



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: February 11, 2009**

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### **Texas voters want broken school funding system fixed**

**Bipartisan majority supports more state funding for public schools,  
opposes incentive pay schemes, wants less emphasis on standardized tests**

#### **Statement by TSTA President Rita C. Haecker:**

“Despite a tight state budget, an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Texas voters believe that providing more state resources for public education is a solid investment that is necessary to secure our economic future.

“Simply put, Texans – Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike – know that in today’s global economy, education is a wise investment that will not crash in tough times.

“This key finding of a statewide poll commissioned by the Texas State Teachers Association indicates strong public support for recent reports that the Legislature may act this year to fix our broken school finance system. This broken system has forced local school leaders to dip deeply into reserve funds and in some cases cut programs and personnel.

“The results of this poll simply reinforce what Texas voters said in the 2006 and 2008 elections. Republicans, Democrats and Independents agree that the time has come to fix a broken school funding system.

“Texans believe public education is state government’s top priority. More than twice as many respondents believe public education is a more important priority than property tax cuts.

“When the Legislature passed a state tax increase just three years ago, all that money went to pay for property tax cuts. But per-pupil funding for our schools was frozen at 2006 levels, with no allowance for rising costs or increasing salaries.

“This year, Texans say it’s time for our elected officials to step up and get it right. An overwhelming supermajority of 71 percent says the Legislature still has more work to do on school funding.

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“This year, Texans say it’s time to recognize the importance of teachers and treat them like professionals. When asked what factor makes for a good public school, 61 percent identify teachers, and 66 percent say teacher pay falls short of what it should be – a sentiment shared by Texans of all political persuasions.

“This year, Texans say it’s time to end the state’s obsession with high-stakes standardized tests. They don’t think a standardized test should decide whether a student passes a course. Sixty-four percent say the state puts too much emphasis on high-stakes testing. Sixty-three percent believe coursework should be as important as a state test in determining student success.

“At the same time, Texans know that changing the way the state measures academic results does nothing to fix a broken school funding system that shortchanges local schools, students and teachers.

“On all of these key issues, a majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents agree that we can and must do better. We are encouraged that legislators are starting to hear that message. We hope they will develop a school funding solution worthy of our students, teachers and taxpayers.”

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*The 65,000-member Texas State Teachers Association is the oldest education organization in Texas. It is an affiliate of the 3.2 million-member National Education Association. For more information about TSTA, go to [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org).*

*The TSTA-commissioned poll surveyed 815 Texas voters from across the state from January 26-29, and was conducted by Ed Goeas of The Tarrance Group, a national Republican polling firm, and Paul Harstad of Harstad Strategic Research Inc., a national Democratic polling firm.*

*Complete poll results and a high-resolution photograph of TSTA President Rita C. Haecker are in the association’s online Pressroom, at <http://www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/index.shtml>.*