



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

August 7, 2020

TAPT Family,

I hope everyone has had a great summer. I know it has been unlike any other, with all of us focused on the health and safety of our students and staff during this ongoing pandemic. It is important for us to take a moment for ourselves to decompress and breathe, rejuvenate and refocus. It is also important to remember that, unlike many crises that our industry has faced before, this one is not isolated to a small part of Texas – we are all facing the same challenges and we are all in this together.



Our theme for the 2020-2021 school year is *United Apart, Stronger Together – Compassion, Communication and Collaboration*. I believe this theme reflects the personality and uniqueness of our industry. In March, when many districts were closing doors and life for all of us abruptly changed, I personally observed the compassion of our members shine. Many districts were using buses to deliver meals, instructional materials to students, and allowing bus drivers and attendants to assist in various roles in the district to ensure that the needs of our students and our staff were being met. The communication between our members expanded, as well as weekly webinars, and I witnessed how everyone in student transportation quickly began sharing ideas and best practices to ensure that all students and staff were placed in the healthiest and safest environment possible. I immediately saw the collaboration – emails, webinars, Zoom meetings with directors and staff from across the state to simply ask – “how are you and what are you doing to keep staff and students safe?”

For the past six months, we have been *united apart*. Now, with the start of the school year upon us, we are going to be *stronger together*. We will continue to provide webinars, regular email communication, and helpful information to our members so we can continue to collaborate to provide the safest environment possible in our districts. We will soon be offering online and in-person professional development courses, so that you can all receive continuing education opportunities, and collaborate and network with your colleagues. Your Executive Committee is already working on the planning for the 2021 TAPT State Conference in The Woodlands, TX, where the desire is to come together, stronger, and celebrate each of you for the collaboration, communication, and compassion you exhibited throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

Respectfully yours,

Kayne M. Smith, Ed.D.  
TAPT President