



# SPRING MEETING & POLICY SUMMIT 2023 RECAP

On March 7 & 8, 2023 the Texas Business Leadership Council (TBLC) held its 2023 Spring Meeting in conjunction with its 8th annual Policy Summit. This year – and in addition to an optional pre-event dinner at Perry’s Steakhouse – an optional meeting with members of the Texas Legislature at the Capitol was added to the two-day agenda so that members could hear firsthand from our elected leadership on the progress of the TBLC’s legislative priorities – namely community college finance, curriculum, cybersecurity, as well as infrastructure and water. Members visited with **Senator Mayes Middleton, Senator Tan Parker, Representative Mike Schofield, and Representative Gary VanDeaver. Senator Bryan Hughes** also stopped to chat with the group in the halls of the Capitol Extension.

The next day, Spring Meeting opened with brief welcome remarks from **TBLC Chairman Charlie Amato** before he turned it over to TBLC member **Bobby Perez** of the **San Antonio Spurs** to moderate our first panel, “The Future of Gaming in Texas” where fellow TBLC member **Andy Abboud** of the **Sands Corporation** joined Scott Ward of Orrick, representing the Texas Sports Betting Alliance, for a discussion on the facts regarding resort casinos and sports betting. Switching gears, our next briefing revolved around virtual education. TBLC member **Rex Gore** of **CleanScapes** serves as Chairman for the Texas Commission on Virtual Education. With his chief of staff, D Thompson, the two discussed their findings in a briefing titled “Just How Far Has Virtual Education Come Since COVID and Where is it Headed.” The data suggests that there is an appetite for a virtual education format and students are achieving success. Questions arose around exposing students to extracurricular life experiences and that feedback was well taken and considered by the panel. Moving to our last presentation of the morning, the TBLC was joined by fellow member **Jason Schenker** of **Prestige Economics** who gave a briefing titled, “The Beginning of the End” where he discussed the end for high inflation, the end for higher interest rates, the end for unprecedented growth, unregulated crypto, globalization, and a litany of provocative economic observations that our members should consider when doing business.

The TBLC then transitioned from our private Spring Meeting to our public event, Policy Summit 2023. While **Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath** was slated to open the event, a last-minute cancelation by the Commissioner allowed for us to share Jason Schenker of Prestige Economics with the entire group. In this new presentation on jobs and labor, Schenker discussed the U.S. job market – and its 10 million openings – as well as the need for skilled labor, arguing that an investment in an education – a transferable, untaxed asset – will never be as inexpensive as it is today and to secure it as soon as possible. Following our opening briefing, we were honored to be joined at lunch by **Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick**. In his keynote speech, Lt. Gov. Patrick laid out his priorities for utilizing Texas’ unprecedented budget surplus through tax relief to businesses and property owners and by supporting our classroom teachers with better pay. Further, the Lt. Governor pledged not to leave Austin without a viable solution for the power grid. After lunch the TBLC convened two panels to discuss education. The first, titled “What’s Needed for a Globally Competitive Workforce,” moderated by **Katharine McAden** of **Google**, discussed Texas’ labor pipeline and featured **Woody Hunt** who served as **Chairman of the Texas Commission on Community College Finance**; Ray Martinez, of the Texas Association of Community Colleges; Renzo Soto of Texas 2036; and former Texas State Senator, the Hon. Larry Taylor. The second panel titled, “A Gold Standard Curriculum for Texas” discussed providing districts and teachers with high-quality instructional materials that were on grade level and featured **Representative Brad Buckley, Chairman of the Texas House Committee for Public Education**; Dr. Bobby Ott, Superintendent of Temple ISD; Mary Lynn Pruneda of Texas 2036; and was moderated by **TBLC President Justin Yancy**. Rounding out the day, Educate Texas helped the TBLC host a coffee and dessert reception with **Texas Workforce Commissioner Aaron Demerson** who shared some of the exciting talent pathways that the TWC are working on across Texas both independently and as a part of the Tri-Agency initiative.

The TBLC hosted 131 guests, a “sell-out” crowd for Policy Summit 2023 including **Senator Phil King, Representative Cole Hefner, and Representative Frederick Frazier**. Media covered the event from the Associated Press, *The Dallas Morning News*, *San Antonio Express-News*, and *Houston Chronicle*, with stories on the event appearing in the *Austin American Statesman* and *Yahoo!Finance*.



The day prior to Policy Summit, TBLC members had the opportunity to attend a meeting with Texas Legislators at the Capitol.



During this meeting, members met with Sen. Middleton (pictured), Sen. Parker, Rep. Schofield, Rep. VanDeaver, and Rep. Hughes.



TBLC Chairman Charlie Amato delivered welcome remarks for both Spring Meeting and Policy Summit 2023



Kicking off Spring Meeting was the “The Future of Gaming in Texas” panel with Bobby Perez (Spurs), Scott Ward (Orrick), and Andy Abboud (Sands).



Next up, we heard TBLC member Rex Gore (R) and his chief of staff D Thompson (L) on how far virtual education has come since COVID.



TBLC Member Kelly Tomblin of El Paso Electric Company during the Q&A portion of the virtual education panel.



For our last briefing we heard from TBLC Member Jason Schenker of Prestige Economics on the “beginning of the end” of high inflation and interest.



TBLC President, Justin Yancy, was our emcee for the day, as well as the moderator for our last panel.



Rep. Frederick Frazier chatting with TBLC Member Jon Karp of Whitley Penn.



Senator Phil King (center) was one of the many public officials in attendance at Policy Summit 2023.



We were joined at lunch by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick where he laid out his priorities for utilizing Texas’ budget surplus.



TBLC Members Miguel Fernandez (L) of Transtelco and Ed Escudero (R) of High Desert Capital mid-conversation.



Hon. Larry Taylor, Woody Hunt, Ray Martinez, and Renzo Soto joined us for our community college & workforce panel.



For the curriculum panel, we heard from Mary Lynn Pruneda, Rep. Brad Buckley, and Dr. Bobby Ott.



Former State Senator Florence Shapiro seated with TBLC members Jeanette Ward and Dale Young.



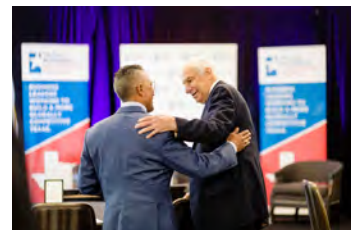
TBLC Member Dr. Debra Chromy of Trellis Company during one of the Q&A portions of the day.



In partnership with Educate Texas, we closed out the day with Texas Workforce Commissioner Aaron Demerson.



Commissioner Aaron Demerson took time to chat with the attendees after his briefing.



TBLC Member Bobby Perez of the San Antonio Spurs with TBLC Chairman Charlie Amato of SWBC saying hello.



TBLC Members Brandon Seale of Howard Energy Partners and Renard Johnson of METI catching up on break.

# SPRING MEETING & POLICY SUMMIT 2022 RECAP

On Tuesday, March 29, 2022, the TBLC hosted its annual Spring Meeting coupled with Policy Summit 2022 at the Stephen F. Austin Royal Sonesta Hotel in Austin, TX. As a result of COVID-19, this meeting was our first, in-person public event since the spring of 2020 – almost two years ago to the day. Due to excitement for the homecoming, our membership participation rivaled record numbers not seen since 2016 with 47% of membership attending some part of the full day conference. In addition to the members and panelists, other VIPs in attendance included **Senator Brandon Creighton; Senator Beverly Powell; Representative David Cook; Representative Joe Moody, Speaker Pro Tempore of the Texas House of Representatives; Representative Tan Parker; Commissioner of Higher Education Harrison Keller; and Texas Workforce Commissioner for Labor, Julian Alvarez.**

The TBLC kicked off its Spring Meeting first with introductory remarks from the Council's newly elected Chairman, **Charlie Amato** of **SWBC**. Amato discussed his priorities for the TBLC, including bolstering our positions at the Texas Capitol on education and workforce; building upon former Chairman **Gay Gaddis'** efforts in Washington D.C. on trade, immigration, and federal issues; and – of equal importance – expanding our membership ranks.

TBLC Member **John Dickson** of **Coalfire** followed Amato to give the Council a cyber security briefing regarding geopolitical issues in Europe and what companies need to be doing right now to secure themselves from rogue and state-based data hacks due to escalating conflicts abroad. In that same vein, TBLC Member **Jason Schenker** of **Prestige Economics** and the Futurist Institute sat down with **Blake Hastings** – the Chief Economist for **SWBC** – to dive deeper into the Russo-Ukrainian war and what the economic ramifications mean for the rest of the world. Zooming in, they also discussed Fed rate hikes, the possibility of a U.S. recession, and what it all means for Texas. The Spring Meeting's last speaker was the CEO and Co-founder of the **Texas Tribune, Evan Smith**, who shared with the Council his predications for the mid-term elections, how they may affect the 2024 presidential election, and what a new battle ground in the Rio Grande Valley means for Texas state elections.

Once the Spring Meeting concluded we transitioned to lunch and invited legislators, legislative staff, partners, stakeholders, and the media to join the meeting. After remarks from Chairman Amato welcoming the “sold out” crowd to Policy Summit 2022, former TBLC Chairman and Co-Chair of the TBLC's Education Taskforce, **Woody Hunt** of **Hunt Companies** was on hand to present **Senator Bryan Creighton** and **Representative Tan Parker** with the TBLC's **Woody L. Hunt Legislative Leadership Award** for their legislative work on the Texas Reskilling & Upskilling through Education (TRUE) initiative. This legislation will incentivize community colleges to better attract and retain both traditional and non-traditional students, enticing them to come back to the classroom and efficiently finish their education so that they can go back into the workforce with marketable skills.

After lunch we transitioned to panel discussions where, in our first panel, we discussed post pandemic success and education funding with **Senator Beverly Powell**, Community College Finance Commission Chairman **Woody Hunt, Kenyatta Lovett** of Educate Texas, and **Jacob Fraire** of the Texas Association of Community Colleges. Our second panel featured **Zaira Garcia** of Fwd.us, **Juan Carlos Cerda** of the American Business Immigration Council, and **Chelsie Kramer** of the American Immigration Council who discussed the status of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the business community's need for comprehensive reform, and the political landscape coming together post-election day.

Finally, to end the day, the TBLC partnered with Educate Texas to host a reception with keynote speaker **Dr. Harrison Keller, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education**. The Commissioner discussed the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's newly updated strategic plan, *Building a Talent Strong Texas*, which transitions Texas through the state's 60X30TX plan and into the future.

Over the course of the day, the TBLC hosted a total of 133 attendees. Spectrum News - Austin covered the event.



TBLC Chairman Charlie Amato delivered welcome remarks for both Spring Meeting and Policy Summit 2022



TBLC Members Rick Francis and Paul Foster chatting during the Spring Meeting to Policy Summit transition.



TBLC Member John Dickson kicked off Spring Meeting with an engaging briefing on the latest in cyber security.



Blake Hastings and TBLC Member Jason Schenker discussed the challenges of the "post-covid" economy.



PS22 was a full house with TBLC members, public officials and staff, business leaders and stakeholders all in attendance.



TBLC Member Woody Hunt presented Sen. Brandon Creighton and Rep. Tan Parker with the 2022 Woody L. Hunt Legislative Leadership Awards. They were then joined by Andres Alcantar to discuss the TRUE initiative and their continued work on education.



TBLC President Justin Yancy with Dr. Kenyatta Lovett of Educate Texas who is a valued partner on education initiatives.



Woody Hunt, Sen. Beverly Powell, Dr. Kenyatta Lovett, and Jacob Fraire discussed formulas for a competitive workforce.



TBLC Members Dr. Debra Chromy, Ed Escudero, and Kelly Tomblin visiting during one of the programming breaks.



Zaria Garcia, Chelsie Kramer, and Juan Carlos Cerda discussed the political challenges for immigration reform and DACA.



Former Texas State Senator Florence Shapiro (R) discussing education policy with Texas legislative staff prior to lunch.



TBLC Members Kyndel Bennett and Russell Molina chatting during one of the programming breaks.



TBLC Member Nathali Parker asking Sen. Powell a question during the workforce panel Q&A segment.



Comm. Harrison Keller spoke on the state of higher education in Texas at the Policy Summit 2022 reception.



TBLC partnered with Educate Texas to host a reception where we learned more about THECB's updated Strategic Plan.



TBLC Member Tym Tombar (R) chatting with a stakeholder at our reception hosted by Educate Texas and the TBLC.



TBLC Members Renard Johnson (center R) and George Watson (R) talking with guests. Policy Summit had a sold out audience!



TBLC Members Rich Gergasko and Ellen Wood catching up after a hiatus in TBLC events due to COVID-19.



Jacob Fraire (R) chatting with Summit guests before his panel where he discussed workforce issues.

# POLICY SUMMIT 2021



## RECAP



Lt. Governor Patrick discusses legislative priorities.



Sen. Brian Birdwell speaks on economic development.



Sen. Larry Taylor on defending HB 3.



Comptroller Hegar discusses the "State of the Texas Economy."



Woody Hunt (TBLC) on the need for a pathway for DACA.



Tyler Moran, Special Assistant to President Biden for Immigration.



Charlie Amato (TBLC) intros the Lt. Gov.



Chairman Gay Gaddis (TBLC) hosts Policy Summit 2021



Jason Schenker (TBLC) interviews Comp. Hegar.



Dennis E. Nixon (TBLC) discusses immigration.



## RECAP

The Texas Business Leadership Council held its sixth annual public facing event, Policy Summit 2021 on February 11-12. The event kicked off with a [keynote address](#) from **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** on his priorities for the 87th Legislative session; namely defending the 86th Legislative Session's education reform package, "HB 3;" adopting a conservative budget; and supporting pro-growth, pro-business policies that has made Texas the eighth largest economy in the world, and number one place to relocate to in the country. A special thanks to TBLC Vice Chairman **Charlie Amato** and **SWBC** for sponsoring Lt. Governor Patrick's remarks.

The TBLC then dove deeper into the tools that help keep Texas competitive for attracting new businesses. Our panel, "[Facilitating the Texas Economy](#)" featured **Senator Brian Birdwell**, President Pro-Temp of the Texas State Senate and Chairman of the Natural Resources & Economic Development Committee; Tony Bennett, President and CEO of the Texas Association of Manufacturers; and Dale Craymer, President of the Texas Taxpayers and Research Association. The panel discussed recent news on why companies like Tesla, Hewlett Packard, and Oracle chose to expand into Texas and how statutes like Chapter 312 and 313 help localities secure this economic growth in their community. **Google** graciously sponsored this panel.

After a brief break, we returned for our last panel of February 11th to discuss the 86th Legislature's major education reform package, HB 3. "[Don't Mess with HB 3](#)" was moderated by Todd Williams, Chairman and CEO of the Commit Partnership and featured **Texas State Senator Larry Taylor**, Chairman of the Education Committee; Scott Flannery, CEO for North Texas and Oklahoma at UnitedHealthcare; Kelly Hall, President and CEO of the Longview Chamber of Commerce; and John Hryhorchuk, Vice President of Policy at Texas2036. This panel discussed just how important it is for Texas to make sure HB 3 is not cut, amended, or changed in any way as we continue to collect data and feedback on what parts of the package are helping and proving effective for Texas students. Thanks to **Educate Texas** for their support underwriting this panel.

On February 12, we reconvened Policy Summit 2021 for an [interview](#) with **Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar**. Sponsored by **Best Associates**, the discussion was hosted by **Jason Schenker**, President of Prestige Economics and Chairman of the Futurist Institute. The two discussed the impact that COVID-19 has had on the Texas economy. Fortunately, it seems that while jobless numbers are up, the Texas economy has weathered the storm quite well. At the time of the recording the Comptroller was confident that Texas' budget obligations could be met in a responsible and conservative manor. Further, the Comptroller thought that Texas would continue its growth trajectory attracting more businesses and increasing the size of the Texas workforce through in-migration.

Our last panel of Policy Summit 2021 zoomed out to focus on a federal issue facing Texas, immigration reform – specifically the status of DACA Dreamers. Panelists for "[Acknowledging America's Dreamers](#)" included **Woody Hunt**, Senior Executive Chairman of Hunt Companies; **Dennis E. Nixon**, President and CEO of IBC Bank; **Tyler Moran**, Special Assistant to the President for Immigration at the White House; and was moderated by Dianne Solis of the **Dallas Morning News**. The panel, kicked off with remarks from Woody Hunt, centered around the message that businesses need to be involved in the discussion and help make the case for the workforce needs in our communities. Thanks to the **Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation** for underwriting this panel.

Policy Summit 2021 went fully online this year and as a result, was the best attended Policy Summit to date with 202 registrants. Further, the TBLC averaged 81.5 sustained viewers per panel throughout the two-day event. VIP participants included **Rep. Keith Bell**, **Rep. Vicki Goodwin**, the **Hon. Joe Straus** and **Paul Breen, Vice Consul General of Ireland**. Finally, Policy Summit was featured in the media with five stories from the [Quorum Report](#), [Texas Tribune](#), [Dallas Morning News](#), [Austin American Statesman](#), and [KRLD](#) in Dallas-Fort Worth. Reporters from KXAN in Austin and WOAI in San Antonio also covered the two-day event.

# POLICY SUMMIT 2020 RECAP



TBLC Chairman Gay Gaddis delivered welcome remarks for Policy Summit 2020.



Former Texas Speaker of the House Joe Straus with TBLC Treasurer Colleen McHugh.



Thank you to PS20 underwriter sponsors Educate Texas and Marathon Petroleum.



TBLC members, public officials and their staff, business leaders and stakeholders enjoying PS20.



TBLC Vice Chairman Charlie Amato introduced Speaker Bonnen.



TBLC President Justin Yancy moderated the first panel on the "Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative" with Comm. Harrison Keller of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Chairman Bryan Daniel of the Texas Workforce Commission, and Comm. Mike Morath of the Texas Education Agency.



Speaker Bonnen discussed HB3 and praised those who assisted in its passing.



Natalie Applegate of Educate Texas moderated the second panel on Youth Apprenticeships with Brent Parton of New America, Dr. Carlos Margo of South Texas College, and Noel Ginsburg of CareerWise Colorado.



TBLC Executive Committee Member Nick Serafy during Q&A.



Sen. Larry Taylor and Rep. Dan Huberty took to the stage to discuss HB3 and its importance to the future of Texas Education. After lunch, Joshua Hunt of Hunt Companies presented them the inaugural Woody L. Hunt Legislative Leadership Award for their instrumental role in passing HB3.



Rep. Keith Bell with PS20 guest Garry Merritt during break.



Policy Summit 2020 guests taking notes during the day's programming.



Two former U.S. Secretaries of Education, The Hon. Margaret Spellings and The Hon. John B. King, Jr. joined moderator Todd Williams of the Commit Partnership for the last panel of the day where they discussed the state of education policy in America.



# POLICY SUMMIT 2020 RECAP

On February 6th, the TBLC held its 5th Annual Policy Summit at the InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas. The summit's agenda began with a panel featuring the leadership of Governor Abbott's "Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative" which oversees the programs that our young Texans use from pre-k through workforce readiness. **Texas Workforce Chairman Bryan Daniel** along with **Education Commissioner Mike Morath** and **Commissioner for Higher Education, Dr. Harrison Keller** discussed the past disconnects their agencies have experienced and how they are now better aligned to achieve the Governor's goals and the goals laid out in 60X30TX.

Following our "Tri-Agency" discussion, our members and guests heard from a panel of experts who shared what Texas and other states are doing in regard to Youth Apprenticeships. Youth Apprenticeships are structured, work-based learning systems that provide high-quality apprenticeships for students while enrolled in high school and immediately upon graduation. Neil Ginsburg of CareerWise Colorado; Brent Parton of New America in Washington, D.C.; Dr. Carlos Margo of South Texas College; and Natalie Applegate of Educate Texas were all on hand to discuss how Youth Apprenticeships have been successful across the country and how there is a growing demand for these workforce programs in Texas.

After a quick break, we were joined by **Speaker of the Texas House, Dennis Bonnen** who delivered special remarks about how important House Bill 3 (HB3) is to Texas. The legislative package was the most comprehensive education reform package that Texas has seen in decades. Speaker Bonnen went on to praise the Texas House for their leadership as they gear up to defend the legislation again in the 87th Legislature from members who may want to pick off performance and outcomes related pieces.

Following the Speaker, TBLC President Justin Yancy continued the HB3 discussion through our next panel with Texas House and Senate Education chairmen, **Senator Larry Taylor** and **Representative Dan Huberty**. Both of the legislators were instrumental in passing HB3 last legislative session. Chairmen Taylor and Huberty shared the behind the scenes accounts about how the legislation almost blew up and how important it is now to defend the package so that we can see the full benefits of the new programming.

As we moved to lunch, we were honored to unveil a new award from the TBLC to be given to outstanding members of the Texas State Legislature who show true leadership often in the face of towering adversity. Aptly named, the Woody L. Hunt Legislative Leadership Award was presented by Joshua Hunt to Chairmen Taylor and Huberty for their steadfast determination to deliver the HB3 legislative package to the Governor's desk.

Closing Policy Summit 2020 we were joined by two former **U.S. Secretaries of Education, the Hon. Margaret Spellings** and **the Hon. John B. King, Jr.** as they discussed the state of education policy in America and how the landscape is changing. Both drew on their decades of experience and showed the audience how much the administrations of George W. Bush and Barak Obama had in common when it came to their goals for successful educational outcomes for every student across the nation.

Policy Summit 2019 closed with a sell out crowd of 142 total attendees - including **Representative Keith Bell**, Texas State University **Chancellor Bryan McCall**, and former **Texas House Speaker Joe Straus**.



# POLICY SUMMIT 2019 RECAP



On Feb. 13, the TBLC hosted a movie screening of *The Pursuit* with the film's director, John Papola.



TBLC Vice Chair Charlie Amato delivered introductions for Speaker Bonnen and Lt. Gov. Patrick.



TBLC Members, public officials, and sponsors enjoying the day's events and speakers.



Evan Smith of the Texas Tribune discussing the midterm elections and what they mean for Texas.



Dale Craymer of TTARA wrapped up the morning events with a briefing on tax and school finance.



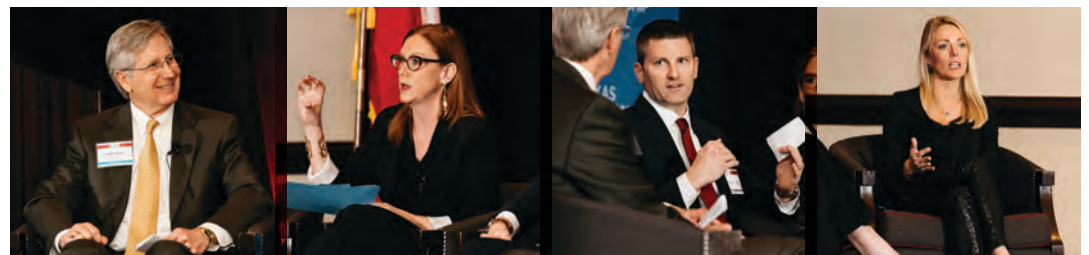
The day kicked off with a private legislative breakfast featuring Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen as the keynote.



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick discussed priorities for the 86th legislative session during his luncheon keynote address.



TBLC members, legislative staff, Texas business leaders and stakeholders filled the room for Policy Summit 2019.



TBLC Infrastructure Co-Chair Bobby Jenkins moderated the first panel on Texas infrastructure with Heather Harward of TWSP, Zane Cole of Jones Lang LaSalle, and Dr. Jennifer McEwan of the Texas Transportation Alliance (pictured left to right).



TBLC Member George Watson during the workforce development panel Q&A session.



Melissa Henderson of Educate Texas, Rachel Hirsch of National Skills Coalition, Dr. William Serrata of El Paso Community College, and Angela Farley of the Dallas Regional Chamber (pictured left to right) discussed workforce development on our second panel.



# POLICY SUMMIT 2019 RECAP

On February 13th and 14th the TBLC held its 4th Annual Policy Summit at the Alamo Drafthouse and Stephen F. Austin InterContinental Hotel in Austin, Texas. The summit's agenda began with a screening of Arthur Brooks' latest project, *The Pursuit*, and Q&A with the film's director on Wednesday, February 13th. Then, on Thursday, February 14th we met to explore the challenges Texas will face to its long term competitiveness outlook if the state doesn't begin to address long standing issues with public school finance, property tax, transportation infrastructure, water, and workforce policies.

Policy Summit 2019 kicked off with a reception and movie screening at the Alamo Drafthouse. Members, guests from the legislature, and local friends affiliated with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and Texas Lyceum joined us for an exclusive screening of *The Pursuit*, a project of AEI President, Arthur Brooks - the preeminent thought leader on free markets, capitalism, and classical liberalism. Following the screening we were joined by the film's director, John Papola. TBLC President Justin Yancy and John sat down for a brief Q&A about the experience and what he took away from traveling the world and meeting the men and women featured in the movie.

The following morning, Thursday, February 14th, we reconvened Policy Summit 2019 hosting a private breakfast with the newly elected **Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, Dennis Bonnen**. Speaker Bonnen candidly shared with the group his vision for Texas and how he hopes to lead through bipartisan engagement. The Speaker walked us through his strategy for choosing committee assignments, weighed in on hot button issues like property tax and teacher pay, and discussed his united front with Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick.

Following breakfast, we heard from Evan Smith, CEO and Co-Founder of the Texas Tribune. Smith discussed the 2018 midterm election - which saw the decline of "red suburbia" as prominent politicians like Pete Sessions lost their re-election bids not only in Texas but across the country. This had a down ballot effect too as Democrats picked up seats in the Texas House and Senate. Additionally, Smith primed the members on the issues which will be important to businesses this session - property taxes, school finance, and the complete disappearance of last session's "bathroom bill" - while discussing the future of the leadership make up in Texas.

After a quick break, we were briefed on the looming property tax debate to be taken up this session. Property taxes in Texas are some of the highest in the country and local budgets continue to grow at unprecedented rates. There is an effort - at the state level - to cap the growth of those local budgets so that Texans are not taxed out of their homes and businesses. Dale Craymer, President of Texas Taxpayers and Research Association, walked Members through the issue and how it might play out.

As the Members moved to lunch, we were joined by legislative staff, stakeholders, and private sector partners to hear from **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick**. He echoed the united front we heard about earlier in the day and stated that he, the Governor and Speaker of the House are all on the same page this session in regard to priority issues - those being property tax reform and school finance. There are some differences beginning to emerge as Lt. Governor Patrick differed from Speaker Bonnen on some school finance specifics but both mentioned how these issues are not lines in the sand and that differences will be reconciled.

Following lunch we broke into panel discussions exploring some of the TBLC's primary issues this session on infrastructure, education and workforce. Our first panel featured our Infrastructure task force Co-Chairman, Bobby Jenkins, as he lead a panel on what makes Texas such an attractive place to do business. Panelists included Commercial Realtor Zane Cole with JLL, Heather Harward with Texas Water Supply Partners, and Dr. Jennifer McEwan with the Texas Transportation Alliance. Their conclusion: if Texas can't get a handle on congestion and water resource allocation, business relocations will dry up. Our second panel on workforce education was hosted by Melissa Henderson of Educate Texas and featured Rachel Hirsch of the National Skills Coalition, Dr. William Serrata of El Paso Community College, and Angela Farley of the Dallas Regional Chamber. Their conclusion: Without better integration between high schools, tech schools, community colleges, and universities, Texas students will be left at a competitive disadvantage when entering the workforce.

Policy Summit 2019 closed with 103 total attendees - including **Representative Will Metcalf, Representative Ben Leman, and Representative Tom Oliverson**. The event was covered by media outlets: the *Austin American Statesman*, *Dallas Morning News*, Texas Tribune, and Spectrum News.

# POLICY SUMMIT 2018 RECAP



Brenda Mainwaring of Union Pacific introduced TBLC Chairman, Gay Gaddis of T3.



TBLC members, legislative staff, Texas business leaders and stakeholders filled the room for Policy Summit 2018.



TBLC Chairman Gay Gaddis kicked off Policy Summit 2018 and discussed her book, *Cowgirl Power*.



Stacy Hock of Texans for Education Opportunity during Q&A with Austin City Council Member Ellen Troxclair.



Gay Gaddis took a moment during one of the breaks to sign books for audience members.



Keynote lunch speaker Austin City Council Member Ellen Troxclair discussed recently passed local laws and how they effect Texas.



TBLC member and Economist Jason Schenker sat down with Comptroller Glenn Hegar to discuss the future of work in Texas.



TBLC members, lege staff, and stakeholders visited with Sen. Dawn Buckingham at the Policy Summit 2018 reception.



Erik Nieves of PlusOne Robotics (left), Mario Lozoya of Toyota North America (middle), and Bob Doyle of the Association for Advancing Automation (right) explored how automation and robotics would effect the future of workforce development.



Dr. David Gardner of the TX Higher Ed Coordinating Board (left), Rex Gore of PelotonU (middle left), Dr. James Pennebaker of UT Austin (middle right) talked about how to better educate a 21st century workforce with moderator Jason Schenker (far right) of Prestige Economics.



Thank you to our speakers, sponsors, and audience members for making PS18 a success.



TBLC members Randy Best, Mark Brooker, Renard Johnson, and guests applauding Troxclair.



Guests, speakers, TBLC members, and lege during the post PS18 reception.



Audience members engaging with speakers during Q&A.

# POLICY SUMMIT 2018 RECAP

On Tuesday, February 27th the TBLC held its 3rd Annual Policy Summit at the Stephen F. Austin InterContinental Hotel in Austin, Texas. The summit's agenda explored how changing demographics, technologies, and policies are setting the Lone Star State up for economic success through growth in productivity and this productivity will come in the form of systems automation. In order for Texans to keep up, students of all ages will need to "robot-proof" themselves through continuing education and skills training.

Policy Summit 2018 kicked off with a lunch featuring special remarks from Chairman Gay Gaddis who is currently on tour with her new book *Cowgirl Power: How to Kick Ass in Business and Life*. She discussed Texas grit and determination, leveraging her strengths and minimizing her weaknesses, and her challenges navigating the business of book sales. Keynote remarks were given by Austin City Council Member Ellen Troxclair who discussed which governing entities are best for job growth – state or local. The Council Member shed light on how Austin and other major Texas cities are pushing anti-business policies aimed to disincentivize economic growth. Most recently, Austin created an ordinance which mandates that employers within the city limits must provide paid sick leave to its employees, raising again the issue of state vs. local control.

After a brief break the group reconvened for a panel discussion titled, "The Future of Work: Automating Prosperity" featuring Bob Doyle with the Association for Advancing Automation, Mario Lozoya with Toyota, and Erik Nieves with PlusOne Robotics. Moderated by TBLC President Justin Yancy, the group discussed the realities of robots in the workplace as tools to assist the workforce, the need for skilled labor to work with emerging technology, and the lack of school resources and curriculum to better train the workforce. Robots will not be taking jobs, in fact, quite the contrary; the lack of a properly trained workforce will stifle employment.

We were then joined by Comptroller Glenn Hegar who sat down with TBLC member and Economist Jason Schenker to discuss Texas' changing industry demographics. The Comptroller has been visiting manufacturers this past winter and shared that their industry is growing and that the federal tax cuts helped to expand their business here in Texas. The Comptroller and Schenker also discussed why the Texas GSP is increasing in manufacturing while the percentage of Texas jobs in decreasing – one could surmise capital improvements in automation might have something to do with it – as well as growing opportunities in the labor market, especially for those who are in business services and the medical field.

Finally, our last panel of the day titled, "Educating a 21st Century Workforce for the Jobs of Tomorrow" tied a bow on the day's proceedings with a hopeful message that education and skills development is the secret for long-term success. Panelists included Dr. David Gardner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; TBLC Member and Co-founder of PelotonU, Rex Gore; and Dr. James Pennebaker of the University of Texas at Austin. Moderated by Jason Schenker, the group discussed innovations in learning and the teaching of college level courses. So much can be done online now that the college of the future may have more of an "on-demand" component rather than the regimental schedule students are accustomed to today. Lifelong learning was also emphasized to keep employees' skills sharp and dynamic.

Policy Summit 2018 closed with a reception attended by Texas State Senator Dawn Buckingham and Texas State Representative Paul Workman. The event had 110 attendees total and included just over one-third of the TBLC's members.

# POLICY SUMMIT 2017 RECAP



Policy Summit 2017 kicked off with a legislative reception hosted by TBLC Chairman & T3 CEO, Gay Gaddis.



TBLC Member & Denim Group Principal, John Dickson briefs legislators, staff and TBLC members on cyber security.



Rep. Gonzales & Rep. Capriglione joined the briefing. Rep. Capriglione plans to file a cyber "omnibus" bill this session.



Rep. Bohac & Chairman Gaddis listen to thoughts from former Texas Chief Information Security Officer, Edward Block.



TBLC Chairman, Gay Gaddis, introduces keynote luncheon speakers Dr. Candace Kendle & Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick.



Dr. Candace Kendle, Founder of ReadAloud.org, speaking on the importance of early childhood literacy in the classroom.



TBLC members, legislators, legislative staff, Texas business leaders and stakeholders packed the room for Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick's Keynote on school choice.



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick engages the audience during his address.



Guests mingle during a break after lunch. Policy Summit 2017 sold out with 150 guests participating in two days worth of legislative briefings, keynotes, panels and receptions.



Capitol Press Corps wrapping up coverage of lunch.



Ed Choice panel intro by TBLC's Mayes Middleton.



Senate Education Committee Chairman, Larry Taylor discussing school choice tools.



Austin Chamber VP Dana Harris introduces House Economic & Small Business Committee Chairman, Angie Chen Button.



Catherine Morse of Samsung & Dale Craymer of TTARA discuss economic incentives and their role in Texas job creation.



Sen. Bob Hall addressing the panelists during the question and answer portion of the Economic Incentives Panel.



Texas Workforce Chairman Andres Alcantar & Superintendent HD Chambers of Alief ISD discuss skill attainment.



John Fitzpatrick of Educate Texas, speaking on preparing young Texans for life after the classroom.



TBLC Member Rich Gergasko, President & CEO of Texas Mutual Insurance, chats with guests at post event reception.



Policy Summit 2017 guests, sponsors, speakers, and TBLC members gather to socialize during one of the intermissions.



Rep. Ron Simmons stops to chat with TBLC Treasurer and General Counsel, Colleen McHugh.

Policy Summit 2017 was a smashing success and grew to include two additional events; a pre-summit reception on the evening of February 8th and a legislative briefing on cyber security over breakfast on the morning of February 9th. In Addition to increased programming, the event saw another sold out crowd with 150 TBLC members, stakeholders, reporters, legislators, and their staffs - a 17% increase in attendance over 2016.

TBLC Chairman Gay Gaddis with her husband Lee hosted several TBLC members and legislative members at their home, overlooking the Texas State Capitol, on the evening of February 8th, 2017. A quick walk from the west entrance of the Capitol, several legislative members stopped in to mingle with our TBLC members, including: Rep. Carol Alvarado, Chairman of the Urban Affairs Committee; Rep. Cecil Bell; Rep. Giovanni Capriglione; Rep. Travis Clardy; Rep. Craig Goldman; Rep. Jim Murphy, Special Purpose Districts Committee Chairman; Rep. Ron Simmons, Rep. Lynn Stucky, and Rep. Gary VanDeaver.

First thing Thursday morning, February 9th, TBLC Cyber Security Task Force Chairman John Dickson hosted a roundtable legislative briefing to discuss the TBLC's cyber security recommendations. Released just prior to the opening of the 85th Legislative Session, the recommendations include common sense, no-cost, and low-cost measures aimed to keep Texan's private data safe. Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, Rep. Larry Gonzales, and Rep. Dwayne Bohac helped the group gain a better understanding of the timeline for filing the legislation and the specific educational efforts that are needed to shore up support.

After a break, we transitioned to the main event featuring Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick with special guest Dr. Candace Kendle of the *Read Aloud 15 Minutes* campaign. Dr. Kendle discussed early childhood learning as well as the importance and advantages of reading aloud to our kids. Lt. Governor Patrick discussed increasing educational opportunities for young Texans. The Texas Tribune produced an article on his speech that ultimately generated a buzz on Twitter for the event. In total, four reporters covered the event for the Texas Tribune, Quorum Report, and *The Business Journals*. Lt. Governor Patrick also recorded a short video praising the TBLC's work on school choice. The clip is featured on the Texas Lt. Governor's official state YouTube channel. Legislators in the audience included Sen. Bob Hall and Rep. Gary VanDeaver.

Following lunch, guests broke into panel discussions beginning with "Educational Choice: A Critical Component to Success." The panel, moderated by TBLC's Mayes Middleton, featured Sen. Larry Taylor, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee; Rep. Ron Simmons; and Adam Peshek, policy director at ExcelinEd. The panel discussed Education Savings Accounts - particularly how the program will help those with special needs - and the feasibility for more school choice in Texas.

Our next panel, "Economic Incentives: Has Texas Seen a Return on Investment?" focused on the issue of economic development and generated some lively Q&A. Moderated by Dana Harris of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, the panel discussed the merits of having a statewide incentive program, explained why incentives are necessary when competing with other states, and shared site selection figures which have been including Texas cities less frequently. The panel featured Rep. Angie Chen Button, Chairman of the Economic and Small Business Development Committee; as well as Dale Craymer, President of Texas Taxpayers and Research Association; and Catherine Morse, General Counsel and Senior Director for Public Affairs at Samsung Austin Semiconductor.

Our final panel of the day, "Work in Texas: From Classroom to Career" discussed educational attainment and workforce issues facing the Lone Star State. Featuring Chairman of the Texas Workforce Commission Andres Alcantar, Alief ISD Superintendent HD Chambers, and John Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of Educate Texas, the panel discussed what needs to be done to put our young Texans on par with their student peers in other states and countries. Woody Hunt, Chairman of the TBLC's Education Task Force moderated the panel.

As our day came to a close, we capped the evening off with a post-event reception, thanking our sponsors, TBLC members, and stakeholders for their support on the issues that keep Texas globally competitive.