On February 3 and 4, 2012, the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE) had a summit/conference in San Antonio based on the theme “What’s Hot in Literacy for 2012.” This theme, in turn, was based on the annual survey “What’s Hot in Literacy” which has been appearing in *Reading Today* for over 15 years. For information, see www.literacysummitwhatshot2012.com.

An IRA state association conference is hardly surprising—many have conferences. However, this association did not even exist six months prior to the conference.

**Some History**

In May 2011, the Texas State Reading Association (TSRA) formally disbanded after 40 years of operation. TSRA had severe financial difficulties as well as problems recruiting and retaining officers.

Many people, including former IRA President Jack Cassidy, were dismayed that Texas would now be the only state that would not have an IRA-affiliated state association. With the blessing of some former TSRA leaders, Cassidy assembled a group of educators at his house in late August, 2011 to discuss the formation of a new organization.

From that group, TALE emerged. James Hoffman from the University of Texas, a former IRA Board member, surveyed educators from around the state to ascertain what role a state association should play. Hosting a conference was one of the high priority activities revealed in the survey.

Dr. Denise Staudt, Dean of the Dreeben School of Education at UIW, became an enthusiastic supporter of the event. UIW agreed to provide meeting rooms at their beautiful downtown campus and the Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG agreed to publicize the event nationally and get major speakers. Thus, virtually, all of the featured and keynote speakers, as well as many of the session speakers, came from the ranks of the SIG.

Educators from over 15 states presented. Enthusiasm for the conference ran high, and over 200 attendees from around the country were present. Dr. Jerry Johns, Northern Illinois University, a former IRA President, agreed to be the opening speaker. Dr. P. David Pearson, University of California at Berkeley and chair of IRA’s newly formed Literacy Research Panel, keynoted on Saturday. Dr. Karen Bromley, State University at Binghamton and a current member of the IRA Board, was the closing keynote speaker.
The Summit was co-chaired by Dr. Jack Cassidy and Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia from UIW. In connection with the Summit, Cassidy and Garcia also edited a book entitled Literacy Trends and Issues: What’s Hot, which is published by Kendall Hunt. The book contains brief chapters on the eight “hot” issues in literacy for 2012.

Each chapter is written by a SIG member including chapters by Cassidy, Grote-Garcia, and Jill Lewis-Spector, newly elected Vice President of IRA. The book was first introduced at the conference. Financially all three groups shared equally in the profits from the summit and profits from the book were shared by TALE and the SIG.

As Jill Lewis-Spector observed, “The inaugural TALE conference in San Antonio this February provided a wide range of speakers and topics, offering all attendees opportunities for exceptional professional development. I was thrilled to be a part of it!”

Dr. Bromley, as the IRA official representative to the conference said, “I was thrilled and energized by the “Literacy Summit” held recently in San Antonio at the University of the Incarnate Word. The opportunity to hear outstanding speakers present on a range of “hot” topics was a huge plus. But, it was also exciting to see over 200 people in attendance who joined and are excited about the new Texas Association for Literacy Educators (TALE).”

The Texas Association for Literacy Education

At the conclusion of the Summit, Cassidy presented Dr. Bromley with the formal application to be officially chartered as an IRA affiliated group. Dr. Bromley took that application to the IRA Board at its meeting on February 25 and the group was officially chartered.

Cassidy is the President of the new organization, Carolyn Denny from the Northside School District in San Antonio is the President-elect, and Sharon O’Neal from Texas State University in Round Rock is the Vice President. Sheri Vasinda from Texas A&M University Commerce is the Secretary of the group, and Stephanie Grote-Garcia from the University of the Incarnate Word is the Treasurer.

Since the conference, the Executive Committee has had one meeting and is working on developing publications and other services for its members. Dr. Vasinda has established a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/texasreaders.org, and Dr. Grote-Garcia has established a webpage at www.texasreaders.org where interested potential members can obtain an application.