

History of Texas Public Schools Week

The Freemasons in the state of Texas initiated the celebration of Texas Public Schools Week (TPSW). The celebration is traditionally proclaimed for the first full week in March in order to coordinate with the celebration of Texas Independence Day on March 2.

In December 1950, Grand Master William Jennings Burris, who had been active in the educational programs of the public schools of McAllen, outlined this program for the observance of Public Schools Week. His desire was to create a long-lasting program of collaboration with all Texas citizens to an important institution and invaluable resource--our public schools and our children. Burris issued a proclamation calling upon all Texas Masons to not only assist in the program, but to impress upon their friends the importance of a closer affiliation between parents and teachers, and a revival of interest in the educational system.

In his message, Burris said:

"It is important that each of the Lodges understand fully that the proclamation that I issued on December 26 is to be fulfilled in each point, as it is so important that we, as Masons, dedicate this one week to the very important subject of Public Schools, since through the effort of the Order, public schools in Texas were given their birthright. I feel that the type of program proposed will accomplish this important undertaking."

The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) began a tradition of designing a campaign logo and theme each year to help school districts coordinate their celebrations. Members of the association create and produce a kit which besides the logo includes celebration ideas, sample press releases, proclamations, and more. These kits were especially helpful for smaller districts who did not have the creative resources to come up with their own campaign.

TSPRA has found though that many schools and districts no longer have time to fully celebrate during that first week due to statewide standardized exams. For awhile, the association suggested that schools select any week in March to celebrate. The Pick-a-Week in March seemed to solve the problem for awhile. But soon that too posed problems with testing and spring break schedules.

After considering several options, TSPRA decided to rename their campaign efforts as Celebrate Texas Public Schools, taking the focus off of just a one week celebration and moving to a year long campaign.