

**Final Culminating Report
Task Force on TLA Districts
Texas Library Association
April 15, 2011**

In June 2009, the Executive Board of the Texas Library Association voted to form the Task Force on TLA Districts. This Task Force is an outgrowth of the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force in which the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force members were divided about the viability of districts.

Current members are:

Sharon Amastae, Chair, Camino Real Middle School, El Paso, District 6
Walter Betts, Texas Christian University, District 5
Mary Alford Cohrs, Bellaire City Library, District 8
Stephany Compton, Texas Woman's University, Denton, District 7
Ellen Eyberg, El Paso Public Library, District 6
Debbie Garza, Dawson County Public Library, District 9
Maribel Garza-Castro, 2010-11 Executive Board Liaison, 2011-12 President
Karen Locher, University of Houston-Victoria, District 4
Shirley Martyn, St. Mary's University, District 10
Constance Mathany, Texas Comptroller's Office, District 3
Karen McIntosh, Amarillo College, District 2
Maria Elena Ovalle, Region One ESC, Edinburg, District 4
Angela Skaggs, Angelo State University, San Angelo, District 1
Mary Jo Venetis, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, District 5
Jerilynn Williams, 2011-12 Executive Board Liaison, 2012-13 President

The charge from the TLA Executive Board asked the Task Force to:

1. Evaluate the results from the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force survey of the TLA membership in 2009 related to districts as well as other comments and recommendations of members and member groups during the 2009 Annual Assembly and such other data as would be thought desirable.
2. Recommend if TLA should continue to be subdivided into geographical groups; and if so, how the geographical boundaries should be drawn and what would the purpose of such units be.
3. If geographical units are thought to be unnecessary in the future, recommend strategies for involving members and member groups throughout the state in TLA activities and governance.
4. Submit a preliminary report to the TLA Executive Board by March 1, 2010 and dialogue with members and member groups during the 2010 Annual Conference

regarding the Task Force's recommendations. (Note: The submission date of the Final Report was first changed by the TLA Executive Board to the 2010 Annual Assembly, and subsequently to the 2011 Annual Conference.)

The Work of the Task Force

Our first meeting was held at Annual Assembly in 2009. A wiki was set up to help coordinate and share our work. The results of the section of the 2009 Transforming TLA Structure Task Force survey that related to districts were analyzed by Mary Jo Venetis. Task force members attended the 2009 District Fall Workshops throughout the state, discussing the issues presented in our charge and gathering ideas and opinions from TLA members. We communicated through our TLA listserv and wiki and met via conference call several times. A preliminary report was submitted to the TLA Executive Board and Council at the 2010 Conference. Task Force members visited all District Caucuses during Conference and comments from members were also received at the Membership Meeting. Between Conference and Annual Assembly, our Preliminary Report was posted on the TLA website with an area for comments and comments were also sent directly to Task Force members.

When a Final Report was submitted at the 2010 Annual Assembly, Council decided that the Task Force proposals should be discussed further at the 2010 Fall District meetings. A summary of each district meeting and comments from members were posted to the Task Force wiki. The Executive Board further directed the Task Force to survey the general TLA membership during the spring of 2011. These survey results were analyzed, also by Mary Jo Venetis, and the Task Force met via conference call to develop our final recommendations, which are presented in this report.

A Brief History of Districts

Districts were first called Regions and were formed in 1948 as part of an overall reorganization effort by TLA. A gasoline shortage made travel to the spring annual conference difficult so district meetings were held to provide an alternative means for members to meet together and discuss library issues. The ten districts match the ten regional library systems, each covering a number of counties that range from small and rural to large and metropolitan areas. Each district meets in the fall to conduct business, provide workshops, and offer networking opportunities to discuss and advocate library issues. (See map of TLA Districts in Appendix V.)

Evaluation of Survey of Transforming TLA Structure Task Force and Other Input

The survey conducted in February and March 2009 by the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force was designed to obtain an overall perception of TLA's membership and governance structure. A follow up survey was also conducted

in April 2009. Our analysis focused solely on the district survey section that had eight questions. (See Appendix III for the complete report, "Research Findings on Texas Library Association Districts.")

There were 1,616 respondents to the entire survey and of these, 1,309 completed the section about TLA districts. Just as the districts themselves vary considerably in number, the number of respondents varied from several hundred in Districts 5 and 8 and fewer than 35 in Districts 1, 2, 6, and 9. (See Appendix IV for current district membership.)

The Task Force noted that the February and March 2009 surveys had a large percentage of members responding and that the geographic distribution of respondents matched the geographic distribution of membership. Moreover, respondents were also distributed among the various TLA divisions, indicating a balance in types of libraries. Because our analysis found the survey data to be reliable and representative of our association membership, our initial proposals and recommendations were based on the results of the two surveys, with the additional consideration of comments we had received from TLA members.

Our Task Force found that the collective responses from TLA members indicated that:

- Attendance at fall district meetings had declined over the past three years. Seven out of ten members did not attend district meetings. Moreover, younger members (aged 26-35) were less likely to attend district meetings.
- There was still a strong agreement that districts serve a useful purpose even though many members did not attend district meetings or think these meetings were valuable. (51% believed districts serve a useful purpose, citing developing leadership skills, workshops, and networking.)
- There was an overall perception that district meetings were tailored for one type of library more than another, usually public or school.
- Most members were in agreement that virtual conferences and/or online meetings such as webinars could prove to be a useful alternative to holding district meetings and that networking could be accomplished through other methods besides face-to-face meetings.

Evaluation of the Spring 2011 Survey and Other Input from TLA Members

Following the direction of Council and the Executive Board, members of the Task Force visited each District meeting in the fall of 2011. Task Force proposals were presented and discussed, and comments gathered and posted to the Task Force wiki. In general, the comments did not support the proposals. Many expressed the desire for continuing education workshops at the district level. The map proposing 24 districts was met with dismay in many districts

except for those in which there were few changes. Some members expressed reservations about proposed changes in governance of the districts.

Because the Fall District Workshops are attended by only a small percentage of TLA members, it was decided to present our recommendations to the entire membership in a survey in the Spring of 2011. (For the complete analysis and summary, see Appendix I and Appendix II.) 732 members (11.97% of the total membership) responded to the survey, a number large enough to be a representative and random sample of the entire TLA membership. As in the 2009 survey, respondents came from all ten districts and from the four divisions.

Overall, there was support for the Task Force's recommendations in repurposing the TLA Districts' focus and geographical boundaries, a contrast to the generally negative reaction at the 2010 Fall District Meetings. 173 members (23.63% of the 732 respondents) took the time to provide additional comments. While some comments supported the recommendations, many did not, with the most frequent type of comment being to "leave districts alone."

Task Force Proposals

Our Preliminary Report in April 2010 made four recommendations that, after consideration of comments from TLA members, were reconfigured as two recommendations in our Report presented at Annual Assembly 2011. After discussion at the 2010 Fall District Workshops and consideration of the 2011 survey, both of which focused attention on these proposals, we are today presenting three final recommendations to the TLA Executive Board and Council.

The Task Force on TLA Districts recommends that TLA:

1. Repurpose districts so that their primary focus is to provide a geographical-based representation on Council and to be a local venue for the discussion of TLA issues/news and for networking at a local level. Continuing education activities and other programs can be presented at the discretion of each district.

- Less emphasis on mandatory fall programming will ease the pressure on districts with financial and volunteer constraints.
- Districts will have the flexibility to provide the meetings, either formal or informal, that their members want. Meetings might be online, could be scheduled at any time during the year, and might not occur every year. It will be the responsibility of district planners to determine how to establish these meetings.
- TLA's Continuing Education office is providing a variety of webinars. Opportunities for other TLA units to provide Continuing Education are now available. This division-specific programming may well be more useful for members.

- The key is to communicate Council news, bylaws changes, legislative updates and any other important changes in order to call district members to action when a vote is needed to approve a change.
- Districts may choose to partner with other local groups to provide programming. Such partnerships are already occurring, such as in District 5 with Northeast Texas Library System, District 7 with North Texas Regional Library System, and District 6 with the Border Regional Library Association and REFORMA.
- Members can be kept up-to-date using various electronic/social networking tools, such as email, Facebook, listservs, Twitter, MyTLA, etc.
- Messages from TLA sent directly to district members help to provide the latest news from the Association and other information, such as legislative news (i.e. Texline), that may be of interest to members.

2. Streamline the current governance structure by only requiring that districts elect a Councilor and a Councilor Alternate. Each district has the flexibility to elect additional officers.

- The Councilor and Council Alternate would each serve a three-year term. Other officers' terms and duties would be developed by each district based on its needs.
- Recent changes to the TLA Bylaws provide units with greater flexibility in defining which officers they have. These changes apply to districts as well as divisions, round tables, and interest groups.
- Event planning, nominating duties and other district matters can be coordinated by volunteer committees.
- Membership responses also listed leadership opportunities as an important function of districts. This proposal allows for leadership development while still not burdening some districts with unnecessary offices that are difficult to fill.
- TLA should provide additional training for district officers and councilors, separate from the New Officers' Briefings held at the end of Conference and at Annual Assembly. This training might also be available in a webinar or online.
- Elections should be held in January/February as part of the regular TLA election process, not at Fall Meetings.
- The District Planning Committee can play a crucial role facilitating communication and the exchange of ideas among districts.

3. Keep the current ten TLA districts at the present time. Allow members to select their own district, choose a "virtual district" or choose not be affiliated with any district.

- The Task Force feels that geographic subdivisions should be retained by TLA. We looked at a variety of maps and divisions of Texas and focused on the Education Service Centers (20 regions) and the Texas Regional

Councils of Government (24 regions). While many members find fault with the current 10-district structure, members also expressed significant reservations about the suggested models.

- The Task Force recognizes significant support for changing district boundaries, as evidenced in the 2011 survey, but also considerable opposition to such changes, as shown in the comments at the 2010 Annual Assembly and Fall District Meetings.
- Redrawing the boundaries of districts may warrant additional investigation by TLA in the future. The Task Force feels this should be done at the local level. An option for districts to petition Council for change, such as dividing a district or allowing specific counties to move to a different district, would allow for this local involvement in setting future district boundaries.
- Permitting members to choose their own districts would allow for some flexibility within the current district structure, especially for members who live and/or work near district boundaries. A “virtual district” would allow for representation for those members for whom a local physical district has little value.

(See Appendix V for map of current TLA Districts.)

In Conclusion

The work of the Task Force on TLA Districts during the past two years has reaffirmed the usefulness of districts. We acknowledge that the question of the structure and boundaries of Districts may need to be revisited in the future. However, we are convinced that the changes in the focus and governance of TLA Districts that we propose today will strengthen the grassroots involvement of Districts that has been an important part of the Association from its beginning and help to make the Districts a more responsive, viable, and useful tool for TLA members at the local level.

Appendix I

Spring 2011 Data Analysis TLA Task Force on Districts' Proposed Recommendations Survey

Background on Survey

Over the past 18 months, the Texas Library Association (TLA) Task Force on Districts has been working to develop proposals to help make TLA Districts a more flexible, viable, and useful tool for TLA members at the local level. To that end, we have made presentations and solicited member input at the 2009 and 2010 Fall District Meetings, at the 2010 Annual Conference, and at the 2009 and 2010 Annual Assemblies.

The Task Force, with the approval of the TLA Executive Board, decided to provide TLA members an additional opportunity to comment on our proposals with a six-question online survey before presenting our final report to TLA Council at the 2011 Annual Conference in April 2011.

The survey was conducted in an effort to learn how members felt about the Task Force's proposals. The Task Force feels that TLA Districts continue to serve a useful purpose, and we also feel that providing representation at the state level should become the primary focus of districts. With this in mind, we also recommended redrawing the geographic subdivisions for a better representation of geographic areas with population diversity, such as rural and metropolitan areas. The Task Force also feels that the TLA Districts should be repurposed so they are no longer primarily a venue for continuing education because of the expanding technology base, ongoing growth of continuing education opportunities, and decline in district meeting attendance. However, TLA Districts still can coordinate activities, including continuing education, at their discretion.

Methodology

The "TLA Task Force on Districts - Survey - Spring 2011" was conducted by the Task Force in conjunction with the TLA Office. On March 8, 2011, an email blast was sent to TLA members through their respective divisions, College and University Libraries Division, Public Libraries Division, Special Libraries Division and Texas Association of School Librarians, inviting members to participate in the online survey. The email included a link to the *Survey Monkey's* online questionnaire. The TLA Office also posted the survey invitation on the TLA website on its front page and through "MyTLA," a social media networking community; both postings included the link to the questionnaire.

After checking the response rate, Mary Jo Venetis, a Task Force member, and Sharon Amastae, the Task Force Chair, contacted the TLA office to extend the survey to March 25, 2011. The TLA Office sent a final email blast to TLA members through the district email listservs on March 24, 2011.

Data Analysis Review

The online survey instrument had six questions as shown below. The first two questions were demographical questions. The next three questions used a Likert type scale, specifically a support rating scale with 5 points. The first point was rated as “strongly support” with the next point rated as “support.” The other end of the scale showed the last point being rated as “strongly do not support,” with the next point being rated as “do not support.” The midpoint was neutral, allowing TLA members to state “no opinion.” The sixth and final question was an open-ended question, asking TLA members for their comments, ideas and suggestions.

1. Please indicate your TLA District.
2. Please indicate your TLA Division.
3. The Task Force on TLA Districts has recommended that TLA repurpose districts so that they are no longer primarily a venue for continuing education. The primary purpose of districts will be to provide a geographical-based representation on Council and to be a local venue for the discussion of TLA issues/news and for networking at a local level. Each district will be free to determine the scope and direction of their activities. Do you support this recommendation?
4. The Task Force has recommended that TLA redraw district boundaries, creating a larger number of districts that are smaller in size and keeping metropolitan areas together. We recommend following the model of the Texas Regional Councils of Government, which has 24 regions. Do you support this recommendation?
5. In addition, the Task Force has recommended that TLA streamline the current governance structure of TLA districts by electing two representatives from each district to represent the district on Council and provide local leadership, with the person receiving the fewer number of votes becoming the alternate. Do you support this recommendation?
6. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Because the Task Force’s concluding report was to be presented to TLA Council at the 2011 Annual Conference in April 2011, it was decided that the survey’s data analysis would be straight-forward without efforts to determine

various patterns. However, patterns of overall support or lack of support for the Task Force's three recommendations could still be identified through the use of content analysis in identifying and grouping comments from the open-ended question.

Data Results

As noted above, all of the TLA members received the survey link through an email blast, giving everyone a chance to participate. The online survey opened on March 8, 2011 and ended on March 25, 2011; only 732 TLA members elected to participate in the survey. This group of 732 TLA members or survey respondents, statistically speaking, was a representative and random sample of the entire TLA membership throughout the state. At the time of the survey there were 6,118 TLA members, and 732 members participated in the survey, resulting in a response rate of 11.97%. The response rate itself is acceptable because the smallest sample size would be 547 members and we had 732 respondents.

In response to the first question on identifying districts, out of 732 respondents, 75 members or 10.2% of the survey respondents, were unable to identify their districts as illustrated in Figure 1. In the 2009 survey, 213 respondents out of 1,309 members who participated in the district survey section did not know their districts (16.3%). The change from 16.3% in 2009 to 10.2% in 2011 indicates that TLA members are more aware of their own districts.

Out of 10 districts, two districts had a high number of members participating in the 2011 survey, Districts 3 and 8, with 125 members each, tying for first place. The next two districts, Districts 5 and 7 had 96 and 90 members respectively participating in the survey. These results are comparable to the 2009 survey results with the same districts having a high turnout with some slight differences. In the 2009 survey, District 5 had the highest turnout with 254 members responding, with District 8 coming in second place with 247 members participating. In the 2011 survey, District 5 dropped to second place while Districts 3 and 8 took first place. District 7 showed a decrease in their members participating from 148 members in 2009 to 90 members in 2011.

Both District 4 and District 10 had an equal number of 54 members. In comparison to the 2009 results, District 4 had 91 members participating in the 2009 survey, and dropped down to 54 members participating in 2011. The same can be said for District 10, with 120 members in 2009 to 54 members in 2011.

The lowest turnout, with a range of 22 to 40 members participating came from Districts 1, 2, 6, and 9, which were similar to the 2009 original survey results. In 2009, these districts had a range of 15 to 32 members participating in the survey; this indicated a small increase in the number of members participating.

Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of the 2011 survey data results.

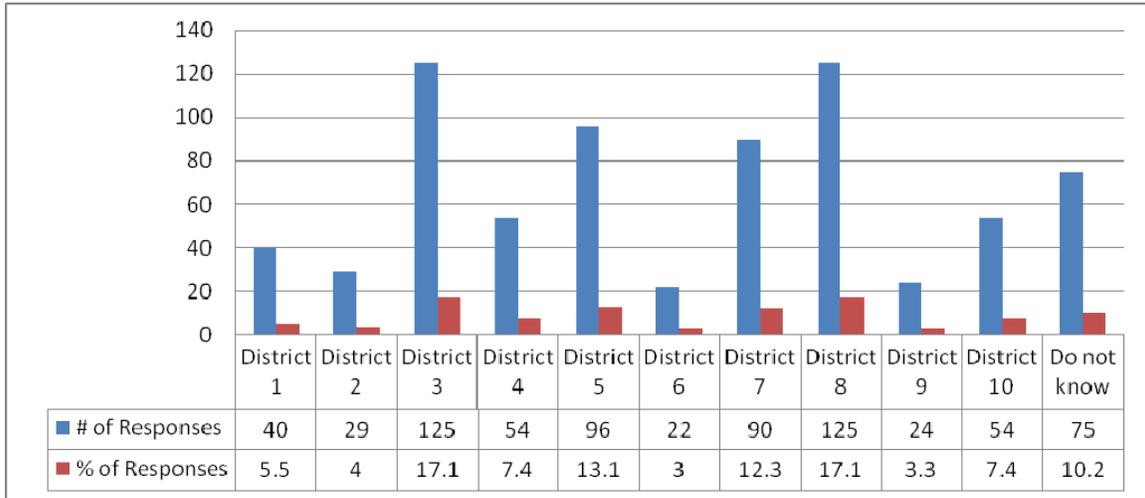


Figure 1. 2011 Survey Responses to “Please indicate your TLA District.”

TLA members were asked to identify their division in the second demographical question. According to the results, public and school librarians represent 77% of the survey participants based on the 725 members’ response. Seven members declined to answer the question. The respondents’ majority was almost evenly split between members of the Public Libraries Division, 38.1% and those who identified themselves as members of the Texas Association of School Librarians, with a 38.9% response rate as shown in Figure 2. The remaining respondents were from College & University Libraries Division, representing 21.7% of their membership, and 3.2% members represented Special Libraries Division.

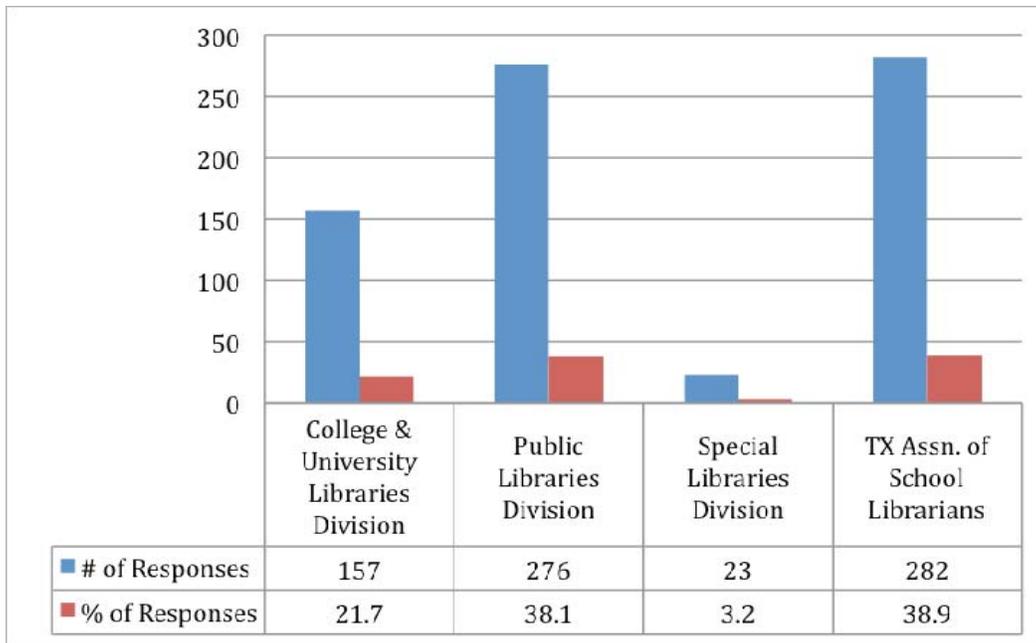


Figure 2. Responses to “Please indicate your TLA Division.”

In general, the next three charts, Figures 3, 4, and 5, indicate overall support by the respondents for the Task Force’s recommendations in repurposing the TLA Districts’ focus and geographical boundaries.

The first recommendation was to repurpose districts so that they are no longer primarily a venue for continuing education. Instead, the primary purpose would be to provide a geographical-based representation on Council and to be a local venue for the discussion of TLA issues/news and for networking at a local level. Furthermore, each district would be free to determine the scope and direction of their activities. Out of 732 respondents, 714 answered the question and 18 declined to answer the question.

Overall, 71% (507 respondents out of 714) supported the recommendation, with 23.8% who indicated a rating of “strongly support” and 47.2% who indicated a rating of “support.”

Approximately 13% (12.9%) of the survey respondents did not support this recommendation with an additional of 4.1% who strongly did not support this recommendation, totaling 17%.

Eighty-six respondents (12%) out of the 714 respondents did not have any opinion.

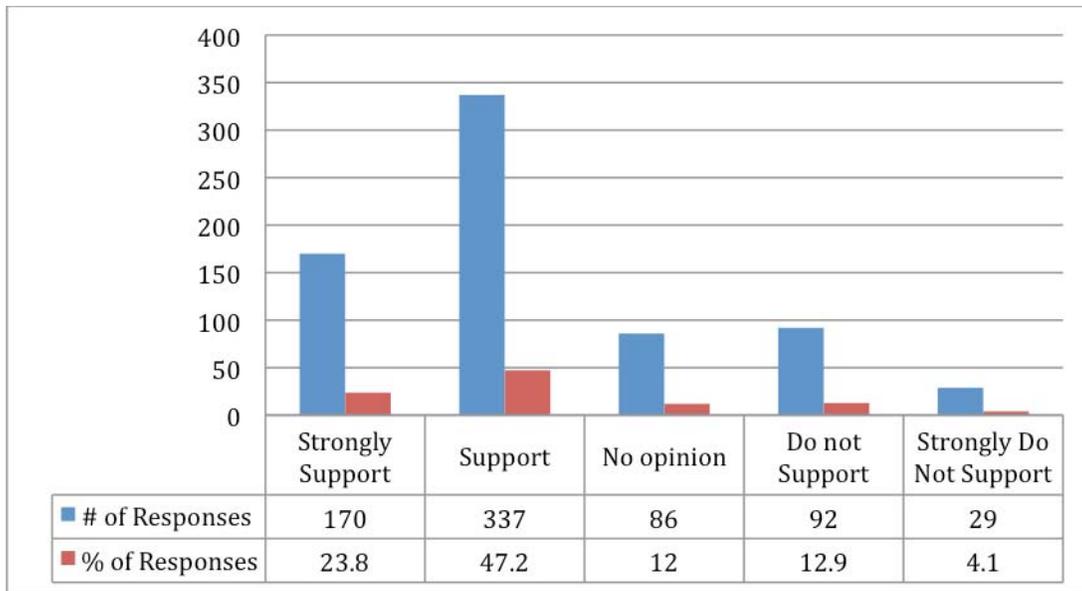


Figure 3. Responses to “Recommendation 1 – Continuing Education not primary focus.”

The second recommendation was to redraw the district boundaries, creating a larger number of districts which are smaller in size and keeps metropolitan areas together. The Task Force recommends that TLA follows the model used by Texas Regional Councils of Government which has 24 regions. Out of 732 respondents, 30 declined to answer the question, which left 702 respondents who actually answered the question.

Again, Figure 4 shows that there is an overall support for this recommendation, with 23.2% who selected the rating of “strongly support” and 48.9% who selected the rating of “support,” totaling a 72.1% response rate (506 respondents out of 702).

On the other side of the rating scale, 116 respondents disagreed, giving a 10.7% rating for “do not support” and a 5.8% rating of “strongly do not support, totaling 16%.

Eighty respondents, 11.4%, out of 702 participants had no opinion.

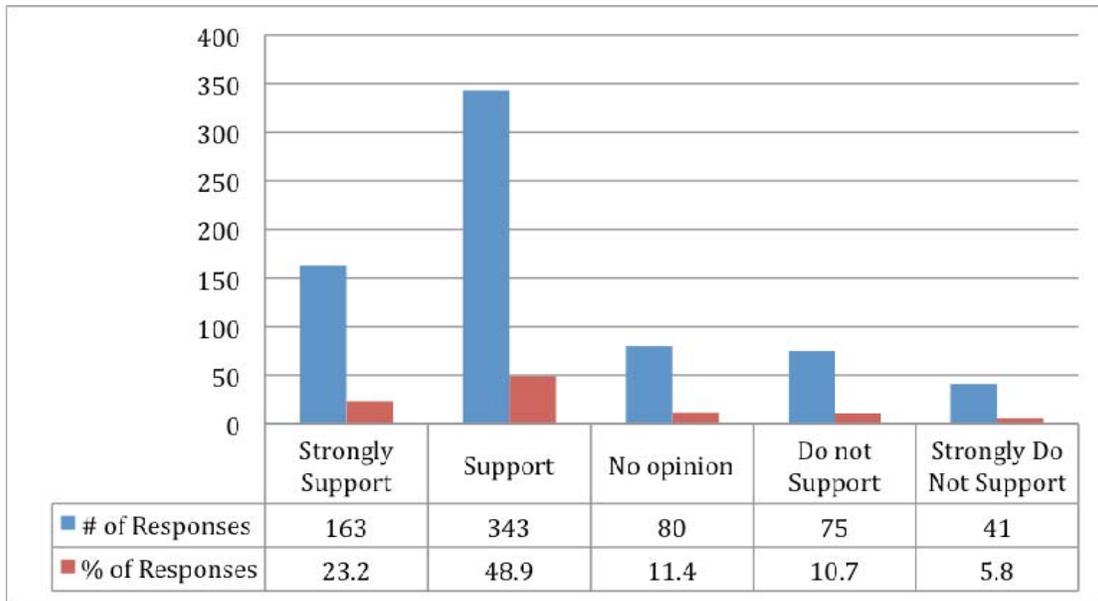


Figure 4. Responses to “Recommendation 2 – redraw district boundaries.”

Finally, figure 5, shows a similar pattern of support for the recommendation to streamline the districts’ current governance structure. The Task Force recommends that each district elects two representatives to Council and provide local leadership with the person receiving the fewer number of votes becoming the alternate.

Out of 700 respondents, 396 respondents or 56.6% supported this recommendation, with an additional 158 respondents who strongly supported this recommendation. Overall, 79.2% supports this recommendation with 8.8% who dissented. Out of the 8.8% who disagreed, 5.4% (38 members) did not support this recommendation along with 3.4% (24 members) who strongly opposed this measure.

Once again, 84 members or 12% had no opinion. Thirty-two respondents skipped the question.

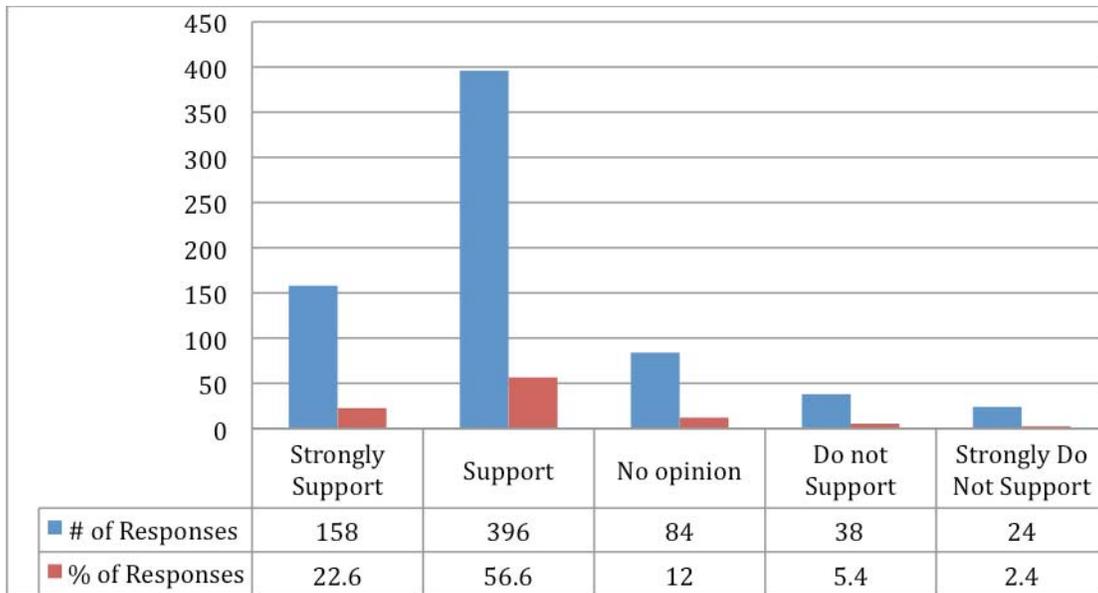


Figure 5. Responses to “Recommendation 3 – alter districts governance structure.”

Finally, there were 173 respondents out of 732 survey respondents who provided additional comments in response to the sixth question of providing feedback, ideas, or suggestions to the Task Force. Keep in mind that this group, 173 members out of 732 respondents (23.63%), is a representative sample based on the survey participants, not the TLA membership.

By conducting content analysis, the Task Force compiled the comments into grouped categories as illustrated in Table 1, showing the top five primary concerns.

First, 39 respondents out of 173 participants preferred to leave the districts intact as they are structured; they do not want to redraw the district boundaries or give up continuing education.

Second, out of 173 respondents, 32 made other comments, unrelated to the survey question, discussing TLA itself or the current budget crisis for example. This additional information is shown in Table 2.

Third, two grouped categories have the same number of respondents. Twenty-four respondents appreciated the Task Force’s efforts; another set of 24 respondents supported the change to increase the number of districts for improved participation and better representation.

Fourth, 18 respondents have issues with altering the TLA Districts’ governance structure, questioning how business could be conducted.

Fifth, 17 respondents want to keep continuing education as a primary venue for districts.

Table 1. Additional Comments Provided by 173 Respondents

Category Description	Frequency
Leave districts alone (do not redraw/remove CE)	39
Other comments unrelated to survey question	32
Task Force great job / appreciation notes	24
Support the change to increase districts	24
Issues with district governance structure	18
Keep districts responsible for CE	17
Good change; improve participation, representation	6
Improve communication within districts / CE	6
Eliminate or reduce districts	5
Prefer to use TEA's ESC map instead	2
Total n	173

Table 2 shows the list of other comments which were unrelated to the survey question.

Table 2. Other Comments Provided by 32 Respondents

Category Description	Frequency
Comments unrelated to survey question	7
Comments marked as "no comments" or "n/a"	5
Prefer to have district meetings on weekdays; more meetings	3
Need specific goals/activities for districts	3
Poorly phrased or biased questions	3
Bluebonnet Committee – need to change district requirements	2
Disorganized districts; no welcome, no planning	2
Budget issues now priority; not good timing to focus	2
Complaints about lack of support from lib admin and/or overpriced conferences, etc.	2
Districts focused on one type of library; feel disenfranchised	1
Focus on online migration	1
Improve TLA conference programming	1
Total n	32

Instead of listing every comment made by these 173 respondents, the Task Force will include the *Survey Monkey's* summary report as Appendix II for the TLA membership's reading convenience.

Commentary about Research Findings

Collectively, responses indicate there is support for the Task Force's recommendations as marked by the scalar ratings of "strongly support" and "support."

Based on the additional comments provided by the 173 respondents who took the time to provide their feedback, their responses indicate

- There is some support for passing the Task Force's three recommendations.
- Others appreciated the Task Force's efforts in undertaking this project.
- There is still a concern of what will replace the districts' current governance structure if the recommendation passes to elect two officers; respondents are concerned how district activities could be planned with two officers.
- There are some reservations that TLA Council could become more "unwieldy" or less efficient if there are too many councilors; some questioned the quorum needed if there are that many representatives.
- Some fear that rural and unpopulated areas would have a stronger voice than those in metropolitan areas.
- Others are in favor of having smaller districts for an increased level of participation and representation.
- Others proposed the number of districts to be reduced or eliminated all together.
- Continuing education remains an issue for respondents who questioned the districts' purpose if this focus is removed. They asked whether it would be necessary to have districts or even district meetings if continuing education is removed.

Conclusion

Based on the survey results, the Task Force was confident that the sample of 732 respondents out of 6,118 TLA members represented the TLA membership throughout the state, resulting in an acceptable response rate of 11.97%.

The scalar ratings for Recommendations 1-3 show a support for the Task Force on TLA Districts to move forward with the proposed changes as decreed by the survey respondents.

Out of 732 respondents, 173 members (23.63%) took the time to provide additional comments. Some comments indicate support for passing the Task Force's recommendations in changing the districts while others indicate a different pattern, a dissension or disagreement with the proposed recommendations. These respondents indicate some concerns about TLA

Districts' purpose if continuing education is no longer a primary venue. Another concern is with TLA Districts' governance structure being altered with an increased number of councilors / representatives; TLA Council would become "unwieldy" and less efficient. Some respondents feel that the districts' current governance structure should be left intact since they still provide a useful purpose.

(The report presented in Appendix I was primarily written by Task Force member Mary Jo Venetis, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, District 5, April 2, 2011.)

Appendix II

The *Survey Monkey* summary of the Spring 2011 Survey of the Task Force on TLA Districts is available as a separate pdf with this report and on the TLA website.

TLA Task Force on Districts - Survey - Spring 2011



1. Please indicate your TLA District:

		Response Percent	Response Count
District 1		5.5%	40
District 2		4.0%	29
District 3		17.1%	125
District 4		7.4%	54
District 5		13.1%	96
District 6		3.0%	22
District 7		12.3%	90
District 8		17.1%	125
District 9		3.3%	24
District 10		7.4%	54
I do not know my district number.		10.2%	75
		answered question	732
		skipped question	0

2. Please indicate your TLA Division:

		Response Percent	Response Count
College and University Libraries Division		21.7%	157
Public Libraries Division		38.1%	276
Special Libraries Division		3.2%	23
Texas Association of School Librarians		38.9%	282
		answered question	725
		skipped question	7

3. The Task Force on TLA Districts has recommended that TLA repurpose districts so that they are no longer primarily a venue for continuing education. The primary purpose of districts will be to provide a geographical-based representation on Council and to be a local venue for the discussion of TLA issues/news and for networking at a local level. Each district will be free to determine the scope and direction of their activities. Do you support this recommendation?

	Strongly Support	Support	No Opinion	Do Not Support	Strongly Do Not Support	Rating Average	Response Count
Recommendation 1	23.8% (170)	47.2% (337)	12.0% (86)	12.9% (92)	4.1% (29)	2.26	714
						answered question	714
						skipped question	18

4. The Task Force has recommended that TLA redraw district boundaries, creating a larger number of districts that are smaller in size and keeping metropolitan areas together. We recommend following the model of the Texas Regional Councils of Government, which has 24 regions. Do you support this recommendation?

	Strongly Support	Support	No Opinion	Do Not Support	Strongly Do Not Support	Rating Average	Response Count
Recommendation 2	23.2% (163)	48.9% (343)	11.4% (80)	10.7% (75)	5.8% (41)	2.27	702
answered question							702
skipped question							30

5. In addition, the Task Force has recommended that TLA streamline the current governance structure of TLA districts by electing two representatives from each district to represent the district on Council and provide local leadership, with the person receiving the fewer number of votes becoming the alternate. Do you support this recommendation?

	Strongly Support	Support	No Opinion	Do Not Support	Strongly Do Not Support	Rating Average	Response Count
Recommendation 3	22.6% (158)	56.6% (396)	12.0% (84)	5.4% (38)	3.4% (24)	2.11	700
answered question							700
skipped question							32

6. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

		Response Count
		173
answered question		173
skipped question		559

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
1	Absolutely nothing will be done at the district level if the only officers are council reps.	Mar 8, 2011 12:39 PM
2	good work!	Mar 8, 2011 1:29 PM
3	Who will be in charge of continuing education if you take the responsibility away from the districts? Continuing education is important. Please continue to make it a priority.	Mar 8, 2011 1:39 PM
4	I'm not sure that the leadership development component of the current district structure has been addressed. A number of TLA leaders first became involved at the district level and found support in the district.	Mar 8, 2011 2:23 PM
5	In the first place, I'm not convinced that the system is broken. In the second place, I feel that the multiplication of districts would only cause confusion and a surfeit of Council positions to be filled, with no clear mechanism for how the positions will be filled, how those representatives will be accountable to their districts, or who will coordinate the other district activities listed in the proposal. There are also fiscal implications for TLA (what happens to funds currently held by districts? will the various districts use expensive electronic balloting, since most of them probably will not have formal meetings? If they do have formal meetings, at TLA and Annual Assembly, will TLA pay for the additional space?) The only part of the proposal I could support is a reevaluation of the need for fall meetings, though I do know librarians who rely on the fall meeting for all or part of their continuing education requirements.	Mar 8, 2011 3:07 PM
6	It seems that a governing body of 48 members will be unwieldy. I agree with the idea of increasing the 10 districts we now have, but 24 seems like too many.	Mar 8, 2011 3:51 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
7	Our district, indeed certain university branches would be separated under the proposed map. Our district would like to redraw the boundaries for D4, possibly keeping the district map intact.	Mar 8, 2011 4:34 PM
8	I think we should focus our efforts on advocating for libraries. Schedule events for districts members to go out to seek community support with signatures, letters to our representatives and adopt a much more vocal presence in our communities. It may help if districts compete to see who can get the word out to the most people or collect the most signatures.	Mar 8, 2011 4:36 PM
9	Why is geography so vital when we are in a global environment, encouraging participation virtually even by this survey? I understand the concept of "equal voice", but adding potentially 22 additional members to council will not make council any more agile. Why should representation be by geography rather than by population of libraries/librarians within those geographical regions? Make Council a "Senate" and not a true representation of membership? This is rubbish and short-sightedness. And PLEASE do not make all four of these silly things be voted on as a group, even though they are so very interdependent. Council will become even more unwieldy. Do you really think there would EVER be a quorum?	Mar 8, 2011 5:42 PM
10	"Status quo" is NOT CUTTING IT. Too many Texas are left out and turned off. We MUST try something else, and the Task Force's efforts and hours of thought have provided a viable alternative.	Mar 8, 2011 6:33 PM
11	My vote on the previous question relates only to the current 10-district set-up. If district boundaries are set up along COG lines, I do not support the previous concept.	Mar 8, 2011 6:35 PM
12	Having 24 districts is a bit of a surprise for me. I recall from the last meeting I attended, that we were looking at REDUCING the number of districts. A smaller size will make it easier for those of us who want to attend sessions to do so. As it is, we usually have to drive 1-3 hours. Hope this plan works. :-)	Mar 9, 2011 7:07 AM
13	My concern is for those smaller regions say 22 which is above North Texas - with only 3 counties. Will they be able to find people to be on council? It also disproportionately gives MORE voice to those in smaller unpopulated areas. Is there a concern for Council making Quorum for meetings?	Mar 9, 2011 8:33 AM
14	I like the idea of having a Councilor and an Alternate simply due to the fact that is difficult in certain districts to find people to run for office. I don't however think 24 districts is a good idea. However, I will accept what the membership approves.	Mar 9, 2011 10:06 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

15	<p>After listening to comments at Annual Conference & Annual Assembly last year, I question the need to have districts at all. I don't believe participation will increase at the district level if the districts are re-drawn and decrease in size geographically.</p> <p>At the District 4 Fall Meeting, we had less than 15% of District 4 TLA members in attendance. A month prior to the meeting, district members were surveyed (via Survey Monkey) about whether they were planning to attend the Fall meeting and whether they might be interested in other opportunities for continuing ed. such as webinars offered through District 4. According to the membership figures available via TLA's web site, approximately 8 to 10% of District 4 members submitted a response. When asked how many Fall meetings they'd attended since 2005, 53% replied they had never attended a Fall meeting. 37% said they would be unable to attend because of time constraints. On the bright side, just over 78% said they would be attending TLA Annual Conference in 2011.</p> <p>With technology today, I believe District meetings (and Districts, to some degree) have become a thing of the past. They originated over 60 years ago at a very different time. With all the time and resources that go into coordinating and planning Fall meetings and all the demands already being made of librarians, are Fall meetings and the need to re-group at District levels worth the trouble? Given what I've seen and heard in the last few years, my opinion is that no, they're not.</p> <p>NOTE: I've been a member of TLA for just over 10 years and still have over 20 years before I reach retirement age.</p>	Mar 9, 2011 10:55 AM
16	<p>I see little reason for member libraries to attend disctrict meetings if all they do is elect someone to Council. They can do that online. Part of the reason librarians have been able to participate in these meetings is because we have been able to tell our supervisors that they are educational. And if we do not have meetings, we will not know who the people are that we are supposed to elect. It's a question of spinning your wheels to no effect.</p>	Mar 9, 2011 3:30 PM
17	<p>Abolish the districts. Our district had difficulty finding 1 person as a council rep now you want 2?</p>	Mar 10, 2011 11:20 AM
18	<p>Doing a great job working on this issue</p>	Mar 10, 2011 3:42 PM
19	<p>Flexibility of mission and meetings is the key. Don't change everything just because some districts currently don't function well.</p>	Mar 11, 2011 3:37 PM
20	<p>Good work.</p>	Mar 11, 2011 4:05 PM
21	<p>While I do consider continuing education opportunities still of importance to Districts, I think it would be beneficial to have smaller Districts with more interactions among local members.</p>	Mar 11, 2011 4:08 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

22	I believe that the districts should be a venue for continuing education as well as a means for local librarians to interact with one another. The district meetings are indeed hard to plan, but getting together in our areas helps us become acquainted with another, and I do not see anything other than a district meeting that would be attractive enough to get people together from different types of libraries.	Mar 11, 2011 4:09 PM
23	However the districts are divided, I will still participate. I really didn't have strong feelings either way. More stuff online would be great since travel budgets are tight.	Mar 11, 2011 4:11 PM
24	I'm still unsure of the "value add" of districts as a whole. Is it networking? Is it continuing ed? Is it to get together to resolve a problem or issue? It just seems so nebulous what they're for. I do wish they were more task oriented. Also, if they were on Facebook and regularly communicating whatever vision arises, that would also be appreciated as I'm already there. The forums on the TLA site seem rarely used and FB is probably why. The average person spends 20 minutes a day there, so if you want to communicate important messages and network with others, perhaps FB could be used more?	Mar 11, 2011 4:12 PM
25	I am somewhat concerned that if there are more districts, there will be less Best of the Best funding available to each district. In my experience, District 6 has relied heavily on this financial support from TLA.	Mar 11, 2011 4:14 PM
26	This survey is, intentionally or otherwise, biased. There is nothing about alternatives such as those offered at previous council meetings. Duh.	Mar 11, 2011 4:22 PM
27	Only concern with using COG areas is that some are isolated from large clusters of population/other librarians.	Mar 11, 2011 4:27 PM
28	This seems to create a division of haves and have nots. It will be easy for the large districts to provide ce, events, etc for their members, but the small ones will not be able to provide as good a programming. For people who can't get to Annual these workshops are essential.	Mar 11, 2011 4:32 PM
29	Good work. Thank you for the time you put into this.	Mar 11, 2011 4:34 PM
30	I'm not sure how all this will play out in the end, but I want to give KUDOS to Sharon & the Task Force! Y'all have done an outstanding job!!!	Mar 11, 2011 4:41 PM
31	I do think that local district participation may be the only means for some people to participate in TLA, especially persons from smaller institutions where not all can attend the annual TLA conference.	Mar 11, 2011 4:42 PM
32	I like the idea of more districts, but if that map is accurate, I have a problem with it, particularly if it becomes voting seats and not just conference meetings. The break down looks inherently unfair.	Mar 11, 2011 4:42 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
33	<p>no need to follow the rcog model exactly, the replacement fop districts with webinars - to date the webinars are over priced & tend to be given by the 'bigwigs' in the TLA - generally library directors and managers - those a bit removed form actually working with patrons - while district presentations are given by rank & file sharing their daily practice as librarians. Plus, it is a good place for beginners to practice & gain confidence at district for presentations at larger venues like TLA.</p> <p>One problem with some districts is they either dont encourage discussion & participation - as if it's 'secret'- chairs actively share with frequent emails rank & file, the same old people are always seeming to have the 'inside track' on offices. Too often TLA, & library directors & managers, encourage members to be spectators rather than participators - so often I see out of state people presenting at TLA instead of power holders getting in there & actively encouraging their subordinates to make presentations, to share what they know, to make their libraries representative of the kind of learning environment they are supposed to be working at, rather the current model where many are NOT funded, NOT given time off in the week to attend PDAs, NOT encouraged to be active but to be couch potatoes/watchers instead of do-ers.</p>	Mar 11, 2011 4:43 PM
34	I am not familiar enough with what they currently do to make any comments.	Mar 11, 2011 4:43 PM
35	I believe this a very ill-conceived idea. Voting representatives, and a lot of them, with no real constituent base. Will dilute what little remaining effectiveness and legitimacy that Council currently has.	Mar 11, 2011 4:45 PM
36	I'm willing to try these recommendations, but I fear we will lose those who HAVE been involved in districts without gaining the involvement of others. It bothers me that the success of the current district structure in meeting the needs of those presently involved at the district level is evidently not important. What if we lose what we have, and gain nothing?	Mar 11, 2011 4:53 PM
37	I would recommend using the ESC districts rather than the COG districts--COG districts just seem too fragmented.	Mar 11, 2011 4:55 PM
38	I joined TLA again after moving back home to Texas from Minnesota. I have not lived in District 7 before. I have not heard anything from my district at all maybe it is too soon to hear from the district?? When I lived in District 2, I usually knew what was going on. I am not sure what to expect anymore.	Mar 11, 2011 4:56 PM
39	I realize that some districts do not function well do to geographic size, but I believe District 3 would be harmed by cutting us up into smaller districts. Smaller districts would mean some would be all smaller libraries (fewer staff) who have less time to devote to TLA business.	Mar 11, 2011 5:02 PM
40	I do not understand how going from 10 districts to 24 with 2 representatives from each simplifies the TLA governance structure. While it may be helpful to have smaller districts, it may be difficult to find more people willing and able to attend TLA Conference and Annual Assembly in order to represent their district.	Mar 11, 2011 5:05 PM
41	the districts seem to vary from 2 counties to 26 and needs to be more equitable. People in Bridge City will get sick of looking at each other.	Mar 11, 2011 5:21 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

42	This can only be seen as an effort to prop up the TLA CE program which should never have been created.	Mar 11, 2011 5:26 PM
43	I've never gone to a district meeting	Mar 11, 2011 5:34 PM
44	If we do no training, what is the purpose of the district? 24 voting delegates with nothing to represent will overwhelm council. Especially if you find that one particular type of library becomes most dominate. Right now you rotate between types of libraries so it hopefully evenly distributed. I think districts need some purpose and so far it hasn't been well defined by this proposal.	Mar 11, 2011 5:38 PM
45	Where was/is the publicity about this before the survey? I wasn't able to answer with confidence after reading the short summaries of the proposed changes.	Mar 11, 2011 5:43 PM
46	I think smaller districts will help with travel expenses and will allow leadership to grow from the grassroots level. In my area, some school districts require summer workshops to count for prof dev days (Comp Days). Attendance by the school library segment might increase if district meeting was held during the summer and registration fee was minimal.	Mar 11, 2011 6:40 PM
47	It is my opinion that when regional centers no longer distributed funding to libraries based on participation, including attendance at District meetings, that libraries had less reason to attend district meetings. I think because we can now get training via webinars, etc. that we have even less need to attend District meetings. Smaller districts, as proposed, will provide for networking within districts with nearby libraries. Neighboring libraries already network fairly closely anyway. I don't see that it will encourage networking within different types of libraries, unless there is a strong incentive for partnering between public/academic/college libraries. If our regional centers dissappear, who or what will encourage that partnering?	Mar 11, 2011 7:16 PM
48	Thank you to the Task Force for the time and attention given to TLA reorganization.	Mar 11, 2011 7:30 PM
49	#4 looks like it needs to be split	Mar 11, 2011 8:22 PM
50	The smaller district boundaries make more sense and work much better for me. Currently I live about fifty miles north of Waco, which puts me in the Austin district, but Austin is 150+ miles from my home. The D/FW area is about fifty miles from my home. That would be a long drive, too, but more reasonable. The map in this survey looks like it would be even better than that.	Mar 11, 2011 11:24 PM
51	Wonderful ideas...Districts seem to be given more voice in TLA and freedom to meet the needs of the Districts' members.	Mar 11, 2011 11:33 PM
52	I am hopeful that these changes will involve more people in the political side of our organization.	Mar 12, 2011 12:16 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

53	In your distribution 90% of the librarians will be represented by only a few people. The rural areas will have way too much power.	Mar 12, 2011 10:39 AM
54	I have been thinking for some time that the districts are too large to be properly representative.	Mar 12, 2011 10:52 AM
55	I am in favor of this idea, because I know to travel to district meetings etc. can sometimes be cost prohibitive to members who live in certain districts. This will certainly change the format for the TBA committee in choosing students to attend the TBA luncheon since it is now ten (one from each district) and could become 24.	Mar 12, 2011 11:21 AM
56	Great ideas re: redistricting and adding more districts.	Mar 12, 2011 5:58 PM
57	I still think the meetings are important. . . no virtual conference can beat meeting and talking with colleagues face to face. I wish someone would come up with an idea to solve the conundrum of when to hold the meetings. . . If they're on work days, they feel left out because school librarians and those who have to 'man' the desks can't come, but if on Saturday, they don't want to give up free time. You can't win for losing.	Mar 12, 2011 6:06 PM
58	I do NOT prefer facebook or twitter, but I do like email communication. I don't feel very involved in tla because I don't know HOW to become involved. I do not like district meetings though. Please offer as much continuing education as possible in ANY format.	Mar 12, 2011 8:39 PM
59	I hope that by allowing regions to choose their direction will allow them to combine resources for staff development purposes as it can get expensive to bring in high-level presenters that benefit the members. And on that note I'd hope to see more collaboration between districts that allow members to cross-over & take advantage of offerings in a neighboring district without a huge jump on cost.	Mar 13, 2011 9:39 AM
60	A small thing maybe, and probably doesn't have anything to do with anything, but the numbering of the districts seems to jump around all over the state. Is there significance to that?	Mar 13, 2011 6:52 PM
61	Keeping the districts as they exist at this time gives area libraries (urban and rural) more leveraging for local concerns.	Mar 14, 2011 12:46 AM
62	We need to retain the option to provide workshops at the regional level. That is how many new librarians gain experience with professional presentations.	Mar 14, 2011 8:58 AM
63	The structure as it is now allows for face-to-face interaction of individuals. "Social media" can be a great supplement but cannot take the place of this interaction. I have made contacts from the face-to-face that have led to presentations at TLA events and also at ALA. If the structure changes as proposed I will be less involved with TLA and will have to evaluate the cost of membership to the benefit it will bring.	Mar 14, 2011 9:03 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

64	With the imminent funding crisis for the Texas State Library, its ability to provide CE, or for the public library systems to do that, may be ending. We need strong districts to provide CE and maintain local identity.	Mar 14, 2011 9:05 AM
65	While there would appear to be a small increase in the number of representatives from rural areas, it appears that there would be a much larger increase in representatives from the more heavily populated areas.	Mar 14, 2011 9:11 AM
66	My main concern is that making the outlying areas too small will limit who will volunteer to serve.	Mar 14, 2011 9:24 AM
67	The main advantage I can see to the smaller districts is that the TLA districts can partner with other entities in their area to provide F2F training and chances to network. Education Regions would be one example of a good partnership	Mar 14, 2011 9:36 AM
68	I support a more focused goal for the districts; I support web-based meetings, considering the lack of funds for travel reimbursement.	Mar 14, 2011 9:47 AM
69	I do not support adding more people to the Texas Bluebonnet Award committee. It is VERY difficult to get a workerbee representative from each of the existing districts! Will the Task Force make recommendations about such?	Mar 14, 2011 9:58 AM
70	The proposed COG districts are uneven and would result in some districts under represented due to their small size. The comparison of the panhandle and extreme south Texas is one example. I think a hybrid of the COG should be developed to bring smaller proposed districts into larger ones to ensure representation of TLA members.	Mar 14, 2011 10:44 AM
71	The two representatives should not be from the same city. See previous question.	Mar 14, 2011 11:09 AM
72	Though I like the idea of local networking and issue discussion, with Council representation for each district, I do not like the idea of doing away with the continuing education aspect. This is important for school librarians, who often do not have this opportunity. Also I'm not sure about the number of districts. District 8 IS too big for convenience in traveling to meetings, but it has been successful in being big enough to provide meaningful continuing education opportunities and also in networking. I'm not sure such a large number of districts will not be unwieldy and inefficient.	Mar 14, 2011 11:37 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

73 I would like to see districts remain venues for CE for two reasons. The district meetings can be opportunities to meet and network with librarians outside one's immediate library type, one's own employer, or one's near-by geographic area. The district meetings also provide an opportunity for librarians to gain experience in conference and program planning, Without the opportunity to build networks and to gain planning experience, I fear that the pool of candidates with proven leadership skills for TLA-wide positions (such as president) will shrink and eventually disappear, with a subsequent deficit in the skill sets of holders of the association's elected positions in the future.

However, I believe that districts should not be required to hold fall meetings, since some districts have serious obstacles to overcome (especially in large, sparsely-populated areas) in order to hold a meeting, while other districts have a good rate of success with their meetings. Making the in-person CE event an optional activity would allow districts to decide on their own about how to serve their constituents without placing an undue burden on some or precluding a beneficial activity from others. Learning over the Internet is a good thing, but I don't think it is comparable to the experience of meeting other librarians in person who gather together with a common goal, such as getting CE, networking, or making grassroots contributions to the association.

Regarding the change of district boundaries, I'm not sure what the answer should be. I have heard (and agree with) comments to the effect that if we have 10 districts now that don't work very well, why should we assume they will work better when we have ~25 of them?

Regarding representation, I have concerns about expanding TLA Council by adding ~15 more representatives; Council should not rubber stamp every issue that comes before it, but Council meetings are often too short to engage seriously in debate on controversial matters (without raising the ire of the councilors who want to rubber stamp everything and adjourn as quickly as possible). Adding more members to Council introduces additional issues like defining and establishing a quorum, getting the meeting to start and run on schedule, and getting new councilors up to speed on their role.

Finally, I am concerned about how funds allocated to existing districts will be redesignated, and how future funds will be allocated to future districts. For the districts that have been successful with their meetings, it seems unfair to take away summarily the accumulated funds that are available because of the hard work of the district officers. On the other hand, in the revised schema for districts, it is unclear whether any portion of the membership dues will be directed to the benefit of the districts, or whether districts with low membership numbers will be automatically funded at lower levels.

If the recommendations of the task force are adopted as currently submitted, I will accept that these changes are the way the majority wants them to be. Nevertheless, I believe that the loss of district meetings, the reduction of district sizes, the expansion of the number of districts with a parallel expansion of Council will pose new challenges that need to be addressed.

Sorry for the manifesto.

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
74	none	Mar 14, 2011 11:38 AM
75	Congrats to the Task Force. Hope recommendations pass.	Mar 14, 2011 12:12 PM
76	Change is good. Removing education to the state level seems appropriate	Mar 14, 2011 12:36 PM
77	I think the language of the proposal to remove continuing education from the districts need to be reworded. It alarms everyone.	Mar 14, 2011 2:14 PM
78	one rep. from each may be able to do the job	Mar 14, 2011 2:16 PM
79	Many of these proposals seem to be cost prohibitive in a time when TLA needs to be focusing on other areas. By letting each district determine their own priorities, members of one district may be short-changed in training opportunities, while another may be enriched...and it may change from year to year. Some standardization needs to be in place for the protection of the local members. I am distressed to see a continued polarization of the metropolitan areas against the rural areas thus giving us less common ground. I'm not sure how funding would work. I'm not sure who elects those two representatives. Lots of questions.	Mar 14, 2011 11:59 PM
80	I guess I'm still not clear on the purpose of districts with this repurposing. If districts are still encouraged to have annual meetings (for networking, informational purposes), then two representatives on Council is not enough manpower, unless a meeting committee is formed within the district. That may work, but it may be difficult to find volunteers when in the past the district chair was in charge of planning. It is also nice to have a secretary/treasurer if districts will be given a budget to manage TALL texan donations, stipends for legislative day, etc.	Mar 15, 2011 8:59 AM
81	Please keep us up to date on what happens at meetings via email. Communication is important.	Mar 15, 2011 9:20 AM
82	Thanks to all your hard work.	Mar 15, 2011 9:23 AM
83	Because everything with library funding is so uncertain right now, this is not a good time to be making these major changes.	Mar 15, 2011 2:38 PM
84	Thanks to the Task Force for their work on this project.	Mar 15, 2011 4:11 PM
85	Thank you for your very hard work on this project.	Mar 16, 2011 9:51 AM
86	The proposed map will not work for my district. Two reps from each district is not enough to plan anything of significance.	Mar 16, 2011 4:24 PM
87	It would be very usefull if meetings, etc. were scheduled during the work week and not on weekends.	Mar 16, 2011 5:49 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

88	Would districts still be free to have a district conference if their membership supported it? Could districts with a small number of libraries/librarians merge with nearby districts if they desired?	Mar 18, 2011 9:52 AM
89	This is the same thing one of my business organizations has done due to lack of participation.	Mar 19, 2011 3:41 PM
90	District 2 has become a venue for public libraries and librarians, so as a school librarian it is no longer of much value for me. Continuing education must be sought privately, and the large distance of our district is not practical for networking.	Mar 20, 2011 1:43 PM
91	Why have so many districts? Why use or recommend only one way of redistricting? Can we have some other alternative? Over double the number of districts for so many who don't care? What about the new districts that do not have very many librarians in them? Have you looked at the number of librarians or TLA members in these newly proposed districts?	Mar 20, 2011 9:25 PM
92	It looks as though the Taskforce has done excellent work. Thanks to all who contributed their efforts.	Mar 21, 2011 9:20 AM
93	Lets do it.	Mar 21, 2011 9:32 AM
94	If Continuing Education Credits will still be required of library directors and others, what venue will be offered besides the districts for CE? It is through the districts that most librarians learn about CE opportunities. One other thing the districts have been good for in the less populated areas is collective bargaining power so small libraries can get the same discounts as the big city libraries. How would breaking up the districts into smaller areas help the small rural library with better costs? Though I know it all depends on the district - HALS does things differently than AALS does. Difference in population and libraries served play a big factor into that. HALS has all the Houston area libraries systems - AALS biggest member is San Antonio with many small rural libraries. That is my concern - small, rural libraries may get overlooked in the shuffle.	Mar 21, 2011 9:57 AM
95	no comments at this time	Mar 21, 2011 10:54 AM
96	It seems that the proposed districts will have a disproportionate number of librarian members, yet have equal representation on the Council. Have you addressed this issue, or is it even a concern (e.g. the Council will not be voting on anything)?	Mar 21, 2011 11:11 AM
97	Question #4 was unclear to me- the first sentence details the Task Force recommendation and the second sentence is about the Texas Regional Council of Government recommendation. I'm assuming that the question is asking if I agree or disagree with the Texas Regional Councils of Government recommendation...	Mar 21, 2011 1:09 PM
98	I like the changes being suggested.	Mar 21, 2011 1:41 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
99	Simplify	Mar 21, 2011 1:59 PM
100	Great job!	Mar 21, 2011 2:35 PM
101	District 8 has offered new librarians the opportunity not just to receive continuing education, but to be presenters. Other venues, besides Contributed Papers at TLA, should be developed to allow librarians who may not be ready to present online workshops to develop their skills in a small venue.	Mar 21, 2011 3:14 PM
102	Long overdue. Let's get it done.	Mar 21, 2011 5:35 PM
103	The information accompanying the survey was very lengthy, which probably reduced readership of the entire document. Sometimes, as they say, "less is more."	Mar 21, 2011 6:34 PM
104	Great ideas but I think other activities need to be assigned to districts, but I'm not sure what. I don't know what is proposed is enough to keep people involved. Also, the number GREATLY increases issues such as: if people want to meet at TLA to gather information - do we let them? Now there are 19 rooms, do we have enough rooms for all?	Mar 21, 2011 10:39 PM
105	Use the same district lines and numbers as TEA Regions	Mar 21, 2011 11:33 PM
106	I love the idea of inner district networking!! I feel like I've been in Texas 3 years and outside of my local library branch or work I don't know any librarians. Even at my work it's hard to know who is a librarian and who isn't, and who is interested in library issues (outside of work). I would love to be more active and meet others.	Mar 22, 2011 8:16 AM
107	Thank you for asking.	Mar 22, 2011 8:26 AM
108	My only concern is that currently the smaller, less populated areas benefit from the resources that the larger metro areas can offer. With the new boundaries this might be lost.	Mar 22, 2011 8:27 AM
109	By allowing the person with the fewer number of votes to be an alternate, it sure would allow some of use that truly want to serve TLA a chance to do it. It is very disappointing to try and try to get involved at the district or state level and never get a chance to do so. I have been involved in TLA for 15 years and it looks like the less vocal ones of us will once again not be served.	Mar 22, 2011 8:40 AM
110	I don't have a problem with using the districts for geo-based representation on the council, but I think removing the districts' responsibility for continuing ed is a huge mistake. Librarianship is a dynamic field -- things are always changing by leaps and bounds, not just simple steps. Continuing ed is <i>very</i> important in this field, especially for those of us who want to remain viable and valuable to our employers, communities, and colleagues. Continuing ed <i>needs</i> to continue to be a primary responsibility of the local organization, i.e. the district.	Mar 22, 2011 8:41 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

111	I'm sure part of the purpose behind reviewing the role of districts in the first place is the vast differences in communities and needs across this vast state. With that in mind, I would like to see a more flexible structure... knowing that flexibility creates its own difficulties. I am also concerned about creating a Council so large it becomes unwieldy. Perhaps some kind of hybrid system would work: Maybe create a few more districts for purpose of representation on Council, but not so many. Perhaps create sub-districts within each. My main concern is that each district or sub-district should be able to determine its own primary purposes. As a TLA unit, of course, there would be minimal requirements for structure and function. But allow each to determine its own needs rather than handing that down from above. Districts in more rural and distant areas still depend on their districts for CE, at least more so than say District 3 or District 8. Maybe there's even a few alternatives to structure bylaws, wherein each (larger) Distr. provides representation on Council, defining the relationship between larger and sub-districts, with each sub determining its primary functions, perhaps out of a list of provided options: CE, networking, etc. In this way, the larger kind of "umbrella" Dist. might take on networking while the subs that need it focus on CE. Something along those lines. My primary concerns are providing the flexibility to allow districts to determine their own priorities; and not getting Council too huge. Tho I do support some kind of breakdown beyond the 10 district system now.	Mar 22, 2011 9:20 AM
112	if the State Library Systems are drastically cut for the next budget, TLA should support some of the systems functions, education and advising on professional subjects	Mar 22, 2011 9:20 AM
113	TLA District III meetings are usually interesting, a good way to meet other librarians, and provide excellent opportunities for professional development. Our library enjoys meeting with librarians from all sizes of libraries, both metropolitan and rural. This contact is probably more important for the rural libraries. We do not want this aspect of TLA District III to change unless absolutely necessary for economic reasons.	Mar 22, 2011 9:48 AM
114	The current system works for District 3. It would be ashame to change it.	Mar 22, 2011 10:09 AM
115	Focus on library patron needs, not just association needs.	Mar 22, 2011 10:18 AM
116	As a member of district 8 I feel that the mix of libraries is good, and we usually have a good district meeting. While I am not always able to go, I feel that it is to our benefit to network with librarians that are closer to us, geographically. I think that most members of this district are against breaking the district up--and changing the purpose.	Mar 22, 2011 11:46 AM
117	NA	Mar 22, 2011 12:08 PM
118	If the districts are no longer the main area for training who would be. It give support to libraries to let their staff go to district meeting to get training and it costs less to send people to area/reagional locations than to a conference location.	Mar 22, 2011 3:03 PM
119	I would like to become more involved here, but I do agree, giving up personal time is so hard to do now days. I'll try harder and I hope the meeting schedules are made far enough in advance to work with.	Mar 22, 2011 9:13 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
120	There are not enough people participating in District activities to support a large office structure and the current district meeting activities. Districts need to be free to provide what activities pertinent to their area.	Mar 24, 2011 9:53 AM
121	In the digital age, it seems counterintuitive to increase the number of districts rather than decreasing them. Online communication is the best way for people to connect since travel, even locally, can be a burden for busy librarians. Online, we can communicate as frequently as we desire. Not to mention that geographically, we may not have as many peer institutions with which to connect. It makes more sense to reduce or eliminate districts and go with the broader divisions of public, academic, school and special.	Mar 24, 2011 3:20 PM
122	Thank you for all your hard work! This sounds like it will be a more effective representation for all of us.	Mar 24, 2011 3:33 PM
123	Since most librarians have budget constraints, have you thought of having tele-conferencing more often?	Mar 24, 2011 3:45 PM
124	Attending my district meetings over the years has provided me with many opportunities for professional development and I would like to see that continue.	Mar 24, 2011 3:48 PM
125	Although, I didn't initially support this change, I realize that something needs to be done to increase participation. Since this will increase participation by more people and give us the option to continue things as we have done--for those who like it that way--I support this change.	Mar 24, 2011 3:50 PM
126	Most of the librarians will be in just a few districts which will give rural small libraries too much voice in council.	Mar 24, 2011 3:52 PM
127	I like the current district structure. We have a range of interests, libraries, and ideas, so are exposed to many issues, concerns, and solutions.	Mar 24, 2011 4:14 PM
128	You're doing a great job -- Thanks!	Mar 24, 2011 4:28 PM
129	Thank you for your efforts!	Mar 24, 2011 4:31 PM
130	Being lumped with a much larger metropolitan area 100 miles away has never made sense, just being our local 7 counties that already has an identity makes much more sense.	Mar 24, 2011 4:36 PM
131	According to the proposed recommendation, District 4 would be broken up into four smaller districts, which does not make sense. If some districts would like change their boundaries, so be it, but the rest of us should not be required to follow suit.	Mar 24, 2011 4:37 PM
132	Do NOT ever let [REDACTED] serve anywhere [REDACTED] never communicates and is dishonest.	Mar 24, 2011 4:37 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

133	Some districts are too large to adequately represent all of their members.	Mar 24, 2011 4:38 PM
134	I think it is a mistake to drop continuing education from the central mission of the districts. This has been very important in the rural areas of the state, especially in the more remote areas like West Texas and the Panhandle.	Mar 24, 2011 4:42 PM
135	N/A	Mar 24, 2011 4:45 PM
136	Great Job, Task Force Members	Mar 24, 2011 5:27 PM
137	If question 5 is contingent on question 4, and I do not support the districting that TLA has proposed, then what value does my answer to question 5 have? I support redistricting, but would suggest that each current district have a say in how that redistribution occurs. Further, I still believe that TLA overall needs to rethink and/or redefine its mission and value to its members - redistricting is of limited importance relative to the value of TLA as a whole.	Mar 24, 2011 6:05 PM
138	Communication is always the key. Thanks for your efforts.	Mar 24, 2011 6:27 PM
139	To be honest local district workshops have been planned so 'last minute' the last few years I've quit going because they are so disorganized. Friends who went to the district 8 most recently said it was the worst they'd ever attended. We didn't even have registration info until just a few weeks ahead. We must have stronger leadership.	Mar 24, 2011 9:04 PM
140	The Bluebonnet Committee will need to make a change in their selection. Stay with the same committee number but do away with the district requirements.	Mar 24, 2011 9:16 PM
141	I suggest we leave the current TLA districts in place for the reasons already presented.	Mar 24, 2011 9:56 PM
142	Great ideas.	Mar 24, 2011 9:57 PM
143	I think the districts should have meeting at least twice a year.	Mar 24, 2011 11:09 PM
144	Thank you for seeking our opinion on this matter and for the thought that went into creating this document. It is greatly appreciated!	Mar 24, 2011 11:24 PM
145	District representation on Council is an excellent idea.	Mar 24, 2011 11:48 PM
146	Having districts on how COG exists would not fly well. Leave Districts as they exist for stronger leveraging and splintering into smaller proposed options.	Mar 25, 2011 1:19 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text		
147	I greatly appreciate the efforts of the Task Force. This is a complex issue, with no clear solution, and I believe you all have done an excellent job coming up with some reasonable alternatives to the existing structure. It's not been an easy or glorious task, I'm sure...but I thank you.	Mar 25, 2011 5:50 AM
148	Job well done; thanks for your service.	Mar 25, 2011 6:43 AM
149	This all sounds good but considering the budget issues in the state I will lose my position as librarian starting 2012-2013. What good will changes do then when most of the librarians in the state are gone?	Mar 25, 2011 7:17 AM
150	I still think they need to do education. Some librarians can make district meeting but not State	Mar 25, 2011 8:09 AM
151	Navarro County should not be grouped with Dallas/Ft Worth, but Waco.	Mar 25, 2011 8:17 AM
152	Good work. Thanks	Mar 25, 2011 8:18 AM
153	I still support a role of continuing education so if districts are smaller, some may want to band together to provide CE opportunities.	Mar 25, 2011 8:27 AM
154	I appreciate the work the Task Force is doing for Librarians.	Mar 25, 2011 8:41 AM
155	Way to go!	Mar 25, 2011 8:44 AM
156	Our district should not schedule meeting with the consideration of the Houston area only. Those of us out in the little areas surrounding Houston would like to feel we have a part and not be treated like step-children.	Mar 25, 2011 8:57 AM
157	Regardless of outcome, I would like to see this issue *resolved* this year! And (again, regardless of outcome) to thank the Task Force for all of its hard work. It is very much appreciated (yet again, regardless of outcome). :-)	Mar 25, 2011 9:13 AM
158	No matter how you slice it, some people are not going to like it. Instead of dismantling the whole system, why don't ya'll try and figure out what some district do better than others, and provide tools for the lesser districts to succeed?	Mar 25, 2011 9:26 AM
159	Glad you are finally making these purposeful changes.	Mar 25, 2011 9:36 AM
160	Recommend to keep Chair, vice-chair and other officers.	Mar 25, 2011 9:59 AM
161	Change is good if it will improve representation and participation by the different districts.	Mar 25, 2011 10:07 AM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

162	I like the idea of moving away from workshops as more and more migrate online.	Mar 25, 2011 10:08 AM
163	These recommendations seem good for increasing involvement at the local level.	Mar 25, 2011 10:08 AM
164	Having read the report and looked at the data, I do not see how the survey results necessarily support the recommendations of the task force except that districts serve a valuable purpose and should be kept.	Mar 25, 2011 10:26 AM
165	I have never attended any district events. They are usually held in Corpus Christi, 2 hours away. We have a STRONG TASL group here in the Rio Grande Valley, and ESC Region I services us quite well. Changing the districts to smaller units just makes sense.	Mar 25, 2011 11:17 AM
166	<p>Suggestion for TLA Conference program proposals--have fair representation at each annual conference, and also advertise the submission window more among districts. Also, get feedback from districts as to 1) Have they ever presented? If not, why? Or if they have submitted proposals, when was it, and what was the reason given for not being accepted? 2) why there is a lack of submissions for presentations--why have people not submitted proposals, 3) what kinds of sessions members would like to see--ideas for focus areas as well as trends to be shared and presented @ TLA.</p> <p>Related issue---TLA's annual conference needs to be even more forward-minded and innovative, taking the cue from TCEA. Also--accept a wider diversity of proposals, even from those that are newbies to presenting. Expanding the Exploratorium idea (AND extending deadlines for submission) would provide a richer pool of sessions. The selection committee should be chosen from those among the districts, not the same few people each year.</p>	Mar 25, 2011 11:35 AM
167	The Task Force has done invaluable reseach, consolidation, and deliberation to come up with progressive proposals. Thank you.	Mar 25, 2011 11:41 AM
168	For rural Texas the less we have to travel the better. District 1 is so big in miles that if it was split we might have better turn out!	Mar 25, 2011 12:22 PM
169	My concern is that dividing the state into too many districts will put some areas like us in southeast Texas in the position where we will have a smaller pool of volunteers to represent our districts. Networking is not an issue so much as is how active people from our area will be.	Mar 25, 2011 2:01 PM
170	In my opinion, some of the areas on the map would be too small to be effective, e.g. 15, 22. However, I have no problem increasing the representation on Council by the areas. I suggest doing some "tweaking" of the areas by doing some combining. I am a college librarian in the Beaumont area (15) and am not in favor splitting us apart from Houston. Right now, we have good networking with our academic counterparts in Houston, Huntsville and Nacogdoches. Our 3-county area is not large enough to provide any meaningful networking for the academic librarians. Please keep our area with Houston! We have no problems being part of District 8!	Mar 25, 2011 2:06 PM

1. Please add your comments, ideas, and suggestions for the Task Force.

Response Text

171	Your task force recommendations are very good. I really like breaking the districts into smaller areas. I truly believe you will get better representation at the meetings if you do.	Mar 25, 2011 2:06 PM
172	I hope that continuing education is still included somehow in the meetings because it is still important to the success of TLA and the various Districts purpose.	Mar 25, 2011 2:14 PM
173	I have not liked region 7 under the guide of North Tx Libraries. I would prefer to see us set our own direction!	Mar 25, 2011 5:51 PM

Research Findings on Texas Library Association Districts

(initially presented April, 2010)

Introduction

The Task Force on Texas Library Association (TLA) Districts is an outgrowth of the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force in which the task force members were divided about the viability of districts.

The TLA Task Force on Districts was charged with four objectives to determine whether districts should continue in its present formation or be restructured differently. For this paper's scope, the task force was charged to evaluate the results from the Transforming TLA Structure Task Force survey of the TLA membership in 2009 related to districts. Other comments and recommendations of members and member groups during the 2009 Annual Assembly and such other data would be also considered by the task force members.

Background on Districts

There are ten (10) regional districts within TLA. Each district has its own governance structure, including bylaws and elected officers. Each district also holds an annual fall meeting to conduct business, provides mini-workshops gleaned from TLA's annual conference held in the spring, and offers networking opportunities to discuss and advocate library issues.

The purpose of TLA districts is outlined within District 3's website under its history chapter (<http://www.txla.org/groups/dist3/history.html>), and quoted below:

Districts are geographical designations grouping TLA members according to location and offering members a means to identify and organize with other members who work in close range of one another. Districts were first termed Regions and were established in 1948 as part of an overall reorganization effort of TLA and in response to the shortage of gasoline that seriously impeded travel to the TLA annual conference. The District Planning Committee, a Standing Committee of TLA, budgeted annually for districts in the neighborhood of \$60.00 to \$75.00. From the start, each district was envisioned to be self-supporting, raising the funds needed to conduct business through registration fees for the annual meeting of the district. Each district was to encourage and emphasize the need for improved library service throughout the state of Texas and, by

accomplishing that, give broader scope to the work of TLA. (TLA District 3, 2009, para. 3)

Each district covers a number of counties serving the population of Texas, ranging from small and rural counties to large and urban metropolitan cities as found on the TLA website on districts, <http://www.txla.org/html/dist/distmap.html>

The 10 districts, represented graphically in Figure 1, are also represented by 10 regional library systems that serve as primary facilitators between public libraries, TLA, and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The 10 regional library systems also play other roles, such as developing library leadership, encouraging shared cooperation and resources among public libraries, providing continuing education, promoting the growth and development of community libraries, and supplementing local library resources.

- District 1, Big County Library System (Abilene, San Angelo)
- District 2, Texas Panhandle Library System (Amarillo)
- District 3, Central Texas Library System (Austin)
- District 4, South Texas Library System (Rio Grande Valley)
- District 5, Northeast Texas Regional Library System (Dallas, Garland)
- District 6, Texas Trans Pecos Library System (El Paso)
- District 7, North Texas Regional Library System (Fort Worth, Denton)
- District 8, Houston Area Library System (Houston)
- District 9, West Texas Library System (Lubbock)
- District 10, Alamo Area Library System (San Antonio)

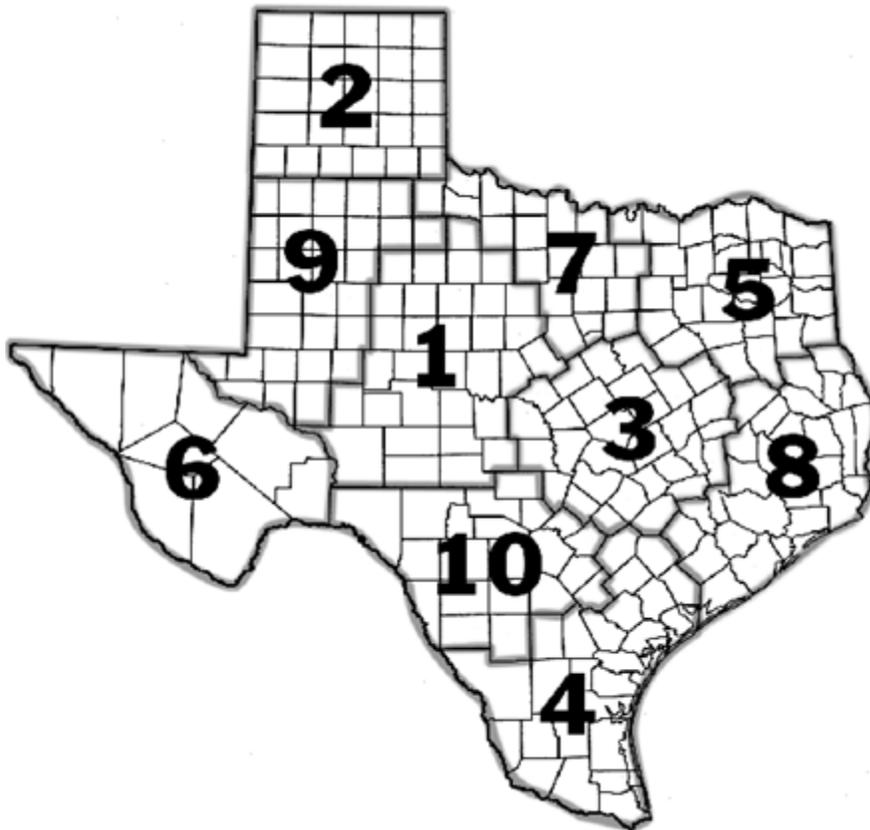


Figure 1. TLA's Ten Districts.
From TLA's website on districts, <http://www.txla.org/html/dist/distmap.html>.
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Methodology

The Transforming TLA Structure Task Force survey was conducted by the Transforming TLA Steering Committee. An email invitation to participate in the online survey was sent to librarians and/or library support staff in Texas, asking them various questions about TLA's governance. The email included a link to the *Survey Monkey's* online survey. The online survey was posted between February and March 2009. A follow up online survey was posted in April 2009 and will be discussed separately.

The survey instrument was designed in seven parts, in an effort to learn how members felt about TLA's governance structure and whether they were satisfied with their membership. The overall research findings for the entire survey instrument will be beyond the scope of the TLA Task Force on Districts' charge which will only focus on one aspect of the survey – TLA districts.

The survey summary can be found on the following web link:
<http://tinyurl.com/yber7k5>

Data Analysis Review

Opinion was divided on whether districts continued to be viable. Anecdotal comments seemed to indicate that TLA districts were not meeting members' needs. It had been noted that some members of the restructuring task force along with comments made on the survey itself were passionately opposed to have the districts continuing. A member of this task force asked why this was – reasons were lack of involvement, a feeling that people don't care, and that the academics ignore the districts.

The task force agreed that we should analyze data obtained from the online survey instead of creating new surveys. It is important to note that the purpose of the survey was to obtain an overall perception of TLA's membership and governance structure. There were 1,616 respondents for the entire survey instrument. Out of these respondents, 1,309 respondents completed the district survey section. The district survey section had eight questions as shown below:

7. What is your TLA district?
8. Have you attended a fall district meeting in the past 3 years?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. Why have you not attended a district meeting? (select all that apply):
 - a. Can't get off work
 - b. Cost
 - c. No topic of interest / programming / does not apply to me
 - d. Lack of employer support
 - e. Timing or scheduling conflict
10. Please describe your level of satisfaction with the district meeting experience.
 - a. Highly satisfied
 - b. Somewhat satisfied
 - c. Not satisfied
11. How can districts better reach their potential to provide laboratories for learning, leadership, and networking?
12. Do you believe districts serve a useful purpose?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know / no opinion
 - d. Other (please specify)

13. If districts were eliminated, would it be important to have alternatives for networking, being involved in TLA, and getting continuing education?

- a. Yes
- b. No, opportunities already exist within TLA
- c. No, opportunities already exist within other groups
- d. I don't know / no opinion

14. If “yes” above (#7), what would you suggest to replace district meetings? (Select all that apply):

- a. Virtual conference opportunities
- b. Different geographic segmentations of the state
- c. Informal discussion groups using technology

Data Results

In response to the first question on identifying districts, out of 1,309 respondents, 213 members were unable to identify their districts as illustrated in Figure 2. Out of 10 districts, two districts had a high number of members participating in the survey – Districts 5 and 8. The next four districts had a substantial number of members that came from Districts 3, 4, 7, and 10; the range of responses was between 91 and 148. The lowest turnout came from Districts 1, 2, 6, and 9 with a range of 15 to 32 responses.

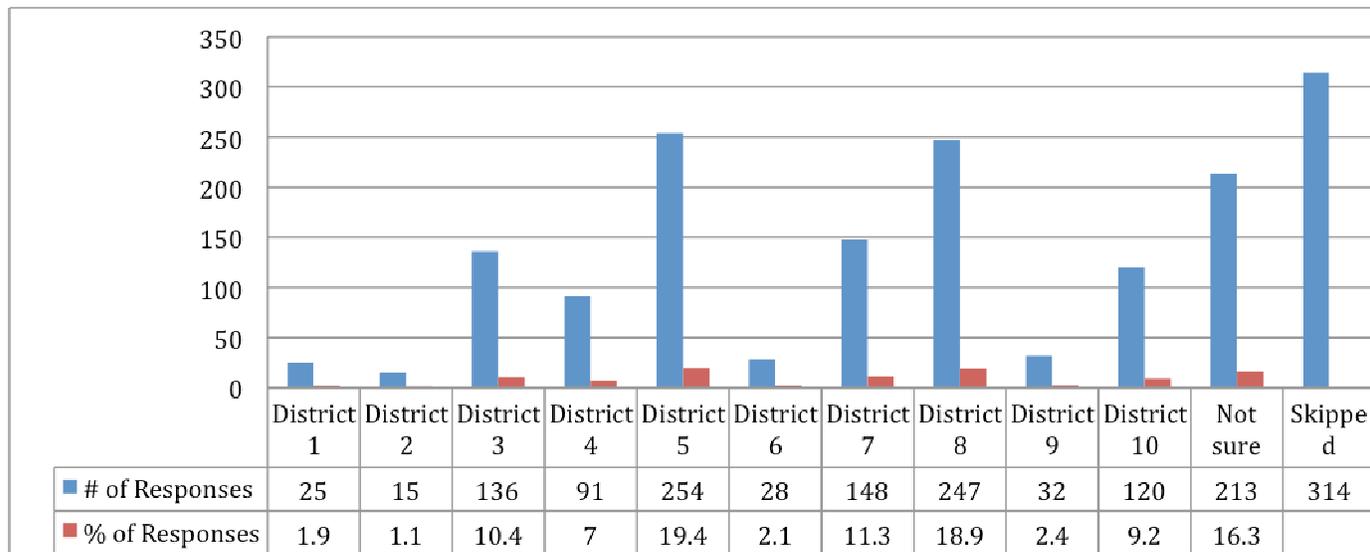


Figure 2. Responses to “What is your TLA District?”

In response to the question on whether survey respondents attended a fall district meeting, 70.1% answered no as shown in Figure 3.

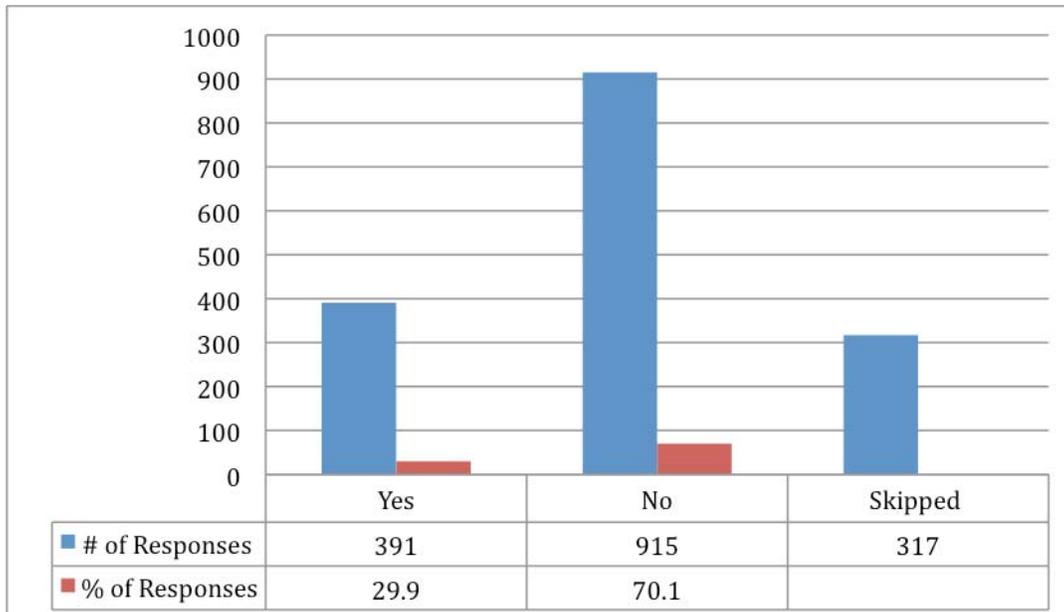


Figure 3. Responses to “Have you attended a fall district meeting in the past 3 years?”

The task force decided to obtain attendance data by examining the fall districts’ registration for the past three years from 2007 through 2009. The results are tabulated in a Microsoft Excel®* spreadsheet which is referenced as “Reg History 2007-09” and housed on the TLA Districts wiki page. The information is captured in Figure 4. The highest number of attendance took place during the District 8 fall meetings, which serves southeast Texas including Houston.

DISTRICT MEETING REGISTRATION HISTORY															
	D-1			D2			D3			D4			D5		
	2007	2008	2009	207	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
# of Registrants	39	28	30	38	50	46	78	94	77	44	41	44	83	99	3
Cost of MemberPreReg	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$50.00	\$55.00	\$65.00	\$25.00	\$27.00	\$30.00
DISTRICT MEETING REGISTRATION HISTORY															
	D6*			D7			D8			D9			D10		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
# of Registrants	15	77	48	53	27	40	300	194	207	32	38	28	86	42	4
Cost of MemberPreReg	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$30.00
	*Co-sponsored by BRLA														

Figure 4. Fall District Meetings’ registration / attendance for the past three years.

Figure 4 also indicates a small number of TLA members attended the fall districts in comparison to the actual number of members who belong to these districts.

* Microsoft, www.microsoft.com

For further analysis, the task force also examined data by filtering the results to each district to determine whether other patterns existed. The information is tabulated into another Excel® spreadsheet, referenced as “District Data for Specific Questions.” This is also housed on the TLA Districts wiki page. Overall, many members responded that they had not attended the fall district meetings.

Reasons for not attending the fall district meetings varied; however, “timing or scheduling conflict” was cited as the top reason with almost 60% replies as indicated by Figure 5. The second top reason indicates that the fall district meetings did not appeal to members due to the lack of appropriate or interesting topics or programming, or they felt that the district meetings were not applicable for them. For example, the district meetings may have been tailored more for public librarians than academic or school librarians as commented by some respondents.

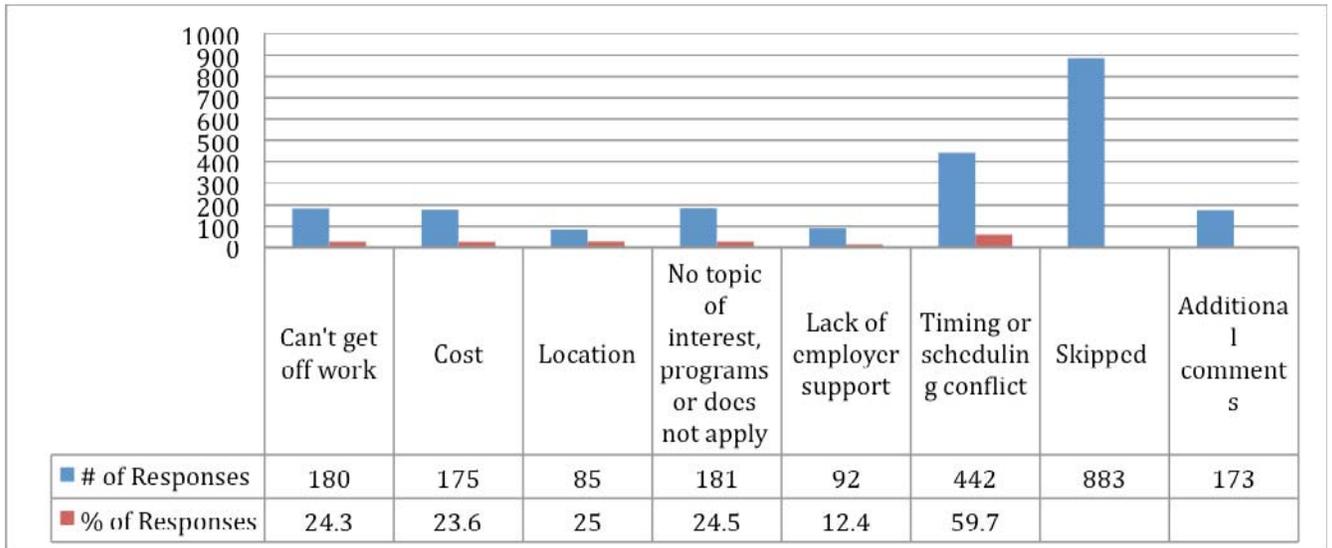


Figure 5. Responses to “Why have you not attended a district meeting?”

As shown in figure 5, 173 respondents also provided additional comments. By conducting content analysis, the task force compiled the comments into grouped categories as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Additional Comments Indicating Reasons for not Attending District Meetings

Category Description	Frequency
Did Not Know / Unaware	52
New Members	31
Scheduling (Week Ends)	19

Not Interested	16
Out of State / Retired	11
No Time / Too Busy	9
Not Relevant to My Situation	7
Family Illness / Health	5
Someone Else Attends	4
Poorly Organized	3
Attend TLA conferences / Regional meetings.	3
Too Many Meetings: ALA, TLA, etc.	3
Uninformed of Purpose	3
Not A Member	2
Not A Librarian	2
No Opportunity	1
Attend When Presenting	1
N/A	1
Total n	173

Table 1 shows the top common reason listed by 52 respondents out of 173 participants, indicating that they did not know that there were district meetings being held. Out of 173 respondents, 31 members were new members or new to the profession. The survey was their first opportunity to learn that there were district meetings. The other three reasons in the top five are (1) scheduling conflicts, with members complaining that that meetings were often held on Saturdays, and that they prefer that the meetings be held on a work day; (2) the content of the district meetings were not applicable or of interest to them, and (3) they were not living in Texas or had retired.

In general, the respondents were almost split between being “highly satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” when they described their district meeting experiences in Figure 6.

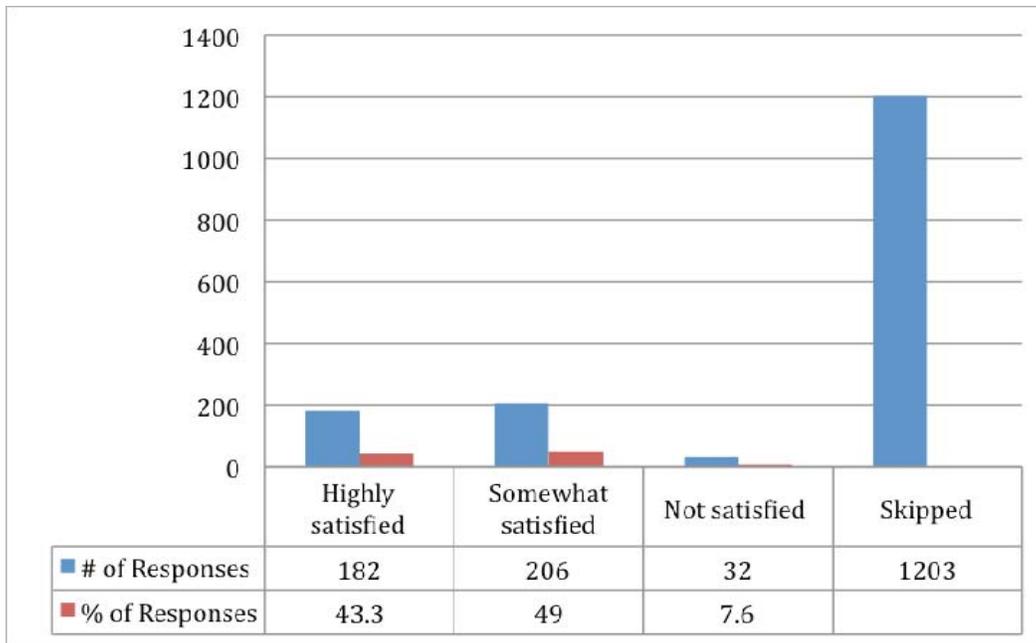


Figure 6. Responses to “Please describe your level of satisfaction with the district meeting experience.”

Going back to the filtered spreadsheet, referenced as “District Data for Specific Questions,” data patterns revealed that respondents from Districts 1, 4, 6, and 9 indicated their high satisfaction level, with the remaining district members feeling “somewhat satisfied.”

There were 436 respondents who provided thoughtful comments in response to the question of “How can districts better reach their potential to provide laboratories for learning, leadership, and networking?” Again, content analysis was performed to group the comments into categories and tabulated into Table 2.

Table 2. Additional Comments Indicating how Districts Could Improve Potential

Category Description	Frequency
Develop / Improve Programs for all Types of Libraries	42
Electronic / Virtual / Email Resources	40
Better Communication / More Informative / Frequent Meetings	39
No Comment / Answer not Relevant to Question	38
Not Sure / Don't Know	34
Social Events / Networking / Mentor Programs	29

No Change	27
Relevant / Exciting Programming	24
Flexible Meeting / Session Schedules	22
Contact From Members of TLA Leadership Reminding of Meetings & Purpose	19
Vary Place of Meetings	13
Work with Regional Library Systems / Educational Service Centers	11
Provide Continuing Education at District Meetings	11
Mini Conferences / Local Meetings	10
Recruit Librarians and Paraprofessional Non Members	9
Develop / Improve Academic Programs	9
Develop / Improve School Library Programs	8
Outreach To Smaller Areas / Local Groups / Programs	8
Restructure TLA Districts	7
Work With Local, County And State Officials and Other Groups	6
TLA Presenters Travel within District to Train	5
High Quality Speakers	5
Centralized Locations	5
Stop Working In Cliques Be Open To All	4
List of TLA Resources, Trainers, Speakers	4
Budgeting / Funding	4
Develop / Improve Leadership Programs	3
Total n	436

Some of the comments made by respondents include the following:

“Attempt to bring people together (physically and virtually) throughout the year instead only around the annual meeting time.”

“By offering programs that address values, issues, and matters of COMMON concern; emphasize similarities; facilitate communication; encourage collaboration; foster camaraderie.”

“Perhaps follow an ALA model with two annual meetings a year with one meeting being for election of officers & related business, committee & action meetings focused on relevant issues and concerns of that particular geographic & demographic district, and a "one-size-fits-all workshop" for how to be an effective member and/or leader in library organizations in particular and organizations in general. The second meeting of the year would be for presentations that featured best practices, strategies, successes, etc. of the librarians and libraries in the district. The latter might serve as a "laboratory" for first-time presenters in the district to develop their ideas, skills, and confidence to present at state and national levels.”

"[N]eeds to dedicate equal amounts of time and resources to different types of libraries and librarians. Currently they have a very heavy lean toward school [or public] libraries."

"District could invite more of TLA's leadership to present workshops at our fall conference. The liaisons are very good at sharing information, but leaders in TLA are also always welcome."

"I think well-equipped meeting sites with good atmosphere will bring attendees back, improving outreach. District 8's use of a large joint academic/public library this year was a nice touch. Pleasant atmosphere breeds good feeling about events. Our district is in an urban area, which makes good facilities and good facilitators somewhat easier to provide. I wonder how less-populated districts/areas fare..."

"More programs representing [sic] the wide variety of interests from elementary school to university librarians to public librarians! In the past I have attended wonderful district programs similar to the programs available at state."

"Maybe a statewide discussion series - that each district could build upon a general theme or share resources (e.g. speakers, presentations, etc.) that would help build statewide awareness and consensus around a topic. From this base, each district could build custom workshops and such that would appeal to staff in their region."

"My district is large. Most participants attend when the meeting is within an hour of their home. Putting together a District meeting is a lot of work. I'm not sure it can be justified when attendance is so poor."

"Districts are 'starting points' for TLA service, and regular meetings allow us to meet other TLA members locally--please keep them! They are a rare opportunity to meet librarians outside my system. I wish I could meet TLA officers there, too, at least occasionally. On the other hand, blogs especially might be a way for local librarians to communicate, and for TLA work groups, like divisions, roundtables, etc. to communicate quickly and informally."

"While I attended my first district meeting this last fall and was satisfied, I generally avoided them because: 1) it looked like most all of the programs had particular interest only to school librarians, and 2) if most of the people there were going to be school librarians, I wouldn't know anyone. I suspect that finding programs that are diversely appealing and yet affordable is a full time job, and complicated by the annual changeover in leadership. A model which has some merit is the collaborative effort between NTRLS, which stages meetings all the time, and their

corresponding contiguous TLA district, for developing and staging worthwhile, helpful, and meaningful programs.”

The question of districts serving a useful purpose elicited a strong response from 625 respondents (51%) who said yes in Figure 7.

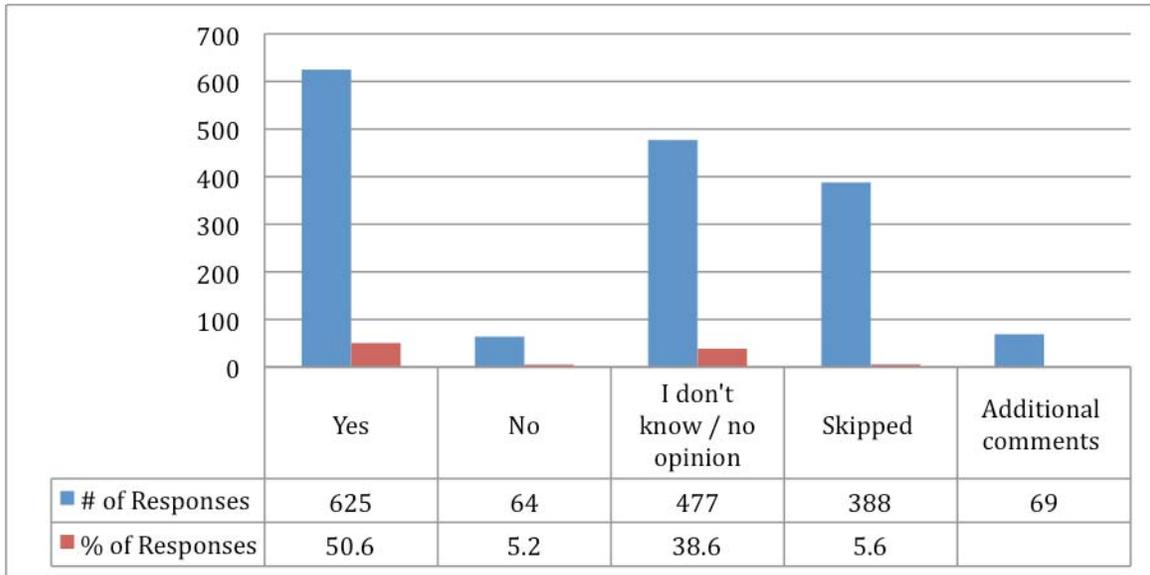


Figure 7. Responses to “Do you believe districts serve a useful purpose?”

By analyzing individual districts within the filtered spreadsheet of “District Data for Specific Questions,” data patterns revealed that eight districts, Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10, showed a strong agreement that districts served a useful purpose. However, Districts 5 and 7 indicated an ambivalent reaction with close percentages in both “yes” and “I don’t know/no opinion” categories. Recall that out of the 1,309 respondents, 212 members were unable to identify their own districts. These 212 members showed a strong ambivalent response with 54% indicating that they do not know or have no opinion as whether districts have purpose.

When analyzing the additional comments, 40 respondents believed that districts serve a useful purpose, and their reasons ranged from developing leadership skills to networking with other colleagues. Eleven respondents wanted to eliminate districts because they were not meaningful or poorly attended due to lack of interest or programs. Eighteen respondents were uncertain, listing reasons that they would attend if their districts had stronger leadership, noting that some districts do better than others in meeting members’ needs.

In Figure 8, participants agreed that it would be important to have alternatives for networking, being involved in TLA, with 60% agreeing while another 25% did not know of any alternative or did not share any opinion one way or another.

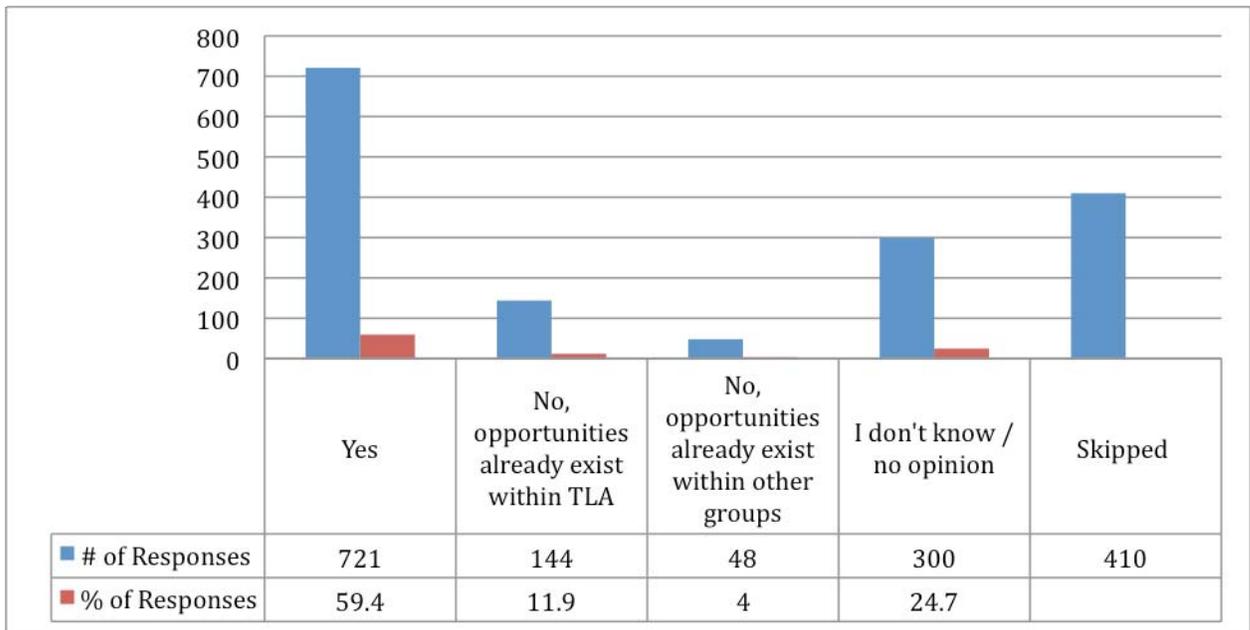


Figure 8. Responses to “If districts were eliminated, would it be important to have alternatives for networking, being involved in TLA, and getting continuing education?”

The majority of participants, in Figure 9, seemed to agree that technology in some form could replace district meetings, either through virtual conference (61%) or informal meetings using technology (58%).

Additional comments made by 89 respondents indicate different ideas in restructuring districts as indicated in Table 3. Out of 89 comments, 22 asked that districts not be eliminated or changed. There were 11 comments supporting virtual meetings / conferences. Additional 10 comments indicated support for workshops that are geared to geographic areas and/or special interest groups. Along a similar line of thinking, there are several groups of members who believe that district meetings should (1) focus on types of libraries; (2) be set up similar to educational service centers; and (3) work through regional library systems.

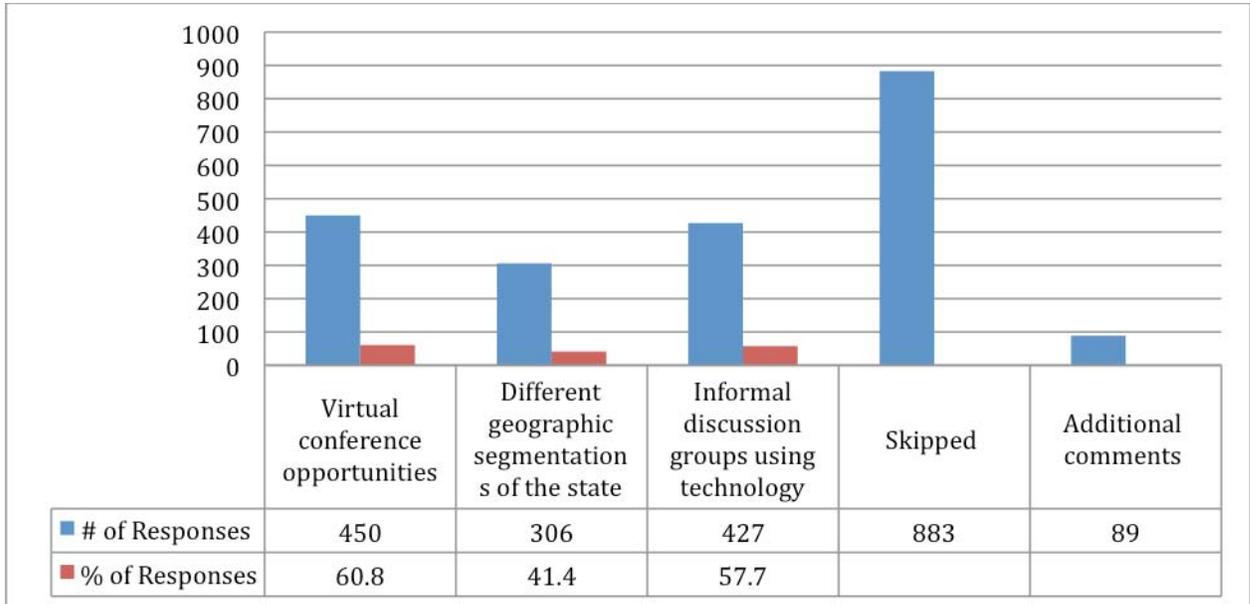


Figure 9. Responses to “If ‘yes’ above (see figure 8), what would you suggest to replace district meetings?”

Table 3. Additional Comments on Replacing District Meetings

Category Description	Frequency
Do Not Eliminate / Change	22
Virtual / Online Meetings	11
Workshops Geared to Local Geographic Areas & Special Interest Groups	10
Unsure / Don't Know	9
Focus on Types of Libraries (Including State Library) Instead of Districts	8
Redesign and/or Combine Districts / Meetings	7
Work Through Regional Systems	7
Pattern Districts as Educational Service Centers	5
Local Continuing Education	3
Local Annual Social & Networking Events	3
Hold Conferences in All Districts	2
Support Staff Meetings	1
Other Comments Unrelated To Question	1
Total n	89

Follow up survey results in April 2009

TLA sent a follow up survey in April 2009, asking participants to select a specific unit, committee, and/or district to determine whether that unit should be left unchanged, modified slightly, fundamentally restructured or eliminated. Only 330 people decided to respond. Out of these 330 respondents, 86 members (see total *n* in Table 4) selected districts to be altered in some way. The findings were not statistically significant when compared to the 330 respondents who selected other TLA units. The summary survey results can be found by accessing:

<http://tinyurl.com/ylds22z>

Table 4. Results from April 2009 survey results

	Response Count	%	Districts to be left unchanged	%	Districts to be modified slightly	%	Districts to be restructured	%	Districts to be eliminated	%
District 1	6	1.00%	1	0.00%	1	0.00%	1	2.00%	2	8.00%
District 2	4	1.00%	2	1.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
District 3	13	3.00%	5	3.00%	4	3.00%	2	5.00%	1	4.00%
District 4	4	1.00%	2	1.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
District 5	18	5.00%	7	5.00%	4	3.00%	4	11.00%	0	0.00%
District 6	3	0.00%	2	1.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
District 7	12	3.00%	2	1.00%	0	0.00%	4	11.00%	4	17.00%
District 8	13	3.00%	3	2.00%	6	5.00%	1	2.00%	0	0.00%
District 9	3	0.00%	1	0.00%	2	1.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
District 10	10	3.00%	3	2.00%	3	3.00%	1	2.00%	1	4.00%
Total <i>n</i>	86		28		23		13		8	

Commentary about Research Findings

Collectively, responses indicate that

- There is still a strong agreement that districts serve a useful purpose even though members do not attend district meetings or think these meetings are valuable.
- There is an overall perception that district meetings are tailored for public libraries due to the presence of regional library systems that provide system support for these libraries.
- Historically, district meetings were held to provide alternative means for members who could not attend TLA's annual conferences held in the spring. These district meetings were to assist members who worked in close distance of one another to network and discuss library issues.
- District meetings are often held on weekends, causing many members to skip attending the meetings due to scheduling conflict or unwillingness to give up their time off.
- Attendances at fall district meetings have declined within the past three years except for District 8. No additional information is available on why District 8 had a high rate of attendance, however, there was a comment from a member who mentioned that the Central Texas Library System in Austin have combined their meetings with District 3 meetings, resulting in a higher attendance.
- From reading the additional comments provided by the survey respondents, data patterns also reveal that members are unaware of what districts are supposed to do and do not know when or why meetings are held. This unawareness may indicate that the historical reasons in the district formation no longer exists due to the availability of digital technology which allows members to network virtually / online throughout the state of Texas.
- Those members who indicate strong support for district meetings indicate the development and growth of library leadership and libraries, as well as receiving continuing education workshops.
- Members are in agreement that virtual conferences and/or online meetings such as webinars could prove to be a useful alternative to holding district meetings.
- Due to the mixed reaction from survey respondents, it leads the task force to question whether districts are still viable due to the low attendance history during fall district meetings.

Based on the above findings, it seems that members still are not able to attend TLA's annual conferences due to budgetary and/or staffing issues, which is the reason why districts were formed back in 1948. Further, members are also not willing to travel to district meeting locales if the content is of no interest or does not apply to their library situation(s). At the same time, due to advances in digital technology, the survey respondents are more willing to try virtual conferences / meetings which will allow them to participate from their own library location at their own time.

Members of the TLA Task Force on Districts will indeed need to discuss the various options in restructuring and/or eliminating districts by (1) rotating TLA's annual conference in all districts; (2) providing district members the opportunity to participate in the annual conference through digital means; or (3) combining districts with the regional library systems and/or education service centers. At the same time, the task force needs to weigh how to restructure the districts without alienating the various types of librarians being served which goes back to the overall perception that districts serve public libraries only. Another possibility is to combine a pair of districts within close proximity and redraw the geographical boundaries to increase attendance and networking opportunities.

(The report presented in Appendix III was primarily written by Task Force member Mary Jo Venetis, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, District 5.)

Appendix IV

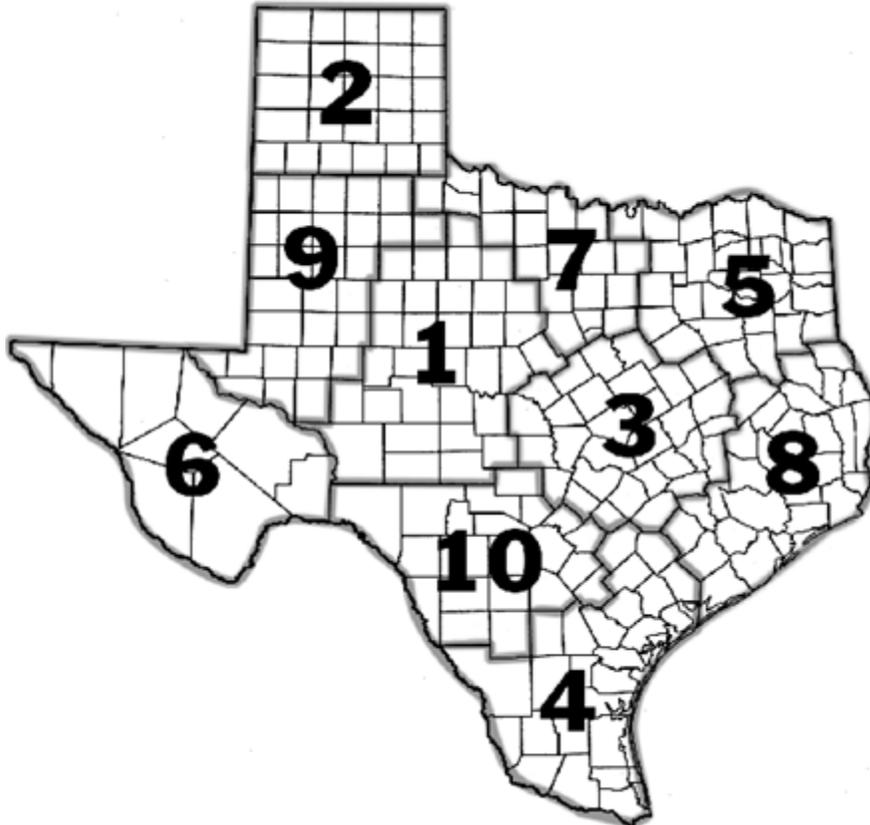
**TLA Membership by District
2010 and 2011**

District	2010 Membership	2011 Membership
District 1	157	173
District 2	112	117
District 3	905	1078
District 4	448	501
District 5	1133	1192
District 6	94	90
District 7	893	933
District 8	1390	1535
District 9	208	218
District 10	615	540
Out of State	167	147
Out of Country	3	12

Note: Membership current as of April 2, 2011 as verified on the Members Only section of the TLA website.

Appendix V

Current TLA Districts



From: TLA Website: <http://www.txla.org.html>