



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### NEW OFFICERS LEAD STATE'S OLDEST EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

When she graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1988 with a bachelor's degree in education, preparing to begin her career as a first-grade bilingual teacher in Austin Independent School District, Rita C. Haecker surely couldn't have guessed that 20 years later, she would be taking office as the president of the state's oldest education organization.

On Tuesday [July 15], Haecker becomes the 114th president of the 65,000-member Texas State Teachers Association. The Texas affiliate of the 3.2 million-member National Education Association was founded in 1880.

During her time in the classroom, Haecker also built a strong record as an effective advocate for educators. She served as the vice president of Education Austin, the president of TSTA's Austin region and a member of the National Education Association's board of directors. Last year, she completed a master's degree in union leadership and administration at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

"I am committed to strengthening the collaboration between TSTA and local associations by emphasizing shared resources and shared responsibility. I will work to help all TSTA locals build their capacities in organizing, leadership development and membership growth," Haecker said.

"TSTA also will continue providing a strong voice for Texas education at the state Capitol. When the 81st Texas Legislature convenes in January, TSTA will work to ensure great public schools for every Texas child," the incoming president continued.

"The state has to provide sufficient funding for excellent schools in every district across the state, do more to recruit and retain the best educators, reduce the dropout rate, reform educational accountability and ensure that retired educators can afford to live with dignity," Haecker added.

Jason R. Hillman joins Haecker on TSTA's new leadership team on Tuesday, becoming the organization's vice president.

Hillman taught in Klein Independent School District since 1994. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Sam Houston State University in 1992.

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Like Haecker, the new TSTA vice president built a strong record as an effective advocate for educators in his district, serving as president of the Klein Education Association. His longtime interest in politics and government also prepared him to serve effectively as the chair of TSTA's Legislative and Political Advocacy Committee.

"TSTA members and all other Texans who want great public schools all across this state have to get out to vote in November. The only way we're going to achieve that critical goal is by electing more state legislators who will invest more in our schools, our children, our future," Hillman said.

"The last time lawmakers tried to reform school funding, for example, the resulting legislation was more about winning a gubernatorial election than it was about providing the dollars Texas schools need to function effectively in our globalized 21st-century economy. Our kids just can't afford to be the victims of that kind of political gimmickry any longer," the incoming vice president added.

The two new officers plan to travel extensively across the state to build TSTA's membership and to get out the vote for pro-public school candidates in November.

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Photos of incoming TSTA President Rita C. Haecker and Vice President Jason R. Hillman are online in the press room on the TSTA Web site, at [www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/index.shtml](http://www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/index.shtml).