

Chairman and C.E.O. of H-E-B Charles Butt Named TSPRA's 2019 Key Communicator Award Recipient

The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) has named Charles Butt, chairman and CEO of H-E-B, as the recipient of the association's 2019 Key Communicator Award*. Butt receives this award in recognition of his work as a champion for public education. Over the years, he has greatly enhanced the academic experience of thousands of students, teachers, administrators, school boards and districts.

Butt has developed several initiatives, including Raise Your Hand Texas, a non-profit advocacy organization that works to strengthen Texas public education. Butt committed \$50 million in scholarships for high school students who commit to a career in teaching. The organization also invests in leadership development and coaching programs for principals and campus/district teams, provide grants to innovative education organizations, pursue research-driven public policy advocacy at the state level and inform and engage the public on issues impacting all students.

Created in 2002, the H-E-B Excellence in Education Award Program is designed to honor outstanding public school professionals and to thank them for their dedication and commitment. Since its inception, the program has awarded more than \$10 million in cash and grants.

Butt has also committed millions of dollars to open a network of Centers for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) schools in Texas. The announcement first came in 2016 with the first school opening in August 2017. In May 2019, the CAST Schools Network announced the August 2020 opening of its fourth campus along with a \$2 million award.

Finally, in 2017, Charles established The Holdsworth Center, investing \$100 million to create a non-profit leadership institute for Texas public school administrators. The Center is named after his mother, Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth, who taught school in the 1920s in Center Point, Texas.

In a letter penned by Butt on The Holdsworth Center website, he states: "We live in a time when support and funding for the nation's public schools is declining and faith in the system is eroding. My investment in The Holdsworth Center is a vote of confidence in our public schools. I believe that the future economic outlook for our state and our country depends on our ability to provide a high-quality education to each and every child. With Texas school districts serving 10 percent of the nation's children, I believe we have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to provide the best possible education to all kids. But it has to start with great leaders—supportive principals, administrators, superintendents, and teacher leaders in every classroom. There is no shortcut and no silver bullet. If we want to get to the root of making long-term, sustainable improvements to public education, we've got to invest the time to go deep within our districts. We need to strengthen the leadership pipelines that can build the foundation for a stronger system and provide more opportunities for growth for our teachers. My hope is that over time, we provide education leaders a place to turn to for growth and that our comprehensive approach will serve as a model to replicate across the nation."

Intrado (SchoolMessenger solutions) is the sponsor of the Key Communicator Award. Intrado is a strong supporter and valuable tool for school districts throughout Texas.

This year's TSPRA Professional Awards committee included: Chairperson Susan Ard, CPC, Cleveland ISD; Patti Pawlik Perales, Alamo Heights ISD; Julie Thannum, APR, Carroll ISD; Cynthia Ybarra Leal, Mission CISD; Kate Hope, Magnolia ISD; Erin Gregg Lubbock ISD

* Since 1981, TSPRA has recognized a Key Communicator for outstanding contributions to public education through effective communications. The recipient may be a legislator, educator or a professional in another field who has improved school communications, or a member of TSPRA who has contributed outstanding service to the profession of school communications. Recipients have included leaders from business, media, PTA, politics and education.

[Click here for a complete list of TSPRA's Key Communicators](#)

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Key Communicator Presentation

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