



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

Statement by TSTA President Rita Haecker
News Conference, Sept. 17, 2009
Donna ISD Board Room

Too many young Texans in the Rio Grande Valley are dropping out of school, so we've come to Donna ISD to underscore TSTA/NEA's commitment to do all we can to keep our minority children in school and ensure that they succeed.

I was born in San Antonio, where my father was a printer who made \$1.03 an hour. Over the years, he saw many young people come into the print shop looking for work. Time after time, after they left, managers would tear up and throw away their applications because they just didn't have enough education to succeed even at the print shop's low-wage jobs.

My father didn't want that to happen to his children. "You're going to work hard and do whatever it takes to finish high school, then you're going to go to the university," he told us. And he and my mother both did everything they had to do to make sure we stayed in school – and we all earned college degrees.

Every parent – every father and every mother – can do the same thing mine did. They weren't unique, just determined. They had the commitment, and they followed through on it. They were actively involved in their children's education.

Successful students need both experienced, capable educators and involved parents. Both are crucial to student success.

We also want to show our support for education support professionals who are vital to strong schools and strong communities. ESPs play critical roles in educating our children and in encouraging the parental involvement that is necessary for student success.

If teachers are the backbone of our Texas public schools, then education support professionals are the muscles that keep the backbone in place. Schools would both literally and figuratively fall apart without ESPs.

TSTA/NEA encourages school districts in the Valley and across the rest of the state to treat ESPs as the professionals they are and pay them accordingly.

###