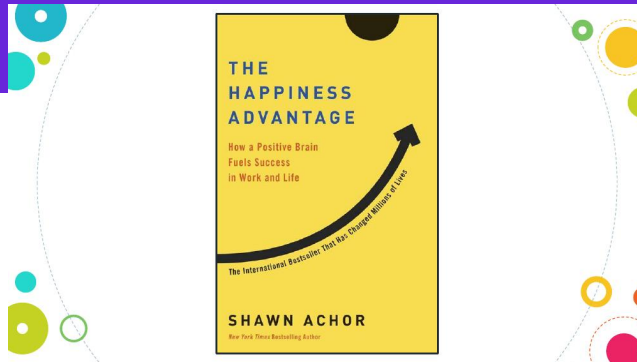
\*Lunch is Provided.

**REGISTER NOW**  





Bridget Kirby presents  
"The Happiness Advantage"



**Women and Tetris Effect**

Talented women are more likely to shy away from applying for job opportunities, particularly more advanced, higher-paying positions, because they're concerned they aren't qualified enough; whereas, men don't seem to worry about their skills matching the specific job requirements as much.

(Coffman et al., 2024)





**TCWSE**  
REGIONS 10 & 11

# REGIONAL MEETING

**Marketing Yourself & The Superintendent Search**

Featuring guest speakers, retired superintendents  
**Kevin Worthy & Doug Williams**

9:00 AM    **MARCH 30**    1:00 PM

*\*1-2pm Region 10 Women Leading Women Mentoring Program*

**Region 10 ESC**  
400 E. Spring Valley Road Richardson, 75081

Register at: [esc10.link/TCWSE33026](https://esc10.link/TCWSE33026)

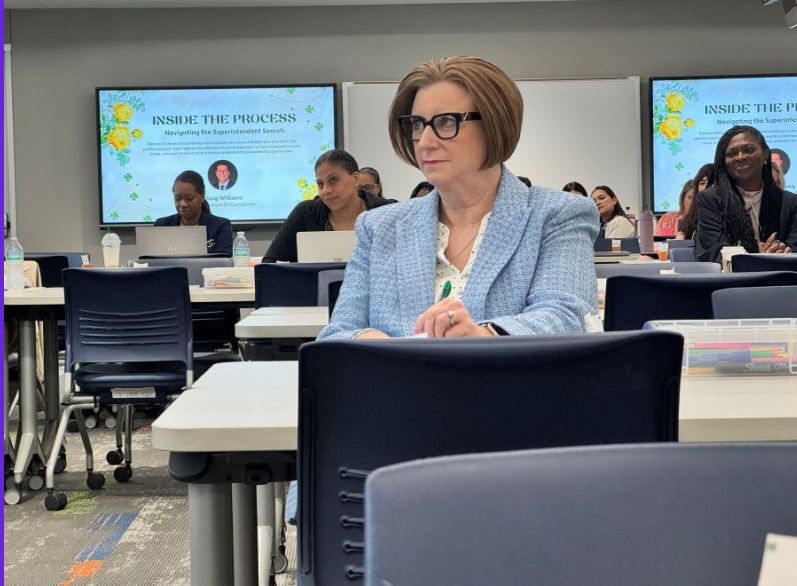


Greetings from TCWSE President Sonja Brown









## Region 13 Book Study Continues



WOMEN  
*Who*  
LEAD

# Book Study

**Women Who Lead: Insights, Inspiration, and Guidance to Grow as an Educator** (Your blueprint on how to promote gender equality in educational leadership and end the broken rung once and for all.)

**SPRING 2026**  
FEB-JUNE | [SIGN UP HERE](#)



**JOIN US!**



TCWSE Region 13

## Region 13 Spring Conference



**TOWSE**  
*Region 13 Chapter*

**SAVE THE DATE:  
SPRING MEETING  
& CONNECTION**

Join us for lunch, connection, and an incredible guest speaker and topic:

**Veronica Sopher**  
"Imposter Syndrome:  
Erasing the Myths"

When: Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 11-2pm  
Where: Region 13 Service Center



*Guest Speaker  
Veronica Sopher*

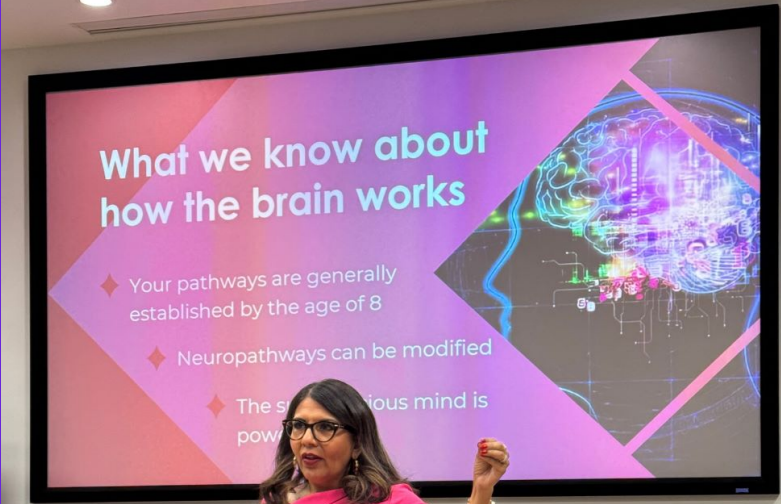
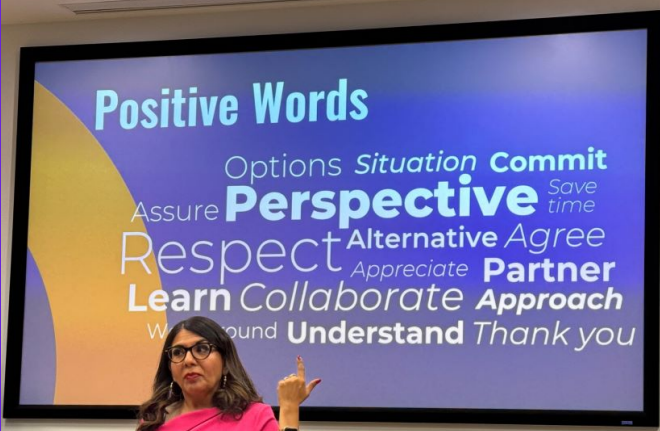


*REGIONAL COUNCIL*  
**TOWSE**  
*Connection and  
Professional Growth*



*Mentorship*

## Veronica Sopher Speaks about "Imposter Syndrome: Erasing the Myths"





**Region 15 Meeting Made Extra Special by CTE Students in Veribest ISD**





Region 19 Hosts Leadership and Lattes:



# TCWSE LeadHERship & Lattes



JOIN US FOR MORNING  
INSPIRATION!

**09:30 AM -**                      **SATURDAY**  
**10:30 AM**                      **APRIL 11TH**

**The Hive Java Lounge**  
8100 N Loop Dr Ste A101





## **Upcoming Events This Year!**

**Region 10 End-of-Year Celebration (Virtual)**

**The Importance of Mental and Physical Wellness**

**Featuring guest speaker Becky Burliegh**

**Date: Friday, May 8, 2026**

**Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Region 17 Regional Meeting Happening Soon!**

## REGION 17 REGIONAL MEETING *RSVP*



### Empowerment Luncheon

Texas Council of Women School Executives

Noon-1:30 pm

May 8, 2026

Texas Tech Credit Union  
6319 79th, Lbk, Tx 79424

### RSVP at the link below:

<https://forms.gle/3LEFCutVYMNDiLoe9>

### *Call for Manuscripts!*

*We have many talented writers among us!*

*Please read message from Kathryn Washington and spread the word!*

Dear Colleagues,

The *Journal of Innovations in Education & Human Development: Research and Practice (JIEHD)* is now accepting manuscript submissions for an upcoming issue.

We invite scholars, researchers, and practitioners to submit original manuscripts that advance research, theory, and practice in education and human development. Submissions may include empirical studies, conceptual and theoretical papers, practitioner-focused articles, and innovative approaches that contribute meaningfully to the field.

**Submission Deadline:** August 1

All manuscripts will undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process.

Authors may submit manuscripts directly via the journal website:

<https://jiejhd.lamar.edu/index.php/jiejhd/about/submissions>

Questions regarding submissions may be directed to:

[dept\\_jiehd@lamar.edu](mailto:dept_jiehd@lamar.edu)

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to showcasing innovative scholarship that informs research and practice in education and human development.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Washington on behalf of

*Editorial Team*

*Journal of Innovations in Education & Human Development*

[https://hihello.me/p/0eb982c2-72ab-4744-8e4d-69b53359ba45?referer=email\\_signature](https://hihello.me/p/0eb982c2-72ab-4744-8e4d-69b53359ba45?referer=email_signature)

## ***Texas School Business Journal See March/April Issue TCWSE Featured on Page 23!***

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## *Messages from our Friends at Raise Your Hand Texas*

Thanks to our partners from *Raise Your Hand Texas* for providing our members with readily available resources:

### **Resources from *Raise Your Hand Texas*:**

[2025 Legislative Session Wrap Up](#) learn what happened in the 89th legislative session.

[A Proposed New Public Education Funding Source: Legacy Education Fund](#) learn about the proposal for a new public education funding source.

[Public Education is Always on the Ballot](#) pledge to vote and support public education advocacy campaigns.

### Opportunities to Get Involved with **Raise Your Hand Texas**

[Join our Across the Lawn emails and texts](#) to learn how some legislation will affect Texas families, schools, and communities.

- [Connect with your Regional Advocacy Director](#) to find out more about local opportunities and how to join advocacy efforts in your community.
- [Join an advocacy core team](#)-nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy teams that anyone can join.
- Check our [event page](#) for events in your community

For more information contact JoLisa Hoover

at <https://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/about/staff/jolisa-hoover/>

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## *Mark Your Calendars for TCWSE Conference 2027 Friday afternoon January 22, 2027 and Saturday, January 23, 2027 Theme: Rooted and Rising*





### **Scriptures of the Month**

*The scriptures below reflect thoughts of **April blessings**. **April** reminds us that God's calendar is divine. It calls us to trust His timing, celebrate deliverance, and anticipate blessings. By understanding the biblical meaning of the month, believers can pray with purpose, sow seeds in alignment with God's will, and expect supernatural results. **It is a month of hope, promise, and abundant life for those who seek Him diligently.***

- **Matthew 28:19-20**- "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
- **Ecclesiastes 3:1**- "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."
- **Psalms 147:3**- "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."
- **Numbers 6:24**- "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

## **2025-26 TCWSE Regional Representative List!**

*Reach out to your TCWSE Regional Representative to get involved  
in your regional TCWSE Chapter*

To find a list of TCWSE Regional Reps <https://tcwse.org/> or see below:

***Reach out to your TCWSE Regional Representative to get involved  
in your regional TCWSE Chapter***

- Region 1 [Michelle DeWitt](#) - Superintendent - Lyford CISD
- Region 2 [Dela Castillo](#) - Chief Financial Officer- Beeville ISD
- Region 3 [Melissa Gonzales](#) - Superintendent Refugio ISD
- Region 4 [Paula Patterson](#) - Superintendent - Crosby ISD
- Region 5 [Bridget Kirby](#) - Assistant Superintendent- Silsbee ISD
- Region 6 [Amy Busby](#) - Asst. Superintendent of Student Serv.- Montgomery ISD
- Region 7 [Misti Smith](#) -Director of Federal and State Programs - West Sabine ISD
- Region 8 [Melissa Reid](#) - TSL Coach - Region 8 ESC
- Region 9 [Carla Hennessey](#) - Superintendent- Montague ISD

- Region 10** [April Estrada](#) - Deputy Executive Director- ECS Region 10  
**Region 11** [Cathy Sewell](#) - Adjunct Professor-Texas Christian University  
**Region 12** [Tiffany Spicer](#) - Superintendent - Waco ISD  
**Region 13** [Alicia Maphies](#) - Director of Curriculum and Instr. - Dripping Springs ISD  
**Region 14** [Chanda Bloch](#) - Superintendent- Hamlin Collegiate ISD  
**Region 15** [Mandy Traylor](#) - Superintendent- Veribest ISD  
**Region 16** [Kelly Legg](#) - Assistant Superintendent- Dumas ISD  
**Region 17** [Cicely Alexander](#) - Director of Counseling- Lubbock ISD  
**Region 18** [Michelle Rinehart](#) - Superintendent- Alpine ISD  
**Region 19** [Blanca Cruz](#) - Human Resources Director- San Elizario ISD  
**Region 20** [Stacia Snyder](#) - Principal- Smithson Valley High School- Comal ISD

TCWSE Membership is open! Go through the TASA portal and be sure your TCWSE membership is current! Remember to keep your contact information current so we can stay in touch! Questions about joining or renewing? Please contact Debbie Craig, TASA Coordinator, Membership & Registration Services 512.477.6361 or 800.725.8272.

[Click here](#) to submit your Regional News and Photos.

## 2026 TCWSE Corporate Sponsors

### President's Sponsors

Carnegie Learning  
 ClassLink  
 Coryell Roofing  
 CW Creating & Managing Wealth  
 edVANTAGE  
 Huckabee  
 PBK  
 WRA

### Platinum Sponsors

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 Just Right Reader  
 VLK  
 Vestige International

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**Scholastic**  
**Sirius Education Solutions**  
**Weathershield Roofing & Sheetmetal**

**Platinum Sponsor**

**Manta AI**

*If you know of an interested sponsor, please direct them to our website or have them contact Jennifer Garrido at [jgarrido@tasanet.org](mailto:jgarrido@tasanet.org).*

**"Our spring has come at last with the soft laughter of April suns and shadows of April showers."**

*~Byron Caldwell Smith*



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