



Dental Assisting National Board

Posted Sept. 15, 2026

**Summary of major actions taken by DANB's Board of Directors at the
2026 Annual Board Meeting**

Chicago, IL
July 23-24, 2026

Including a meeting of the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees
July 23, 2026

DANB Directors in Attendance:

Barbara Mousel, D.D.S., CDA, RDH, Board Chair; Sandra L. Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM, Chair-Elect; Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A., Secretary-Treasurer; Kimberly Plate, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, B.S., Immediate Past Chair; Vicki Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H.; Tanya Dorf Brunner, M.S., Public Member; Stephanie Bustos, CDA, RDA; Carlos Gaxiola, CDIPC, RDA, RDHAP, RDH; Frank Maggio, D.D.S.; Renee McNally, CDIPC, COA, CRFDA, CPFDA, CDA, RDA; Kishan Patel, CDA, COA, CPFDA, CRFDA; Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S., MSgt, USAF, Certificant-at-Large; Lindsay Yates, D.D.S.; Jason Lawrence, D.D.S., Leader-in-Training (nonvoting); Merli Vedia, Leader-in-Training (nonvoting)

DALE Foundation Trustees in Attendance:

Sandra L. Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM, Board President; Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A., Secretary-Treasurer; Vicki L. Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H.; Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S., MSgt, USAF

DANB's Chief Executive Officer Laura Skarnulis, serves as an ex officio member of DANB's Board of Directors and the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

DANB's Communities of Interest

The Board engaged in several strategic discussions and activities. Notably, DANB's Communities of Interest participated in meeting, which included representatives and presentations from the American Association of Dental Boards (AADB), the American Dental Association (ADA): Council on Dental Education & Licensure (CDEL), the American Dental Association (ADA): Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), the American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA), the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), the Association for Dental Safety (ADS, formerly OSAP). ADA's Council on Dental Practice (CDP) could not participate but provide a written report.

Assessment and Certification Updates

Dental Assisting Professional Model – Orthodontic Assisting

The Orthodontic Assisting phase of the [Dental Assisting Professional Model](#) has been finalized following extensive input from a 10-member industry expert workgroup representing state dental boards, orthodontic practices, educators, and DANB Board members. The model received overwhelmingly positive feedback during the targeted comment period and the DANB Board unanimously endorsed the Orthodontic Assisting model at the Annual Meeting.

DANB Exams

DANB's core certification exams (Radiation Health and Safety, Infection Control, General Chairside and Coronal Polishing) have undergone review and continue to demonstrate stable performance and healthy candidate demand. DANB regularly reviews exam performance, candidate volume, content relevance, and program viability, implementing targeted updates or retirement recommendations as needed to maintain a balanced and sustainable examination portfolio.

General Chairside current practices as tested in the GC exam were revalidated by an 11-member subject matter expert (SME) group in a job task analysis workshop (JTA). The SMEs confirmed the accuracy and relevance of tasks currently tested in the GC exam and made some recommendations for DANB's Exam Committee to consider in the future after results are verified through a national survey of dental assistants and their current job tasks related to GC. The same process will be followed to validate the currency of content for RHS and ICE exams as part of normal cyclical validation of the certification scheme for the CDA. Any significant exam changes will be communicated in advance to key stakeholders, including program educators.

Awareness, Education, and Engagement Activities

Staff shared updates on marketing, education, business development, and external relations activities that are expanding awareness of and engagement with DANB. Recent campaigns have increased reach and participation, while new education products, research, and the soon to be published "Salary and Satisfaction Survey" are providing additional opportunities to support the profession and inform future initiatives. Staff also highlighted growing collaboration with state boards, educational institutions, DSOs, and workforce partners, creating opportunities to strengthen credentialing pathways, education, scholarships, and workforce development.

Additionally, DANB recently partnered with SkillsUSA by sponsoring students and recruiting judges for the dental assisting competition, engaging with students and industry professionals throughout the event. These efforts strengthened DANB's connections with the next generation of dental assistants and supported opportunities to recognize and encourage excellence in the profession.

Strategic Discussions

The Board engaged in strategic discussions on key issues and opportunities shaping the dental assisting profession and DANB's future, including the evolving role of Oral Preventive Assistants (OPAs), insights from the Assessment Modernization Summit, and key organizational updates. These discussions provided an opportunity for Board members to share perspectives and help inform DANB's ongoing strategic planning and future priorities.

Scholarships

DANB and the DALE Foundation have increased their scholarships efforts and investment to provide more opportunities to those interested in education, exams and certification. DANB now offers four scholarships including the ADS-DANB-DALE Foundation Andrew Whitehead Certification & Education Scholarship, the DANB/DALE Foundation Scholarship, the Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship, and the ADAA/DANB Scholarship.

DANB/DALE Foundation Scholarship

The DANB/DALE Foundation Scholarship is open to entry-level and early career dental assistants. Recipients will receive between \$250 and \$1,000 in vouchers or reimbursement for DANB exams, review courses, or practice tests. In 2026, 14 recipients were awarded over \$8,500 in support.

Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship

For more than a decade, the Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship has helped dental professionals advance their education and achieve their career goals. Each recipient received between \$250 and \$1,000 for education such as school tuition, course fees, or conference fees. In 2026, 13 recipients received a total of \$6,000 to support their career advancement.

ADS-DANB-DALE Foundation Andrew Whitehead Education and Certification Scholarship

This scholarship supports oral healthcare professionals in their pursuit of the [CDIPC](#) and [DISIPC](#) certifications. In 2026, 54 scholarships were awarded.

Other Priorities and Initiatives

Legislative Activity and Government Relations

DANB continues to monitor and develop strategies to address new laws and regulations affecting dental assistants, as well as emerging state-level issues related to dental assisting requirements and scope of practice.

Board Governance Updates

At the recommendation of the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees, the DANB Board of Directors approved updates to the DALE Foundation Mission Statement.

Board of Directors Updates

Board Leadership

The DANB Board of Directors elected Tanya Dorf Brunner to the Chair-Elect officer position of the DANB Board of Directors for the 2026-2027 Board Year, beginning September 1, 2026.

Per the succession requirements outlined in the bylaws, in the 2026-2027 term, the Immediate Past Chair position will be filled by Barbara Mousel, D.D.S., CDA, RDH and the Chair position will be filled by Sandra Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM. The Secretary-Treasurer position will be held by Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A, completing her second year of the two-year Secretary-Treasurer term.

Additionally, final terms of Vick Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H. and Carlos Gaxiola, CDIPC, RDA, RDHAP, RDH will conclude on August 31, 2026.

DALE Foundation Updates

The DALE Foundation Board met on July 23, 2026. During the meeting, the Board reviewed DALE Foundation financials, discussed their efforts and commitment to workforce development initiatives, and reviewed scholarship activities.

Additionally, the DALE Foundation Board conducted a reviewed and revised the Foundation's mission statement to reflect its to reflect its refocused role in research, scholarships, and workforce development, with an emphasis on supporting patient safety, quality care, and access to care. The revised mission statement was approved by the DALE Foundation Board and subsequently approved by the DANB Board of Directors.

Upcoming Meetings

The 2027 Winter Meeting will be held in Tampa, Florida on February 4-5, 2027.