



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## TSTA urges halt to increases in educator health insurance premiums, seeks legislative funding

The Texas State Teachers Association today urged the Teacher Retirement System Board of Trustees to hold the line on health insurance costs for school employees and to join TSTA in demanding that the Legislature increase the state's share of those costs. The TRS board is expected to consider an increase in employees' premiums for ActiveCare, the state health insurance program for teachers and other school workers, when it meets on Friday.

"Higher premiums would amount to a pay cut for thousands of underpaid teachers and school employees whose family budgets already are stretched to the breaking point," said TSTA President Rita Haecker. "School employees have seen rising health care costs eat into their paychecks year after year, while the state hasn't increased its health care contribution by even a penny in 12 years."

"Rising health care costs are forcing too many excellent teachers to consider leaving the profession," Haecker said. "If state leaders really want to recruit qualified teachers and keep them in the classroom, they must stop dumping the burden of health care costs on the backs of educators and their families."

Teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other school employees already are paying more than \$1,300 a month to cover themselves and their families under ActiveCare 2, the mid-level option for TRS health insurance. School districts pay \$150 per month per employee, and the state pays \$75, an amount that hasn't been increased since ActiveCare was established in 2002. The employee's share of premiums has been increased every school year since at least 2009-10.

The average teacher pay in Texas is \$49,200 a year, about \$7,000 below the national average. Many other school workers earn less.