

Dan Mossakowski excited, honored about his opportunity to take FISD to next level

Board President Dan Mossakowski is no stranger to change. He has lived in many places and could have chosen anywhere to live when he and his wife, Sally, chose Frisco.

An Army brat, Mossakowski spent his first 2 ½ years in Germany. His family moved to Copperas Cove, Texas, for three years (which is where he met Sally at the age of 5!) and then moved back to Germany for three more years. When his dad retired, they came back to Copperas Cove and moved to College Station Mossakowski's junior year in high school. He graduated from A&M Consolidated and attended Blinn College before entering the Air Force.

His basic training was in San Antonio and then he went to technical school in Biloxi. As he enlisted in October of 1982, he knew he wanted to marry Sally before he began active duty. They secretly married that October and later

had a church ceremony for everyone in May of 1983!

He was stationed in North Dakota and during that first Christmas, the temperature dipped to 96 degrees below zero. Although the people were some of the nicest he had ever met, after four years it was time to get back to Texas.

Out of the service in 1987, they moved to Austin and he worked for a few months as a car salesman before joining the UPS team. He worked with UPS until 1995 and then moved to the Dallas area (Carrollton) to work for IKON.

In 1997, they moved to Frisco. Mossakowski said they had spent two years driving all over North Texas looking at schools.

In 1995, Curtsinger was new and he and Sally were impressed with the spirit of the schools and the caring attitude of the teachers when they visited. Not

wanting to make a snap decision, they continued their search and found themselves returning to Curtsinger two years later. They found that same warm, lively environment and knew FISD was the place to raise their three children.

While in Frisco, Dan and Sally have given many hours to the community through church, youth sports, and PTA. Many people know Dan through Sally, and he finds it amusing when she says that some find him intimidating. "They know Sally is sweet and caring," he says, "but I guess my size (he stands well over 6 feet tall) makes me seem less approachable."

When Mossakowski began to think of more ways to be of service to the community, he knew that school board was the ticket. "I certainly felt led to do this and knew that I could help take the district to the next level," he said. When Dan Presley's seat became open in 2004, he knew the time was right.

Mossakowski says the biggest eye-opener for him was the amount of effort and work that has been put into getting FISD where it is and in keeping it moving forward to continuous improvement. "So much is going on, on any given day," he said. "I have had to absorb a great deal of information."

It is important to him that the community is committed to smaller schools, which helps to keep the focus on the kids and helping them succeed. Smaller schools allow students more opportunities for growth and participation.

And for the district to continue being successful, he says we must keep working on building relationships between all those involved – parents, teachers, administrators, etc.

"With the commitment of one, we are good; with two working together, we are better; with all of us on board, we can be great," Mossakowski said.



President Dan Mossakowski reads to students at Wester Middle School during National Library Week.

Renée Ehmke quickly understands: In rapidly growing school districts 'there truly is no rest'

If you ask Renée Ehmke what she has learned since joining the Fisd Board of Trustees in 2004— one thing that quickly jumps to her mind is that, “Dr. Reedy doesn’t sleep.” Based on the times and days he e-mails or the depth of thinking that has gone into an issue being addressed, she feels like he must work 24/7.

In this rapidly growing school district, there truly is no rest. But the best part of that is knowing that the Board and Administration care about each individual student and that they want to do the right thing for all children, Ehmke says.

Ehmke grew up in Wichita, Kansas, played volleyball at Friends University, and became a junior high and high school teacher and coach. She married Chad Ehmke in 1988 and they relocated to Texas in 1996 when his employer, Pizza Hut, moved their headquarters to Dallas.

Because two of their four children

were still at home, Ehmke decided to stay with them when they moved to Texas. It was a big decision not to teach and Ehmke knew she needed to stay busy because she missed the classroom so much.

“My kids were at Curtsinger, so I decided to start volunteering in the library . . . and you see what that gets you,” she said, jokingly referring to her current service on the Fisd Board. One of the areas in which the PTA needed volunteer help was running the Book Fair.

Although PTA Board was not in her plans, the Book Fair chair role was a Board position, so she went for it.

She has continued this chairmanship for many years, and Curtsinger’s book fair is known for its creativity and success – so much so that Scholastic leadership brought Polar Express author/illustrator Chris Van Allsburg to visit Curtsinger students and staff in 2005. She now works with the Wester

Middle School book fair, as well, calling that few weeks each year, “book fair season.”

But this level of volunteerism was obviously just a start for Ehmke. When attending a candidate forum one night, she said she felt led at that time to consider running for the School Board. She decided then that if it was the right thing to do, the pieces would fall into place. With prayerful consideration and the opening of a Board seat, she decided to run.

Shortly into the campaign, she realized that she and now friend Brenda Polk were meant to run against each other. A third candidate filed, but was unable to truly run due to a family illness. That third opponent began the formation of a bond between Polk and Ehmke, however, and through learning more about her, Ehmke knew that the children of Fisd would be served well no matter which one of them won.

Due to a reporting glitch the night of the election, at one point it appeared that Ehmke had lost. She felt her words to her daughter when running for Student Council were about to come back to her, “Sometimes our lesson might be in the losing – if you can be okay with that, then run.”

She did win, though, and has been “running” non-stop since, learning the ins and outs of Board service. It is hard work and great fun and she says at the end of the day, the Board members may have different perspectives and background on an issue, but they are still on the same page.

Ehmke encourages all parents to be involved, stating that it is important to their own student and for the entire school. “Our schools cannot run without our parent volunteers,” she said. And that includes the ultimate volunteers, our School Board members.



Vice President Renée Ehmke visits with middle school volunteers about plans for a PTA sponsored Book Fair.

Laura Ellison: Addicted to volunteering

Laura Ellison's husband has always said she is addicted to volunteering. He could be right, and fortunately, one of her passions is service on the Frisco ISD Board of Trustees.

And this passion for education began at an early age. Ellison was born and raised in Tempe, Arizona. The adopted daughter, and youngest of six children, she grew up in a family of educators and is a fourth generation teacher — her mom, grandmother and great-grandmother were all teachers. From the time she was a little girl, Ellison said she loved to teach and she was always one of the students who helped tutor the younger kids.

She left Tempe to attend Brigham Young University, where she met and married her husband, Nathan. Ellison and her family moved to Frisco in 1995 from Provo, Utah. She was teaching and had finished her special education degree with an emphasis in pre-reading, when her husband was transferred to the Dallas area. They looked all over the Dallas area and fell in love with Frisco. "We loved it for all the same reasons as everyone else who is moving here," Ellison says. "It is a great community with great schools, and you hear this story over and over."

When she and Nathan were visiting Frisco, the realtor took them to Rogers Elementary, because with Ellison's background, education was a number one priority. On that first house-hunting day, the couple met Dr. Rick Reedy, then assistant superintendent

and now superintendent.

"We were very impressed," Ellison says. "Not only with the people, but with things like class size." Other things that happened that first day sealed their decision to move to Frisco.

"The people were so friendly and kind," Ellison remembers. They stopped at the grocery store, and she says at least 10 people spoke and said, "hello." Then, they had a tire blow out, and several people stopped to offer assistance. "I quickly said to myself, 'here is where I want to be,'" she adds.

As soon as they moved to Frisco, Ellison got involved with the schools. Her oldest daughter was at Acker, and Ellison became PTA Vice President and President the following year. During that time, the PTA Presidents would get together once a month, have dinner, and then attend the school board meetings.

"I really enjoyed the meetings and the topics, and I found myself wanting to be more involved and wanting to share ideas," Ellison said. Then, when Scott Cobb announced he wasn't running again, she couldn't get the prospect of board service out of her mind — the timing was right. "I always knew I wanted to serve on the school board, I just didn't know it would be that soon," she says. "I put a lot of thought and prayer into my decision and went for it!"

Ellison, in her fourth term, says it has been a truly wonderful experience. As the senior

board member with the most tenure, she is often looked to for historical perspective.

"This whole board is such a great board," she says. "We enjoy each other, and during meetings we are able to discuss issues and disagree, but we come out of the meetings unified as a board. Board service is everything I thought it would be and more, and I think we all feel the same way."

Dr. Reedy was in his first year as superintendent when Ellison came onto the Board, and she still feels strongly that his leadership has been instrumental in guiding Fisd through the growth and in bringing in people who are making a difference.

"I've made good friends while serving on the Board and I enjoy the camaraderie with the Board and the Administrators," Ellison says. "I just love that feeling you get when the board is able to do something that makes a difference for kids — I come home and I am on fire, even after all these years!"

Aim for Success is an example of a program Ellison brought attention to early on as the board liaison on the Health Education Advisory Committee. This program, for 7-12 graders, is a dynamic presentation about sex that is abstinence-based. She was also the driving force for bringing employee child care to Frisco ISD.

In the future, Laura is looking forward to continuing to deal with the growth, provide for the increasing needs of students, and maintain the quality of education and opportunities.

"It is not the same small town as it was when we moved here," Ellison says. "I can be at a restaurant in town now and see so many faces that I don't know." But Ellison hopes all the new faces in town know how committed the board is to helping students achieve, to be involved in meaningful activities, and to feel good about who they are and where they are headed as they face the future.

In addition to her work on the board, another educational outlet has been Kindermusik; she also works for the Frisco Public Library. She and her husband have four children and are active in their church, among other volunteer activities!



Laura Ellison on a Frisco ISD float during the Frisco Community Parade.

Hoxie Joins FISD Board

John Hoxie says he is one of those people who fits the saying that, although not born a Texan, he got here as fast as he could. Maybe more specifically, he got to Frisco, Texas, as fast as he could. Just don't ask him to say "y'all."

He says it just doesn't sound natural coming from a native of Dayton, Ohio, who grew up in Warren, Michigan, from the age of seven. Hoxie attended the Warren Woods Public Schools; after high school he attended and graduated from Western Michigan majoring in finance with a minor in economics. He continued his education with a couple of years of graduate school in accounting while he was working at EDS.

During that time he married his wife, Julia, (on June 10, 1988, at 4 p.m. to be exact) and they have three children – Nathan, 20, an FHS graduate and a Chemical Engineering major at Texas A&M; Catharine, a recent FHS graduate, who will be attending Texas A&M in the fall; and Stephanie, a FHS sophomore.

He worked with EDS for 20 years and in the early days he moved around quite a bit, living in Indiana, Michigan and even the United Kingdom. The family moved to this area in 2000 as his job called for him to be near the EDS headquarters. Mr. Hoxie has since worked for Hewlett Packard and now works for Siemens in the IT department. He works out of his home and at this point could live anywhere in the world where there is internet and access to an airport. But Frisco is now home, and for his children, the FHS zone is home. He jokes that when Wakeland High school was opening, his kids gave him an ultimatum.

"You've moved us four times," he said, reporting their conversation. "We are now moving us." So, the family did move from north of Main to south of Main to stay in the FHS zone.

Since moving to the community he has been actively involved. One of the first people he met at EDS was Bob Allen. When Bob found out Hoxie lived in Frisco, he recruited the newcomer to help out in his campaign

for city council and suggested he also fill out an application for city committees. Hoxie has served on the Board of Adjustments and is now treasurer for the Community Development Corporation. His civic involvement has caused him to have the utmost respect for City Manager George Purefoy and the entire city staff and he is impressed with the great working relationship between the city and the school district.

Education is something that he holds in high esteem, as well. He said he has always respected people who continue their education and he developed a curiosity about school board service in high school when the mother of a friend decided to run for office. At that young age he found it fascinating and enjoyed learning what that service was all about.

As president of the FHS Band Boosters, he learned even more about the relationship between schools and citizen boards. As someone who believes that there needs to be public service in anyone's life, he felt like serving the schools was a good fit for him.

"We always wanted to make sure we were providing the best education for our kids, which is one reason we moved here – because of the reputation of the schools," Hoxie said.

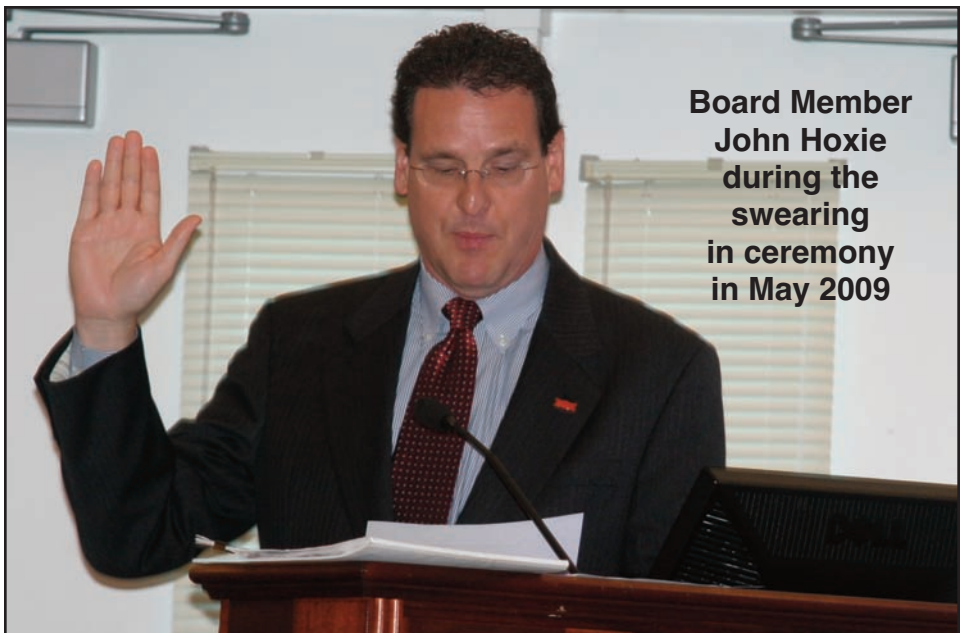
He ran for the Board in May of 2009, was excited to be elected and is looking forward to being a part of "taking a great school district and working with everyone to take it one step beyond."

As the newbie on the Board, he has already started taking Texas Association of School Board training and basic classes on Board member roles and responsibilities, etc. Since being sworn in last month, he says he has learned that he didn't fully comprehend the magnitude of what it takes to run a school district like Frisco ISD and he is excited about the things he is seeing and hearing.

"There is a lot of dialogue taking place between campuses and teachers regarding curriculum, innovations and making advances in that regard – the level of sharing is great," Hoxie said.

Sharing of his time continues to be important and in his spare time, Hoxie enjoys helping with the renovations of the steam locomotive and the caboose at the Frisco Heritage Museum.

"I would like to be more involved," he said. And spoken like a true volunteer who wants others to join in, he added that Ken Creager and others working on the project are always looking for more help.



**Board Member
John Hoxie
during the
swearing
in ceremony
in May 2009**

Board Service a Natural Progression for Beaver

When Richard Beaver first ran for school board in 2002, he says that seeking board service was just a natural progression of involvement for him.

He ran for the position vacated by Libby Maus, who did not seek reelection after serving on the board for 12 years. He won in 2002 and most recently, was re-elected in May 2008 to his third term.

Beaver grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas, and after graduating from high school, he attended Texas State University, majoring in computer science and mathematics. He hired into Texas Instruments, which brought him to the Dallas area, and that is where he met his wife, Jill Roach Beaver.

They married in 1990 and moved to Frisco in 1992. They have three children, twin girls Melissa and Kristen, graduates of Liberty High School; and Sam, who attends school in Fisd. Today, he is a director at Adventa Control Technologies, Inc., a software company that was divested from TI several years ago to become an independent entity.

When the Beaver's children began school, they immediately became involved – Jill more on the campus level through PTA and as a volunteer, and Richard at the district level, working on bond committees.

He served on the 1998 Citizen's Bond Committee and chaired the 2000 committee. Beaver also stays involved with young people through the youth sports associations – coaching soccer, t-ball, softball and basketball through the years.

"I enjoy helping out where I can when it comes to our youth and their education," Beaver said. "I felt that becoming a school board member was a way I could continue service to the district and make a difference for

all students."

The greatest challenge he sees in the future for Frisco ISD is continuing to keep up with the growth and maintaining and improving quality operations during that high growth. He sees a continued focus on attracting and retaining the best teachers and on providing a well-rounded, quality education in a fiscally responsible manner.

"This community is supportive of the schools and believes in educational philosophies and programs that work best for students, such as smaller high schools that allow more students the opportunity to participate in things," he said. "I feel privileged to be a part of a community and school system that puts students first."

Although board service is time

consuming and involves a continual mode of learning, Beaver says it is very fulfilling, as is all parental and community involvement within the district and with the schools.

"I encourage everyone to be involved in the schools," he said. "It will have more of a lasting impact than any other thing we can do. If we want to make Frisco great 20 years from now, we need to focus on the kids – they are our future leaders and will be the ones running the show!"

And when he is not investing in the future by working as a parent, board member and coach, Beaver says he enjoys genealogy research. His wife Jill has very interesting family roots, with ties to Frisco since before Frisco was formed, so it makes for some intriguing research in an area so rich in history.



Richard Beaver visits with parents and students during one of Fisd's monthly Student Recognition Receptions.

Anne McCausland goes the extra mile, makes a big difference for all students

Anne McCausland may not have moved far from home, but she has gone miles as an adult toward making a difference for others.

Background

Born in Dallas, she and her family moved from Oak Cliff to Grapevine when she was eight years old. Her dad was a pharmacist and owned a drug-store that he sold, buying a new one in Grapevine. A graduate of Grapevine High, Baylor and the nursing program at Collin College, she married her husband Jim in 1991 and they moved to Frisco in 1992.

A much different place at that time, they had friends in the area and began looking at homes and researching schools. They felt more comfortable with the smaller school size in Frisco and decided to make it home.

Getting Involved

When her son started Kindergarten at Shawnee Trail (her kids are now in 10th and 7th grade), she joined PTA and volunteered for the book fair and as a room mom. They needed a little more elbow room, so they built a home in the Trails,

attending Fisher. She got more involved by the time he was in second grade and she has been on PTA boards ever since. Although time-consuming, she says it is very rewarding. "I feel the education of a child is very important," she says. "My degree may not be in education, although my mom was a teacher, but the least I can do is small things to make a teacher's life easier." Whether it is making copies, changing out bulletin boards, every little bit helps. In fact, over the years she has spent so much time at the schools that students will assume she works there!

Reasons to Serve

McCausland says that in the beginning you get more involved because of your own kids, and then that transitions to wanting to make a difference for the whole class, next the whole school. As she got more deeply involved in PTA, her focus was about all the students in the district.

Now as a school board member, she is equally concerned with the education of the students throughout Texas and the country. "Education is so important,"

she says. "Our ability to educate all students and to have an educated workforce in this state and nation is critical to our economy and to our future."

Although actively involved for years, Board service has been a learning curve, she says. Absorbing new information and learning the culture of how things are done in this type of business is time-consuming and a huge responsibility. "You do feel a bit of weight on your shoulders at the magnitude of it all." She feels the importance of the Board member role is intensified even more as she is coming on at a challenging time regarding school finances in the state of Texas. While helping to make sure students are provided with an education for success in these times is an important priority, McCausland says that continuing to build relationships within the schools and the community is equally important. The people here and the relationships are what have kept a large city feeling like a small town, she says. "We have not lost that." If it is up to McCausland, we never will.



McCausland and Melanie Crosby, Frisco PTA Council Treasurer and Hunt Parliamentarian, during the 2011 Frisco PTA Council awards ceremony. McCausland has been deeply involved in PTA and has served as a PTA board member numerous years.

Board Service a Natural Progression for Gillespie

In her first year on the FISD Board of Trustees, Debbie Gillespie says this new volunteer role was a natural progression of service to the community.

Background

Born in Kerrville and raised in Austin, Debbie graduated from what is now Texas State. She and husband Dane married while she was in college and she later joined him in working at Dell. With one child and one on the way, Dane had the opportunity to move and change roles and they decided the Dallas area was where they would like to land.

They did their research and had been looking in Collin County for a home – they found a builder they liked and then found the home they wanted in Frisco. So, in 1995 they relocated and she continued to do contract work for awhile. Smith was their first elementary school experience and then they moved to their current house and have been a part of Bright and Spears, Pioneer Heritage and now Frisco High.

Local Connections

She first got involved in the community at Smith as a room mom and then got on the PTA board the following year. She has been active in PTA and PTO since that time and is also a band booster. She was a member for the 2003 and 2006 bond committees, as well.

In addition, Gillespie has always been involved with other endeavors besides those that are school related, including National Charity League, Frisco Family Services, etc. Having a supportive spouse and family is key to being able to give so much time in a volunteer capacity, she says.

Board Service

Gillespie is enjoying her role on the Board and says that although she was well-prepared because of her

parent volunteer efforts and her work on bond committees, there is still much more to it than people realize.

“The school district is one of the biggest businesses in the area and educating our students is a big job,” she said. She adds that volunteer work in preparation for this type of service is critical because you build relationships in the community and with leaders who can help achieve the goals of the district.

Advice to Others

“I encourage all parents to be involved,” Gillespie says. “Things are different than when we were growing up. . . if people are not involved there can be misperceptions and their kids

need to know that they support their education and that their parents know their teachers and know how things work at the schools.”

“It is important to be involved in the community,” she says. “We can impact things at our local level most effectively and that is where our service must start.” If someone doesn’t want to volunteer in schools, she suggests getting involved by attending local seminars and programs such as the police and fire citizen academies, City Hall 101, and other leadership programs.

“The doors are open for the community,” she said. Taking that first step is all that is needed!

