



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.



***Lifting Up...
Happy June!***

Welcome the month of June, a month to regain our strength.

June is a month that typically we have less appointments and required meetings. Once the graduations are complete and budgets approved, hopefully you can find time to recharge or at least plan the recharge for July. On the rare occasion I had a workday with no required meetings, I entered the office with a happy heart knowing I could truly catch up on so many loose ends, writing notes, planning ahead. When even more rarely one of those days occurred when I was off work, I called them my "do nothing" days. I could do whatever I wanted which could mean sleeping late, watching mindless TV, reading, taking a walk or simply "doing nothing." With most of you having Fridays off, I wish for you many "do nothing" days, sunshine and the time to reflect and recharge.

Wishing you a warm and sunny June!

Christie Whitbeck, Executive Director

Check out this issue for: President's message, numerous celebrations of women in our state moving up or honored, a recap of our Leadership You mini conference where your officers and region leaders gathered to learn and plan the 2027 conference and more events for our members, the legacy of Kaye Stripling honored, a link to an applicable article on advancing women in leadership, a new opportunity for reduced tuition costs at Abilene Christian University, a call for manuscripts for our talented writers, and new Scriptures of the month focused for the month of June 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 or TCWSEexecdir@gmail.com.

President's Message

Take Flight: Claim Your Power. Elevate Your Impact.

A Leadership Journey with Sonja A. Brown

June: Resilience & Navigating Turbulence

"Turbulence is not a sign that you are off course. It is often evidence that you are moving toward something greater." - Sonja A. Brown

June has always been a special month for me. It marks another year of life, another opportunity to reflect, and another reminder that growth rarely happens in calm skies. As I celebrate my birthday this month, I find myself thinking less about the years behind me and more about the lessons learned along the journey.

One lesson stands above the rest: Leadership is not measured by how we perform when conditions are perfect. Leadership is revealed by how we respond when conditions are difficult.

As women leaders, we know something about turbulence. We have navigated changing expectations, shifting priorities, staffing shortages, budget challenges, personal setbacks, and professional obstacles. We have experienced moments when the path ahead was clear and moments when it seemed impossible to see beyond the clouds.

Yet here we are. Still leading. Still serving. Still rising.

The truth is that turbulence is not the exception in leadership. Turbulence is part of the flight.

Pilots understand that encountering turbulence does not mean they abandon the journey. They trust their training, remain focused on their destination, and continue moving forward. The same is true for us.

Resilient leaders understand that challenges may shake us, but they do not define us.

Every challenge carries a lesson.

Every obstacle presents an opportunity for growth.

Every setback prepares us for future success.

That is why resilience is one of the most important leadership skills we can cultivate. Resilience allows us to adapt without losing our purpose. It enables us to remain hopeful without ignoring reality. It empowers us to continue leading even when circumstances are less than ideal.

"Resilient leaders do not wait for clear skies. They learn how to fly through the clouds." -Sonja A. Brown

As we continue our journey under this year's theme, *Take Flight: Claim Your Power. Elevate Your Impact.*, I encourage each of you to reflect on the turbulence you have overcome.

Think about the challenges that shaped you.

Think about the moments when you questioned yourself but kept moving forward.

Think about the experiences that strengthened your confidence, deepened your compassion, and sharpened your leadership.

Those moments matter.

They are part of your story.

They are part of your strength.

And they are part of your power.

As we move into the summer months, I encourage you to make time for renewal. Rest when needed. Reconnect with those who support you. Celebrate your accomplishments. Extend grace to yourself. Leadership is not a sprint. It is a journey that requires both endurance and balance.

TCWSE exists to support you throughout that journey. Together, we are building a community where women leaders can learn, grow, connect, and thrive. Together, we are creating opportunities for current and future generations of women leaders across Texas.

Thank you for the work you do every day on behalf of students, staff, schools, and communities.

Thank you for your leadership.

Thank you for your resilience.

No matter what turbulence may come, remember this:

You were built for the journey. And your best altitude may still be ahead.

Steady through the skies,

With gratitude and purpose,

Sonja A. Brown

President, Texas Council of Women School Executives

"How to Help Advance More Women in Leadership"

by Amy Novotney

This article was studied by your officers and regional reps at the recent Leadership You mini conference. Take time to read the science behind how women leaders make work better and how to promote them.

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Let's Celebrate Each Other



Congratulations to:

Alica Press New Superintendent in Angleton ISD effective July 1, 2026!



Misti Smith, TCWSE Region 7 Representative, named Lone Finalist for Superintendent in High Island ISD!



Rachel Robertson named Lone Finalist Panther Creek ISD!

Interim Superintendent, Michelle Davis, now serving as Superintendent of Ezzell ISD!



Ginger Carrabine, Bryan ISD Superintendent, named Region 6 Superintendent of the Year!



Keri Hampton, Superintendent of Brownsboro ISD named Region 7 Superintendent of the Year!



Dr. Kathryn Washington Awarded Tenure at Lamar University!



Kelly Legg, TCWSE Region 16 Representative, now Deputy Superintendent in Dumas ISD!



Tammy Clark, named Deputy Superintendent Granbury ISD!



Dr. Kristen Walls, TCWSE President Elect, new Executive Director of Workforce Innovation at Texas A&M Kingsville!



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 for possible inclusion in the next newsletter.

Honoring a TCWSE Legacy

Kathryn "Kaye" Stripling



The family of Kathryn E. Stripling is deeply saddened to announce her peaceful passing on May 9, 2026.

Kaye was born in Conroe, Texas on September 24th 1940. She grew up in Willis, Texas. She is preceded in death by her parents, Guy and Estelle Stripling of Willis Texas, brother-in-law Bert Dunken, Sugar Land Texas. She is survived by her sister, Peggy S. Dunken of Needville, Texas; nephew Terry Dunken and wife Sherri of Sugar Land, Texas; niece Kathryn Michelle Smith and husband Claude of Austin Texas; great nephews Jackson Smith of Denver, Colorado; Carter Smith and wife Becca of Dallas Texas; great-great nephew Walker Smith, Twins great-great nephew Caleb Earl and great-great niece Sophie KAYE Smith of Dallas, Texas; best friend, companion and caregiver, Lucy Simonton of Montgomery, Texas; and long-time friends, Janet Carr, Diana Henigan and Caroline La Vois of Montgomery, Texas. And of course, her dachshund, Sadie Louise, who was always at her side, even at the poker table, in the house or in the van on the back seat on her pillow and blanket, but touching Kaye with her butt at all times.

Kaye graduated from Willis High School in Willis, Texas, received her Bachelor of Science at Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas and earned her Master's and Doctorate in Education at the University of Houston, specializing in Special Education and Curriculum and Instruction. She began her career at HISD in 1961 as a teacher at Lee Elementary School and later served as principal at several HISD Schools. She became a District Superintendent in 1987, then served as HISD's Assistant Superintendent of Staff Development and oversaw the development of The Rice School/La Escuela Rice in association with Rice University. She was named one of Texas' Top Twenty Texans by Texas Monthly in 1994. In 1995, she became the Southwest District Superintendent. Kaye was appointed Superintendent of HISD in 2001. The State of Texas awarded her the Title of Distinguished Education Leader in 2001. During her tenure as Superintendent of Schools, Dr Stripling led HISD to win the first Broad Prize for Urban Education, the prestigious national award that recognizes progress and innovation in public school systems. She was a recipient of the University of Houston's Distinguished Alumni Award, eSchool News' Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award, and Texas Woman's University's Distinguished Alumnae Award, Dr Stripling was also named a Woman on The Move by the Texas Executive Women, a Champion for Children by Initiatives for Children, Inc.

Kaye retired from HISD in August of 2004, after serving the children of Houston for 37 years.

Retirement for Dr. Kaye did not mean changing her lifelong goal of providing the best public school education possible for all children. Between playing a few rounds of golf and her many card games, Kaye chaired the

American Cancer Fundraiser in Bentwater for several years, served on the Scholarship Committee Willis ISD, and continued working for several years on providing scholarships for HISD graduates who aspired to be teachers. Kaye and friends traveled in her motor home across the USA and Canada. She took a trip of a lifetime with the Houston Zoo to South Africa. Also visited Europe, Turkey, The Ukraine, The Panama Canal, Hawaii and Alaska. Kaye loved People. Kaye loved children. Kaye was told that the "Kids Closet" was always in need of clothes and shoes for school kids. She made it her mission to donate frequently. The Kids Closet is open in conjunction with the food pantry at the Montgomery United Methodist Church. Kaye's lady poker group "The Pokerettes" gladly joined with their support. She then asked the "YaYa" Sisterhood of retired female Superintendents in the Houston/Gulf Coast area to also participate. Everyone opened their hearts and purses.

Thank you Dr. Kaye Stripling for everything you have done through your caring and sharing of yourself to help make this world a better place for so many!

The family wishes to thank the Doctors and Staff at Methodist Hospital, The Woodlands, for their care and compassion during Kaye's stay there. Also, a heartfelt thank you to the Cornerstone Specialty Hospital Doctors and staff that went far and beyond to make her comfortable. May she rest in Eternal Peace.

A Celebration of Life will be held June 13th, 2026, at 11:00 am

Montgomery United Methodist Church

Montgomery, Texas 77356

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Kaye's favorite charity.

Montgomery United Methodist Church

On the Memo line, please write "Kids Closet"

P.O. Box 1330

Montgomery, Texas 77356

Regional Representative Openings

Region 7, currently occupied by Misti Smith, now moving to be Superintendent in Region 5, leaves a vacancy in this area. The region represents many districts including Nacogdoches, Sabine, San Augustine, Big Sandy, Carthage, Chapel Hill, Hallsville, Marshall, Lufkin, Longview, Kilgore, and Tyler.

Region 14, currently occupied by Chanda Bloch in Hamlin ISD, leaves a vacancy in this region. The area encompasses, but is not limited to, districts of Abilene, Hamlin Collegiate, Gorman, Colorado, Trent, Roscoe, Sweetwater, Wylie, Westbrook and Rule.

If interested in Region 7 or 14, please contact Dr. Whitbeck, TCWSE Executive Director, at christiewhitbeck@yahoo.com and get involved in this amazing organization. Interested candidates are presented to the Board for final selection.

As America Prepares to Turn 250!



GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it
in a way that will lead others to join you."

-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg



COUNTDOWN TO AMERICA TURNING 250

Quotes from leaders who have shaped our country

TCWSE Leadership You

TCWSE Officers, Executive Director and Regional Representatives met at the Hotel Galvez in Galveston, TX on June 4 and 5, 2026. The purpose of this "mini" conference was to plan for the January all member conference, to share ideas for regional meetings during the year and to share inspirational leadership with each other. See highlights of our meeting below and mark your calendar for January 22 and 23, 2027. It's going to be spectacular!

Special thanks to our amazing sponsors: PBK, Class Link, Curriculum and Associates, WRA and Huckabee! We are grateful for your continued support of TCWSE!

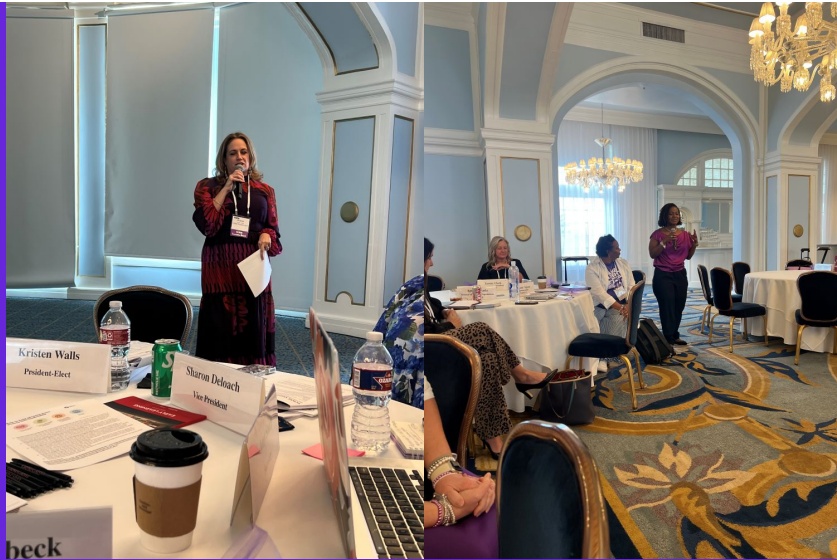




Your 2026 Board Pictured Left to Right:
Sharon Deloach Vice President, Christie Whitbeck Executive Director, Paula Patterson Historian, Sonja Brown President, Kristen Walls President Elect, Amy Sharp Secretary



Learning our history, discussion and sharing of ideas



Kristen Walls shares plans for Conference 2027, "Rooted and Rising"



Paula Patterson and Sonya Brown Lead Discussion on Mentoring vs. Sponsorship



Reception Sponsored by PBK





Officers and Regional Leaders for 2026-27



Your 2026 Board and TASA Representatives Debbie Craig and Jenny Jones



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



Book Study Continues Region 13's Dr. Lindsie Almquist

You can still join in for great conversation
Tuesday, June 30 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. via zoom

Quick Link: Join the meeting now

Actual Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZDUzMjhiODYtMzhkMy00MzE1LWFiMjUtYmJlOWQ1MmRkZjdl%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%229625a507-b447-4eaa-8ea1-b8ef05a9da11%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%229bb30a58-c0c6-48b0-a602-670487eceb6e%22%7d

Meeting ID: 232 096 503 138 83

Passcode: GV39BN7g

Dial in by phone

+1 929-352-1717,,345617793#

Phone conference ID: 345 617 793#

The image is a promotional graphic for a book study. At the top left is the TCWSE Region 13 Chapter logo, which features a white star with 'TCWSE' and 'Region 13 Chapter' written on it, set against a purple circular background. To the right of the logo is a photograph of a book cover with the title 'WOMEN Who LEAD' in gold and white text. Below the book cover, the words 'Book Study' are written in a large, red, cursive font. Underneath that, the book's subtitle is provided: '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.)'. Below the subtitle, the dates 'SPRING 2026 FEB-JUNE' and a 'SIGN UP HERE' link are displayed. At the bottom, there is a yellow 'JOIN US!' button flanked by two sets of three white dots, and the TCWSE Region 13 logo.

TCWSE Partnership with Abilene Christian University

TCWSE Officers have engaged in an MOU with Abilene Christian University. This allows our members to waive application fees and to receive 10% off tuition. If you are considering a higher education degree and you might want to take advantage of this opportunity, contact Sheree Bogny at:

Sheree Bogany, M.S.

Executive, Corporate & Community Partnerships

sheree.bogany@acu.edu | 281-685-0982

[Visit me on LinkedIn](#)

onlineadmissions@acu.edu | 855-219-7300

[Refer-A-Wildcat: Invite a friend, earn \\$500](#)

Abilene Christian University
16633 Dallas Parkway, Suite 800
Addison, TX 75001



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://jiedh.lamar.edu/index.php/jiedh/about/submissions>

Questions regarding submissions may be directed to:

dept_jiedh@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

Scriptures of the Month

The scriptures below reflect thoughts of June Blessings

1. **Matthew 5:16** - "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
2. **Romans 15:13** - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him."
3. **Philippians 4:6-7** - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, present your requests to God."
4. **2 Corinthians 9:8** - "And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."



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 OPEN-PENDING
- 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 OPEN
- 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 OPEN
- 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

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If you know of an interested sponsor, please direct them to our website or have them contact Jennifer Garrido at jgarrido@tasanet.org.

America turns 250 on July 4, 2026!

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." – Psalm 33:12

*Happy
250th
America*

There will be no newsletter in July.

See you in August!

Enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation.



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Our mailing address is: TCWSExecdir@gmail.com

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