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## **Grant Program Targets Loss Prevention**

(Austin) – Grants totaling \$550,000 have been awarded to 211 public school districts and education entities by the Texas Association of School Boards’ (TASB) Risk Management Fund. Grant monies help implement loss prevention and safety initiatives to raise awareness of safety issues and reduce the potential for property losses and on-the-job injuries. Since 1998, the Fund’s Loss Prevention Grant Program has distributed 1,992 total grants of more than \$5 million to Fund members in the workers’ compensation and property/liability programs.

“This year, more than ever, the need to prevent losses and protect employees is critical because the Fund’s members face such tough financial decisions. This partnership has been successful in protecting valuable resources through education and providing funding for identified exposures,” said Clem Zabalza, director of TASB Loss Prevention Services. “The Fund’s continuing commitment to the membership is evident by not standing down and giving back when the need is even greater,” he said.

The 2011 grants were awarded to 197 school districts, three regional education service centers, four county appraisal districts, four community colleges, and three shared service arrangements. Workers’ compensation grants focused on fall prevention, personal lifting devices, and personal protective equipment. Facilities security initiatives, driver improvement, and vehicle safety were the primary areas receiving grants under the property/liability program.

“This year’s response to the program was higher than in previous years, and it is always a difficult task because applicants really examine their exposures and how to best address their needs,” Zabalza said. “Keeping in mind that many members started their budget processes earlier, we made a commitment to begin our program earlier. This meant we were able to get grant awards in the recipients’ hands faster so their loss prevention initiatives could get rolling and gain the greatest benefit,” he said.

“The Fund Board has made this program possible by its commitment to provide resources that put priority on preventing losses and elevating safety in the workplace. For the

past 14 years, the Loss Prevention Grant Program has been vital in raising awareness and reducing injuries and losses to our members. We will continue to champion the needs of our members so they can educate their staffs about workplace safety and resource protection. The Fund remains strongly committed to our partnership with members by supporting their loss prevention and safety initiatives in these hard economic times,” he said.

The TASB Risk Management Fund is a self-insurance pool serving Texas school districts, community colleges, education service centers, and county appraisal districts. The Fund has been in existence since 1974 and provides workers’ compensation, property, liability, and unemployment compensation coverage to more than 1,100 members. Services range from loss prevention and free member training events to online resources, grant programs, and claim forms.

TASB is a voluntary nonprofit association established in 1949 to serve local Texas school districts. School board members are the largest group of publicly elected officials in the state. The districts they represent serve more than 4.8 million public school students.

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