

# Chapter 14

## A Tale of Two Schools

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### ABSTRACT

*This case study illustrates two partnerships between the Taylor Public Library and two area schools, first with the Taylor Independent School District for facility use, and second with the Temple College satellite campus at Taylor for their use of the public library facilities in exchange for a free student worker. The partnership with the local school district was specifically during 2002 through 2006 to continue providing programming during the summer. The Taylor Public Library lost its old facility, and while temporarily located elsewhere, had no venue for summer programs. The library and the school district partnered to hold the summer events on local campuses until the new public library building opened in 2007. The partnership between the Taylor Public Library and Temple College consisted of use of library space to house the college's nursing and medical collections, allow access to these holdings to enrolled college students, and grant students public library cards. For this use, the Taylor Public Library acts as supervisor for a qualifying student worker, funded by Temple College.*

### INTRODUCTION

Schools and public library can share resources and collaborate to the benefit of both the students and the public. While often facility based partnerships involved a shared campus or shared library between the public and educational institutions, the partnerships illustrated here are not to that extent.

There is no melding of institutions; illustrated here are two much smaller collaborations. Still, both parties provide and both parties benefit in each of these partnerships—a fair exchange. These partnerships are stop-gap measures to meet specific needs with their partners. These partnerships also speak to the small town atmosphere, where community leaders are more apt to compromise and come together for solutions. It doesn't hurt

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that everybody knows everybody, and personal connections ease the way for cooperation.

### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Taylor, located in east Williamson County, Texas, was incorporated in 1876. Taylor was very much a railroad town, built on land purchased by investors in advance of the construction of tracks through the new town. The small town grew up quickly, as the area's rich, black prairie soil made for favorable farming. Immigrants from Czechoslovakia and Germany were attracted to the fertile soil and small farming communities sprung up throughout the county. Cotton became the crop of choice. Local gins processed the cotton, which was then shipped off via the Taylor railroad depots. More recently, construction of instate highways better connected the western side of Williamson County to Austin. This slowed growth in Taylor. Williamson County, Texas, is one of the ten the fastest growing counties in the U.S. Taylor is still a rural, agricultural town of 15,191, self-sufficient with slow growth.

### **Taylor Public Library**

The Taylor Public Library (TPL) was first established in 1899 by a woman's study club called the Sesame Circle, one of their goals being the creation of a lending library. Club members served as librarians and a small charge was required for lending. Those fees went towards purchasing more materials and the book collection grew. The early charter for the library defined the primary populations served would be the residents of the City of Taylor and all students who attended school within the city. TPL had many homes throughout the last century, including a Quonset hut shared with the local Girl Scouts troop, a room in the Chamber of Commerce offices at City Hall, a small building on school land, etc. Despite the efforts of local groups and city management, no permanent home

or paid librarian could be secured. In the 1950's the push for a library building was energized, and a committee was established to raise funds. Donations from many community organizations and individuals resulted in a dedicated library building with furnishings, collections and head librarian in 1960. The library was independently governed for many years by a Library Board who raised funds and made operational decisions. There was an addition to the original building in 1970, and a second addition in 1990. This brought the size of the library up to 9,143 square feet. Unfortunately these additions were accompanied by roof leaks and ground seeps, a common problem due to the region's geology. By the late 1990's water leaks had taken their toll on the structure and the building was closed due to mold. Eventually the library was quartered in the Auditorium at Taylor City Hall for five years. A bond issue was approved by a narrow margin (2 votes) to construct a new library building which would be much larger at 20,000 square feet. Land was donated by the Taylor Independent School District, with extra property to expand the library to 35,000 square feet in the future. Ground was broken in 2006, and the new Taylor Public Library opened its doors in March 2007.

### **Taylor Independent School District**

The Taylor Independent School District (TISD) began as a small three-room school in 1884. As the city grew, money was then raised to construct a three story brick school in 1890, which is coincidentally where the new Taylor Public Library now sits. TISD continued to build more campuses and grow. It wasn't until 1950 that the school district pulled away from city control to create its own independent district, with a school board and taxes for operations. This gave TISD the ability to have control over operations and policies free from any city restrictions and gave the district the ability to deal directly with neighboring school districts. As the east part of Williamson County grew, so did

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