

# Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

Fall 2015



## THE NEXT STEP

Why local action is key to improving working, learning conditions



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ON THE COVER: Del Valle Education Association collects signatures for TSTA's Invest Not Test campaign (sign the online petition at [InvestNotTest.org](http://InvestNotTest.org)) and, in the photo above, welcomes another new member.

## Contents

- 4 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WE'RE IN THE OPPORTUNITY BUSINESS**  
Each school year brings the anticipation of success that is the greatest reward for our work. With state policymakers' help, we could do more.
- 6 UPFRONT: TEXAS TEACHER DRAWS STANDING OVATION AT NEA RA**  
Rather Prize rewards ideas for improving schools; Texas Supreme Court again hears school finance arguments; awards and grants; TSTA updates its app.
- 10 THE NEXT STEP**  
We have important local organizing opportunities that are, in part, a result of legislation passed earlier in the year.
- 13 POLL: AMERICANS WANT LESS TESTING, MORE FUNDING**  
Standardized testing continues to fall out of favor with the majority of the American public, the latest PDK/Gallup Poll shows.
- 14 KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: WORDS CAN HURT YOU**  
Advice for using social media safely.
- 16 LEADING THE PROFESSION**  
Education Austin works with the community to save a struggling school; Port Arthur educators receive a \$5000 NEA Foundation grant; Shanna Peebles wins another national award; finalists for Teacher of the Year and Presidential Awards.
- 18 IN THE CLASSROOM: WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR TEACHING?**  
Collaborative evaluations open the door for teachers to incorporate their own artifacts. What artifacts should you create, collect, and maintain?
- 20 ADVOCACY IN ACTION**  
Del Valle ESPs win due process; Harlandale and San Marcos celebrate pay raises; student members participate in Florida project; Global Learning Fellows visit Peru; Southside works to engage parents; Student Program has a new president; officer nominations and a quilt fundraiser for TSTA-Retired.
- 26 STATE CONVENTION DELEGATE ELECTIONS**  
El Paso will host the April 8-9 TSTA Convention.
- 28 NATIONAL DELEGATE ELECTIONS**  
The July 2-7 NEA Representative Assembly will be in Washington, D.C.
- 31 PHOTO ALBUM**  
A page of photos from this summer's Emerging Leaders Conference and Organizing Institute.

## Advocate

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# We're in the opportunity business



As we settle into the new school year, more than 650,000 Texas public school employees are hard at work, transforming challenges into opportunities for the 5.2 million children who attend the neighborhood schools that anchor our communities.

But it's not the big numbers that matter.

What matters is each unique child working every day with each one of us — one by one, classroom-by-classroom, neighborhood-by-neighborhood. We educators — teachers, teacher aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and others — impact the lives of our students and their families in a very positive way.

Along with the daily challenges we face, every school year brings the anticipation of success that is the greatest reward for our work. We are champions for children and their families. Each one of us is in the opportunity

business, working to help students and their families succeed.

We make opportunity possible when we arrive at school early or stay late to help a struggling student understand a math concept or learn to read.

We make opportunity possible when we help a parent purchase essential medication so her child can attend class.

We make opportunity possible when we dig into our own pockets to buy classroom supplies that the school or the parents cannot afford.

The people who live in our communities know what we do, and they know we do it well. We know we could do more.

We could do more if state policymakers put more resources into our classrooms.

We could do more if so many of our classrooms weren't overcrowded.

We could do more if policymakers would stop the plague of excessive standardized testing, and stop trying to use those tests to punish students and teachers instead of providing us the time and resources we need for teaching and learning.

Texas schools face significant challenges. Sixty percent of our students are from low-income families, thousands have limited access to health care, and many enter school without English skills.

We work to turn these challenges into opportunities — to make a lasting, positive impact on our students and their families. We earn a priceless sense of satisfaction every time we see a light come on in a student's eye when a new concept is learned.

"Invest, not test" is a principle that should drive our educational policy. We want to be held accountable, but our policymakers should be held accountable, too.

TSTA will continue to fight excessive testing and continue to advocate for more classroom resources. We will encourage the use of the community schools model to turn around struggling campuses instead of turning neighborhood schools over to private operators who have no stake in the local community.

A successful neighborhood school requires a collaborative investment by educators, parents, local businesses, and non-profits. When we all work together, that school is an anchor for the community and a foundation for student success.

#TeamTSTA will be there, working to light the path to a brighter future. When we organize, when we reach out and ask our fellow educators to join us, we become a beacon of opportunity and success for our students and the public schools in our communities.

Let's have a great school year.

— TSTA President Noel Candelaria

## El negocio de la oportunidad

Mientras comenzamos el nuevo año escolar, más de 650.000 empleados de las escuelas públicas de Texas están trabajando duro, transformando retos en oportunidades para los 5.2 millones de niños que forman parte de las escuelas vecinales que son el ancla de nuestras comunidades.

Pero no son los números lo que importa.

Lo que es importante es cada niño que trabaja día a día con cada uno de nosotros - uno por uno, clase por clase, vecindario por vecindario. Nosotros los educadores — maestros, ayudantes de maestros, conductores de autobús, trabajadores de la cafetería, y otros — tenemos un impacto positivo en la vida de nuestros estudiantes y sus familias.

Junto a los retos diarios a que nos enfrentamos, cada año escolar también trae la anticipación del éxito, que es la más grande recompensa por nuestro trabajo. Somos lo campeones de los niños y sus familias. Cada uno de nosotros está en el negocio de la oportunidad, trabajando para ayudar a nuestros estudiantes y a sus familias tener éxito.

Hacemos posible la oportunidad cuando llegamos temprano a la escuela, o cuando nos quedamos tarde para ayudar a un estudiante que tiene problemas para entender un concepto matemático o necesita extra ayuda para aprender a leer.

Hacemos posible la oportunidad cuando ayudamos a un padre a comprar medicinas para que su niño pueda venir a clases.

Hacemos posible la oportunidad cuando gastamos nuestro propio dinero para comprar útiles escolares que los padres o la escuela no puede comprar.

La gente de nuestra comunidad sabe lo que hacemos, y sabe que lo hacemos bien. Nosotros sabemos que siempre se puede hacer un poco más.

Podríamos hacer más si los líderes de la legislatura proveen más recursos a nuestras clases.

Podríamos hacer más si muchas de nuestras clases no estuviesen superpobladas.

Podríamos hacer más si la legislatura pusiera fin a la plaga de exámenes estandarizados, y terminaran de usar estos exámenes para penalizar a estudiantes y maestros en vez de proveernos del tiempo y los recursos necesarios para enseñar y aprender.

La escuelas de Texas enfrentan retos significativos. El sesenta por ciento de nuestros estudiantes vienen de familias pobres, miles tienen acceso limitado a servicios de salud, y muchos entran a la escuela sin habilidades para hablar inglés.

Trabajamos para transformar estos retos en oportunidades — para crear un impacto duradero y positivo en nuestros estudiantes y sus familias. Ganamos una satisfacción sin precio cada vez que vemos esa luz en los ojos de un estudiante cuando aprende un nuevo concepto.

"Invertir, no examinar" es un principio que debería servir de ejemplo para nuestras políticas educacionales. Queremos ser responsables por nuestro trabajo, pero los legisladores debería también ser responsables por el suyo.

TSTA continuará luchando contra los exámenes excesivos y por más recursos para nuestras clases. Empujaremos por utilizar el modelo de las escuelas comunitarias para mejorar las escuelas con problemas, en vez de dárselas a operadores privados que no velan por el bien de la comunidad.

Una escuela vecinal exitosa requiere de inversión colaborativa de educadores, padres, negocios locales y organizaciones sin fines de lucro. Cuando trabajamos juntos esa escuela se convierte en una ancla para la comunidad y una fundación para el éxito de sus estudiantes.

El #TeamTSTA estará ahí, con una antorcha para un futuro más brillante. Cuando nos organizamos y extendemos la mano para que más educadores se unan a nosotros, nos transformamos en un ejemplo de oportunidad y éxito para nuestros estudiantes y las escuelas públicas en nuestras comunidades.

Tengamos un tremendo año escolar.





# Texas teacher draws standing ovation at NEA Annual Meeting

**“We advocate best for our students and our profession when we are brave enough to tell our stories.”**

“Our stories have a unique power,” National Teacher of the Year Shanna Peeples, a TSTA member and Amarillo English teacher, told her fellow NEA members at the Representative Assembly in Orlando this summer.

“Our critics love clichés, simplistic slogans, and manipulated data. This is how they attack, and the good news is the utter banality of those attacks,” Peeples said. “Stories are different. There is no defense against a good story...I contend that we advocate best for our students and our profes-

sion when we are brave enough to tell our stories.”

- Watch a video of Peeples’ speech: <http://bit.ly/1hv3PtO>
- Watch for Peeples and TSTA member Jocelyn Jones in this video of highlights of the Representative Assembly: <http://bit.ly/1JA6f43>

NEA ANNUAL MEETING: second row, NEA Directors for Texas. Bottom row, NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia applauds National Teacher of the Year and TSTA member Shanna Peeples; TSTA President Noel Candelaria at the Texas Caucus.







# Rather Prize rewards ideas for improving Texas schools

Do you have an idea for improving Texas public schools? If so, it could win you \$10,000 and mean even more to Texas school children.

Veteran TV journalist Dan Rather and his grandson, Martin Rather, have announced the creation of the Rather Prize, a new award designed to recognize the best ideas for improving education in the Lone Star State.

Eligible applicants include teachers, retired teachers, students, and individuals who attended a Texas educational institution within the past three years. Submissions will be accepted through Jan. 10, and 10 finalists will be notified by Jan. 31. The winner, who will be notified by Feb. 15, will receive a \$10,000 unrestricted educational grant and an opportunity to discuss his or her idea at next spring's South by Southwest educational conference in Austin (SXSWedu.com).

For more information about the prize and how to submit an idea, go to [www.ratherprize.org](http://www.ratherprize.org).

The award is a partnership of the Rathers and Rice University's Center for Civic Leadership. It is the brainchild of Martin Rather, a freshman at Rice. Martin is the author of the High School Truth, a compendium of tips and stories from high school students across the country. His objective is to give his Texas student peers a voice on education.

"Texas students and teachers have excellent ideas on how to improve their schools and their districts, but until now they have not had an avenue to have their ideas noted or heard," Martin Rather said.

"The Rather Prize was created to empower those who are committed to improving Texas education by giving them

a platform and a path for discussion and implementation of their innovative ideas," he said.

Dan Rather, one of the country's most well-known journalists and a former correspondent and news anchor for CBS-TV, is a product of Houston public schools and a graduate of Sam Houston State University.

"For a rightfully prideful state such as Texas — one with the wealth and resources that our great state is lucky enough to have — to be rated near the bottom in national education rankings is a disgrace, and as a fiercely loyal Texan this has long grated on me," he said. "Texas is better than this, and I hope to do at least a small part in giving back to a state and an educational system to which I owe so much."

The new prize will be awarded annually. — *Clay Robison*

## WHILE STATE LEADERS TALK ABOUT FIXING SCHOOL FINANCE, TEXAS STUDENTS PAY THE PRICE

The Texas Supreme Court is again hearing arguments over school finance because the governor and the legislative majority haven't done their job, TSTA President Noel Candelaria said in a Sept. 1 news release.

"Gov. Abbott says he wants to 'fix' our schools. But when is he going to start?" Candelaria asked. "Instead of doing his job for 5.2 million Texas public school children, the governor is asking the Supreme Court to make the funding issue go away.

"During the last legislative session, state leaders left billions of our tax dollars sitting in the bank that could have been put to work in the classrooms where teaching students is the highest priority," Candelaria said. "But once again, our students have been left to pay the price for the state's failure to provide the resources needed to put an end to crowded classrooms, hire more qualified teachers and improve school facilities."

Candelaria pointed to three key data points that illustrate the problems that result from the state's failure to act.

- Last year, there were 3,700 fewer teachers in public districts than there were before school funding was cut by \$5.4 billion in 2011. Meanwhile, student enrollment grew by more than 220,000, a recipe for crowded classrooms.
- Last year, school districts were granted 5,883 waivers to exceed elementary class size limits, and thousands of middle school and

high school classrooms also remain overcrowded.

- Texas ranks 38th in per-student funding, spending about \$2,400 per child below the national average.

"The arithmetic is simple. Our students and teachers are being shortchanged, and every day the state fails to invest in our classrooms is another day that students are forced to pay the price," Candelaria concluded.

## TSTA/NEA AWARDS AND GRANTS

TSTA's awards program honors teachers and education support professionals, as well as individuals and organizations that support public education. Visit [www.tsta.org/news-center/awards-grants](http://www.tsta.org/news-center/awards-grants) or call 877-ASK-TSTA for details.

- All-Star Association Representative Awards recognize exemplary leadership at the building or worksite level.
- Leaders for Tomorrow Awards honor members who demonstrate characteristics of future leaders.
- Instructional Awards recognize local associations for activities and accomplishments that incorporate the NEA Priority Schools Initiative.
- School Bell Awards recognize outstanding media coverage of education issues and events.
- Pride in Communications Awards recognize outstanding local or regional association communication.
- Ronnie Ray ESP Advocate of the Year Award recognizes an educational support professional who demonstrates outstanding accom-

plishments and contributions to public education.

- Friend of Education Award recognizes an individual, organization, or company outside the field of education that made a significant contribution to public education.
- NEA Human and Civil Rights Award honors an individual, organization, and/or region or local affiliate.
- TSTA Social Justice Patriot Awards recognize Texas educators, TSTA local and regional associations, and other individuals or associations that are friends of education for distinguished service and contributions in promoting and/or encouraging professional and human rights activities.
- Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award recognizes and promotes teaching excellence.
- NEA Foundation Learning & Leadership Grants allow individuals to participate in high-quality professional development experiences, or groups to participate in collegial study.
- NEA Foundation Student Achievement Grants improve the academic achievement of students in U.S. public schools and public higher education institutions.

## WE'VE REDESIGNED OUR APP

Update or download the free app from iTunes or Google Play. In addition to better design and flow, the improved app gives you access to the Advocate magazine; Member Matters, a monthly e-newsletter; and, if you are a member, the Briefing e-newsletter. Also new: you now can add TSTA events to your calendar.





## Legislation creates local organizing opportunities

During this spring's legislative session, TSTA and other public education advocates defeated vouchers and several other school privatization schemes. Now, with a new school year, our focus turns to local school boards and important issues that provide local associations an opportunity to organize on behalf of school employees and student success — from turnaround strategies for struggling campuses to reducing excessive testing to affordable educator health care.

Through effective organizing, a local can develop an effective working relationship with its school board, one built on respect for the work that educators do and our ability to influence board elections. A local doesn't neces-

sarily have to elect a board majority to win policies that improve working conditions for educators and learning conditions for their students. But board elections are an essential mechanism for holding board members accountable to the real education experts, the employees who work directly with students every day.

Some school districts will have board elections this November, and by the time TSTA members read this article, campaigns for those elections will be well underway. A larger number of districts with significant numbers of TSTA members will have board elections in May and November of 2016, and now is the time to begin preparing for them.

TSTA's Center for Public Affairs will provide local leaders with more information about the elections, including candidate filing deadlines, but locals can begin planning now to recruit and screen candidates for open board seats or to challenge incumbents who refuse to work with us.

Now also is the time for locals to organize around issues, and here are some important organizing opportunities that arose, in part, as a result of legislation passed earlier this year.

### CAMPUS TURNAROUND

House Bill 1842, the so-called "campus turnaround" law, puts a tighter schedule and more pressure on school districts to improve struggling cam-

puses. This law requires the state education commissioner to order a district to submit a turnaround plan for a campus that has been designated unacceptable for two consecutive years. A district's failure to comply would allow the commissioner to appoint a board of managers to run the entire district for two to four years. This board would not be accountable to local voters or employees.

This new law presents at least two organizing opportunities for TSTA locals.

Community schools — TSTA strongly supports this proven, locally-driven approach to strengthening neighborhood schools, and it is an option available to school districts under HB 1842 (see "Keeping the community in schools" in the Spring 2015 Advocate). Under the community schools model, educators and staff from the school partner with parents, local businesses, non-profit organizations, and other community groups to develop a plan to provide students and their families with the support they need for educational success. This model offers an excellent opportunity for local educators to take the lead in saving their neighborhood schools from being turned over to outsiders who don't know the community or its needs.

Innovation districts — HB 1842 also includes the option for school boards to create "innovation districts," allowing schools with acceptable accountability ratings to operate without important state standards, such as class size limits and teacher employment protections. An innovation plan first must be approved by a district-level, site-based

Now, with a new school year, our focus turns to local school boards and important issues that provide local associations an opportunity to organize on behalf of school employees and student success.

management committee and then, after public hearings, by a two-thirds vote of the school board. It is important that TSTA members actively seek membership on these management committees and raise this issue with the local school board to avoid stripping campuses of critical educational quality standards.

### TESTING/ACCOUNTABILITY

Recognizing growing unhappiness among educators, parents, and students with counterproductive, high stakes standardized tests, the Legislature did pass HB 2804, which somewhat reduced the impact of standardized test scores on the campus rating system by introducing other factors into the formula that measures campus success. The same bill put the stigmatizing A-F campus rating into law, but it will not go into effect until the 2017-18 school year, which gives us an opportunity to reverse that bad decision in the 2017 session.

Lawmakers created an opportunity for TSTA to advocate for changes in the test-based "campus grading" system when they created a 15-member "Texas Commission on the Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability," which will study possible changes in testing and accountability requirements for the next legislative session to consider. The committee will

be appointed by the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the House and will include at least two parents and two educators. We encourage TSTA locals to lobby their school boards to demand that the committee and the Legislature reduce the plague of high-stakes testing, design a realistic accountability system, and give educators adequate classroom resources.

### TEACHER EVALUATIONS

The Legislature did not pass legislation that could have ordered value-added measures tied to student test scores (the VAM model) for teacher evaluations and compensation. But a pilot evaluation system (T-TESS) that includes test scores is being test-driven by the Texas Education Agency in selected school districts. Texas' two largest school districts — Houston and Dallas — have imposed their own evaluation systems that are partly tied to test scores. And there may be an effort during the 2017 legislative session to expand the VAM model statewide, under continuing pressure from the U.S. Department of Education. Now is the time for TSTA members to demand that their local school boards join educators and parents in rejecting an unfair, test-based evaluation system.

Education is a cumulative, collaborative process that involves many teach-



ers for every student. Singling out one teacher for higher pay and another for possible dismissal simply on the basis of the latest set of test scores is wrong, and the National Academy of Sciences has rejected the VAM system, calling it an invalid teacher evaluation system.

EDUCATOR HEALTH CARE

Despite soaring insurance costs, the legislative majority again failed to increase the \$75 per month the state pays toward school employee health insurance premiums, an amount that hasn't increased since 2002. Meanwhile, the Texas Teacher Retirement System has once again increased premiums for educators covered in its system. A new law, HB 2974, creates two studies of educator health care. One will consider the financial soundness

and affordability of TRS Care and ActiveCare and access to health care providers under the TRS plans. The second study will determine if it is feasible for school districts to opt out of ActiveCare to contract for their own insurance plans and whether it is feasible to allow regional rates for health care coverage.

Meanwhile, TSTA locals can keep pressure on their own school districts to do what they can to keep insurance premiums affordable and to ensure that the concerns of school employees are heard loud and clear by the legislative study committees.

STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

As you read this, the Texas Supreme Court is deliberating whether to up-

hold, change, or reverse a lower court ruling that found the state's school finance system inadequate, unfair, and unconstitutional. TSTA agrees with the lower court's order that the Legislature must overhaul the school funding system and invest more of the billions of available state resources in our public schools. Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules, TSTA, beginning with the March party primaries, will support legislative candidates who will make education funding a real priority. Locals should encourage their school boards and other allies to join TSTA in demanding that the Legislature enact a funding system that makes a real investment in our schools, students, and educators.

— Clay Robison is TSTA's Public Relations Specialist

Poll: Americans want less testing, more funding



Whether it's used as a tool to measure student progress or evaluate teachers, standardized testing continues to fall out of favor with the majority of the American public.

According to the 2015 PDK/Gallup Survey of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, which was released in August, 64 percent of Americans (and 67 percent of public school parents) say there is "too much emphasis on testing."

Only 14 percent rated standardized testing as a "very important" factor in measuring school effectiveness, and 55 percent (66 percent of parents) oppose using test scores to evaluate teacher performance.

These findings support TSTA's message that it's time to "Invest Not Test." Our petition at InvestNotTest.org urges legislators to invest in neighborhood schools; cut back on standardized testing to give teachers and students the time they need for teaching and learning; and defeat "reforms" that use a

test-based accountability system to hand neighborhood schools to for-profit operators.

"All students, regardless of their ZIP code, deserve a great public school education," said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García, noting that high stakes tests have widened the gap between the wealthiest and poorest schools.

"We must reduce the emphasis on standardized tests that have corrupted the quality of the education children receive," García said. "The pressure placed on students and educators is enormous. We want students to succeed and be challenged by teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as creativity."

Earlier this year, a poll commissioned by TSTA found broad bipartisan support for less testing and more funding. An overwhelming 89-10 majority of Texas voters favors a reduction in the time spent on standardized testing, and a 75-22 majority supports an increase in per pupil funding that now

lags \$2,400 per pupil below the national average.

The Gallup Poll also showed that only 31 percent of Americans favor allowing students to attend a private school at the public's expense.

"School vouchers divert essential resources from public schools to private and religious schools, while offering no real 'choice' for the overwhelming majority of students and their families — and particularly not for the parents of children with special needs, low test scores, or behavioral problems," said García.

Phi Delta Kappa, a global network of education professionals, has conducted an annual poll with Gallup every year since 1969. The poll serves as an opportunity for parents, educators, and legislators to assess public opinion about public schools.

GALLUP POLL KEY FINDINGS

- 64 percent of Americans say there is "too much emphasis on testing"
- 41 percent say parents should be able to opt their children out of standardized testing
- 95 percent rated "quality of the teachers" as very important for improving local public schools, placing it at the top of five options
- 31 percent of Americans favor allowing students and parents to attend a private school at the public's expense
- 84 percent support mandatory vaccinations for students attending public schools



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# Words can hurt you



the reach of individual speech. Comments, pictures, and posts on an employee’s social media accounts are in the public domain in an instant, and they are there forever.

**CAN AN EMPLOYEE GET IN TROUBLE FOR POSTING TO SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER HOURS?**

Most district policies prohibit employees from using district equipment (or contract time) to check their social media accounts, but did you know that using personal time to access and participate in social media could affect your employment? Anything put into the public domain can be discovered and brought to the district administration’s attention.

Discussing controversial issues or expressing frustration on social media cost two employees their jobs recently. In May, a nurse in Judson ISD was terminated for making racially derogatory comments on her Facebook page about students at her school. The following month, a fourth-grade teacher in Frenship ISD was terminated for the same misconduct, although her comments did not directly reference her students. Both stories landed in the news.

While these may be worst-case scenarios, it is better to err on the side of caution when deciding what to say or what pictures to post on social media. What might be seen by one person as

a joke could be of serious concern to someone else.

If the school district, employees, students, or parents are cast in a negative light on social media, the administration will be quick to investigate and act, and if the news media gets involved, the stakes can become even greater.

**CAN A STUDENT RECORD A DISTRICT EMPLOYEE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY AND POST IT?**

Employees have had to deal with students recording them during the school day using cell phones. These recordings may include students’ voices or likenesses.

Even if such a recording is made in violation of the student handbook, the teacher can get in trouble. School district employees who have the responsibility of supervising and instructing children are held to a professional standard as role models to the students and the community.

Students can legally record in the classroom under certain situations. Generally, Texas Education Code 26.009 prohibits the recording of a child or child’s voice without written parental consent. However, consent is not required when the recording is used only for purposes of safety, co-curricular or extracurricular activity, regular classroom instruction, or media coverage of the school.

**WHAT ACTION CAN BE TAKEN AGAINST THE EMPLOYEE?**

The administration has various options

when an employee uses social media in a way that negatively affects the district. These options range from a verbal or written reprimand to termination of employment.

Most districts post their board policies on their websites, and all employees are charged with knowing them. The DH policy describes the employee standards of conduct, which require that employees follow ethical standards.

If the use of electronic media violates this policy or interferes with the employee’s ability to effectively perform his or her job, the employee can be disciplined, up to and including termination of employment.

Depending on the severity of the situation, the consequences can extend beyond the employment relationship. Employees who hold certificates issued by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) may face additional consequences; the State Board for Educator Certification, a sub-agency of TEA, is authorized to

investigate and sanction certificate holders who commit ethical violations.

Teaching is a profession with no off-switch when it comes to how a person portrays personal issues on social media. Be cautious and responsible when discussing employment and student matters, and assume your district administration has or will have access to anything you post.

First Amendment protections do apply when the employee discusses a matter of public concern, as opposed to an individual concern. And your TSTA local association has the right to use the media to advocate for employee rights and working conditions, student rights, and other public issues.

If you find yourself in trouble over the use of social media, contact the TSTA Help Center immediately by clicking on the box at the bottom of [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org) or calling 877-ASK-TSTA.

— *Julissa Herrera is an attorney in the TSTA Help Center*

**Tips for posting on social media sites**

- Do not disparage your employer, your colleagues, your students or their parents in any public forum.
- Do not disparage your role in the teaching profession.
- Do not post unprofessional pictures from your personal life.
- Do not post pictures or messages about your students unless you have signed consent forms from their parents.
- Do not accept or make friend requests to/from your current students, or even recently graduated former students.
- Do not assume that privacy settings will shield your posts.
- Do review your school district’s employee handbook and Employee Standards of Conduct policy.





# Eastside: something to celebrate

Students, parents, teachers, and staff at Austin’s Eastside Memorial High School had a special reason to celebrate the beginning of a new school year, and Education Austin was right there with them.

Texas Education Commissioner Michael Williams lifted a threat of closure that had been hanging over the school for several years because, for the first time since 2002, the full campus had met state accountability standards, thanks to an improved graduation rate, attendance, and test scores.

In 2007, Williams’ predecessor, Robert Scott, had ordered the old Johnston High School closed and re-

opened as Eastside. For a while the campus was split into two schools and then reunified.

When others, including former members of the Austin School Board, were ready to give up on Eastside, Education Austin fought hard for the school and its students. The TSTA affiliate was instrumental in electing new school board members who rescinded a plan — strongly opposed by the East Austin community — to transform both Eastside and Allan Elementary into charter schools.

Education Austin then joined other members of the local community in backing the selection of the Johns Hopkins-affiliated Talent Develop-

ment Secondary as a supporting partner of Eastside. The nonprofit assisted in student and curriculum support and teacher training and development and gave Eastside a reprieve from closure in 2013.

At a celebratory news conference covered by the Austin Chronicle two weeks before school started this year, Education Austin President Ken Zarifis said the achievements at the high school were “absolutely something for this community to celebrate.”

Principal Bryan Miller said he knew, when he first arrived at Eastside in 2011, “there was greatness in this school.”

“Not everybody believed it, not everybody knew about it, but every day we had kids that came to school that wanted to learn, that deserved an education, and that deserved stability and people to fight for them,” he said.

Miller acknowledged that more work — and opportunity — still await Eastside students.

“The ceiling is wide open now,” he said. — *Clay Robison*

**PEEPLS TO RECEIVE ANOTHER NATIONAL AWARD**

Shanna Peeples — the National Teacher of the Year, a TSTA member, and an English teacher in Amarillo — will receive the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence on Feb. 12 in Washington, D.C. Forty-two educators will be recognized at the NEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence in Education Gala, and their schools will receive a \$650 award.

Five finalists will receive \$10,000, and one will be named the nation’s top educator and receive an additional \$25,000. <http://bit.ly/1MRGMXM>

**TSTA MEMBER IN TOP SIX FOR TEXAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

TSTA member Lynn Bodet, who teaches gifted and talented math at Tejada Middle School in North East ISD (San Antonio), is one of six finalists in the 2016 Texas Teacher of the Year program. In October, the top elementary and secondary teachers will be selected and one will be designated to represent Texas in the National Teacher of the Year program. <http://bit.ly/1ld7fHf>

**FINALISTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL AWARD ARE ANNOUNCED**

Three TSTA members are among 10 Texas finalists for the 2015 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching: Patty C. Hill, an algebra teacher at

Kealing Middle School in Austin ISD; Penny Smeltzer, an AP statistics teacher at Westwood High School in Round Rock ISD; and Sheri Cole, a science teacher at Seabrook Intermediate School in Clear Creek ISD. <http://bit.ly/1HIOX08>



**PORT ARTHUR EDUCATORS RECEIVE \$5,000 GRANT**

Katrina Moreno, a paraeducator, and co-applicant Karen Young-Jones have received a \$5,000 Learning & Leadership Grant from the NEA Foundation to add an art and photography workshop to their early childhood program. They hope to improve the communication skills of struggling students at the Wheatley School of Early Childhood Programs in Port Arthur.

Teachers will observe students as they use cameras to overcome language barriers; Moreno and Young-Jones will monitor student engagement and share their findings with colleagues.

“Our competitive grants enable education professionals — from classroom teachers to intervention specialists to paraeducators — to engage in professional learning and classroom projects that will benefit students across the country,” said Harriet Sanford, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation. “By encouraging them to share their knowledge with other educators in their schools and online, we are also supporting their efforts to transform the profession.”

In the past decade, the NEA Foundation has invested more than \$7.1 million to support the work of nearly 4,500 educators, roughly 150 grants each year. To learn about past projects, visit <http://bit.ly/1WSZGjS>.

The NEA Foundation awards grants three times a year. The next deadline is Oct. 15. Applications can be found at <http://bit.ly/VzK2hN>.





# What is the evidence of your teaching?

If your classroom were the site of an archeological dig, what evidence would be found of your teaching practices? As we move into a new era of teacher evaluation, this question is not as far-fetched as it seems. Collaborative evaluations open the door for teachers to incorporate their own artifacts into the evaluation — artifacts that tell the story of what students learned; that give insight into the

teacher's thinking throughout the planning process; that shed light on the effectiveness of professional development; and that speak to the relationships the teacher develops with students, families, and the larger education community.

An artifact is defined as “an object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest.”

In the venue of public education, there are many human beings creating artifacts that attempt to tell the story of teaching. Like those who plundered the magnificent antiquities of the ancient world, third-party vendors use testing and managed curriculum programs to plunder the beauty of teaching and the relationship that exists between teacher and student. Their intent is to use their artifacts to tell a teacher's story; however, the real story of the classroom is the story that can only be told by the teacher — your story.

## ARTIFACTS AND TEACHING

The use of artifacts as a means to measure teacher performance is significant provided they support the story the teacher is telling in the classroom. Given this significance, what artifacts should a teacher create, collect, and maintain? Student data, including test scores, will be forced into the collection of evidence but that does not make it the most significant evidence of your practices as a teacher.

The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) includes four domains: Planning, Instruction, Learning Environment, and Professional Practices and Responsibilities. These four domains form the basis of most teacher evaluation instruments in place across this country. Regardless of the teacher evaluation instrument your school district uses, the importance and use of artifacts will parallel information given in this article.

Evidence of teaching is collected through two primary sources — observation and artifacts. The collection of

artifacts represents the primary source of information to assess teacher practices in the domains of Planning and Professional Practices and Responsibilities. In these instances, the teacher, not the appraiser, drives this collection. The teacher writes the lesson plans, collects data to assess student performance, and takes notes during professional development sessions.

The appraiser's observation also provides evidence of the teacher's artifacts. What the teacher and students say and do in the classroom reflects what the teacher has created (lesson plans, use of student data, etc.) and provides opportunities for the appraiser to identify artifacts as well. The quality of questioning or directions for an assignment can reflect the level of intellectual rigor in the classroom, and how students respond may provide evidence of the level of their engagement. The arrangement of your classroom itself becomes an artifact as your appraiser observes whether or not it is thoughtfully designed and accessible to all students.

## GATHERING YOUR ARTIFACTS

One person's rock is another person's arrowhead. Knowledge gives meaning to artifacts and the teacher has the opportunity to assign meaning to the artifacts of teaching. It helps to have a classification system that amplifies the meaning of the product and links it to the story of teaching through a portfolio, which may consist of hard copies maintained in a binder; an electronic file; linked to the teacher's district webpage; or even maintained on a

**Effective teaching manifests itself every instructional day; do not let the only evidence of your practices be the insidious value-added scores created and peddled by a third-party vendor.**

teacher-created website through a platform such as Weebly.

Ideally, a teacher would align the artifacts of teaching with the domains of the teacher appraisal instrument for easy reference during a post-conference or when a rebuttal may be required. Think carefully about the artifacts in the portfolio. It is not a miscellaneous collection of information. The portfolio should reflect information about the teacher's practices. It is not a scrapbook that only has a strong meaning for the teacher, nor is it a steamer trunk filled to the brim with everything, to the point that going through it overwhelms the teacher and others.

Evidence takes time to collect, and the process of organizing the products of teaching should occur over time. The process needs to be thoughtful and deliberate, and should be based on what is happening in the classroom. The portfolio also needs to be real rather than perfect. Examples of student work that demonstrate process and progress show the depth of learning in the classroom. Structure the portfolio in such a way that the story being told is one of accomplishment.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

There is no exhaustive list of what artifacts to include. TSTA has developed a list of suggested artifacts aligned with

the domains and dimensions of T-TESS; email [bryanw@tsta.org](mailto:bryanw@tsta.org) if you would like a copy. Some products are givens — lesson plans, progress reports, certificates from professional development, and various types of assessments. Others can be more spontaneous — a photo capturing students engaged in collaborative learning activities or a video of a presentation that supports your professional development. Teachers will make their own decisions about the artifacts that best reflect their teaching.

The question to ask yourself at the end of the year is this: what do you want your legacy of teaching to look like? Approach your collection of evidence with that in mind. Effective teaching manifests itself every instructional day; do not let the only evidence of your practices be the insidious value-added scores created and peddled by a third-party vendor. It is just one page of your story as a teacher.

Artifacts link the past with the future. Before her ill-fated flight into space, Christa McAuliffe said, “I touch the future, I teach.” When you choose your artifacts wisely, your classroom comes to life and its cultural and historical significance will live beyond the horizon to a thousand tomorrows.

— *Bryan Weatherford is TSTA's Teaching and Learning Specialist*





# Del Valle support professionals win due process

**“Del Valle should be proud to see the administration, the board, and the union come together to work on commonly held beliefs.”**

Thanks to the Del Valle Education Association’s due process campaign, the Del Valle ISD school board in July unanimously approved due process language for education support professionals (ESPs).

Del Valle becomes the third district in Texas, following Fort Worth and Austin, to provide due process to ESPs in board policy.

“We worked on this for a couple of years,” DVEA President Sean Hurley said. “We attended board meetings, discussed due process with trustees

and administrators, spoke at a public forum, and succeeded in presenting the issue as what it is — a common sense issue of fairness.

“Del Valle should be proud to see the administration, the board, and the union come together to work on commonly held beliefs,” he said.

The ESP due process language was drafted by a committee of administrators, DVEA representatives, and a school board member, Ann Heuberger, former TSTA vice president.



## HARLANDALE LOCAL GAINS BETTER PAY, INSTRUCTION

The Harlandale ISD school board approved a 3 percent increase for ESPs; a \$750 retention stipend for all employees; and teacher salary increases based on salary, not the midpoint.

It was a big win for the Harlandale Education Association, which had kept up the pressure through four special board meetings in June.

HEA also won on an instructional concern that came up in one of its surveys. Some 85 percent of teachers wanted to discontinue an online elementary math program; HEA lobbied board members and encouraged parents who didn’t like the program to speak against it. The board listened.

“The district will continue the program for one more year until the administration can find a replacement. Next year teachers can use it as a supplemental program by working with their principal,” HEA President Julie Gimbel said. “With the teachers having control, they can teach as they deem appropriate for their class, and kids won’t have to sit in front of a computer for 70 minutes a day doing math.”



## LEGACY PROJECT: HUNDREDS ATTEND COMMUNITY FAIR

TSTA Student Program members and advisors from San Jacinto College-Central and University of Houston-Clear Lake participated in the inaugural LEGACY (Leaders Empowering Grassroots Advocacy for Communities and Youth) fair this summer.

At last year’s NEA Representative Assembly (RA), delegates voted to establish LEGACY as a follow-up to Outreach to Teach, the annual NEA-sponsored community service project that included renovation of a school in the city hosting the RA.

Almost 800 students joined hundreds of community leaders, Florida educators, and retired and student NEA members at the first LEGACY fair, held June 30 at Osceola High School and Thacker Avenue Elementary School in Kissimmee, Florida.

There were dozens of exhibits and speakers on such topics as voter registration, literacy, health, and safety; a community garden was planted; and an artist, Inocente Izucar, painted a mural entitled “Opportunity Grows Here” on an interior wall of the elementary.



## GLOBAL LEARNING FELLOWS SPEND 10 DAYS IN PERU

Monica Washington of Texarkana, 2014 Texas Teacher of the Year, is one of 31 public school educators who will spend a year building their global competency skills.

Through professional development training, collaboration with educators across the globe, an international field study, and sharing curricula, the NEA Foundation’s Global Learning Fellowship equips educators to bring an international perspective to their students, associations, and districts.

“To thrive as global citizens, today’s students need to be taught how to investigate the world, recognize perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action,” Harriet Sanford, president/CEO of the NEA Foundation, said.

This year’s international field study in Peru included visits to schools in and around Lima and Cusco to observe instruction and exchange ideas and best practices with teachers and administrators. Fellows learned about the economy, history, and culture; met with representatives from a multinational business; and participated in a service learning project. <http://bit.ly/1UhHpOH>





# San Marcos wins pay hike, insurance relief

“It’s amazing. It’s the biggest thing that’s been done in our district in a long time for our employees,” San Marcos Educators Association President Susan Seaton told Time Warner Cable News (TWCN) after the school board voted in June to increase teacher salaries by 3.8 percent and fully fund insurance premiums for the base plan.

“Even if our board doesn’t know it, they changed people’s lives

tonight. By taking this bold step and really kind of showing the employees what they’re worth, they’ve made a change in the lives of all 1,200 district employees,” Seaton said.

“We want to retain those great teachers that we have so we can keep them working for us and not for other districts,” school board President Kathy Hensen told TWCN. “We don’t want to train them and send them off somewhere else.”



## INVOLVING PARENTS IN SOUTHSIDE SCHOOLS

TSTA/NEA and Southside Education Association partnered with the National Council of La Raza and Southside ISD to implement a parent engagement program in August. Padres Comprometidos is a national training program NCLR developed to cultivate relationships and interactions between parents and schools. The program, which began in 2009, seeks to help parents become more engaged with schools; view themselves as true partners with the schools; advocate for academic success because they understand the benefits and value of education; be less intimidated by the school system and understand school expectations; feel respected by school staff; and be equipped with the tools they need to promote postsecondary education for their child.



## MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Photos from TSTA local associations’ membership drives; from the top:

- Deer Park Education Association
- McKinney Education Association
- North East Education Association
- Education Abilene
- Donna TSTA/NEA





COUNTERCLOCKWISE: Robert Berger is the new president of the TSTA Student Program; TSTA-Retired President Louise Watkins, Barbara Franklin, Bobbie Duncan, and Clarence Phinisee at the NEA Retired Annual Meeting (not shown: Lois Stephenson and Frank Colbert); and the quilt TSTA-Retired is raffling.



# Meet the new Student Program president

Robert James Berger II, the 2015-16 state president of the TSTA Student Program, works full time while attending the University of Houston-Clear Lake. He will graduate in the fall of 2017 with a degree in EC-6 ESL.

### Why did you choose education?

Since the age of five, I've dreamed of teaching and have geared my studies toward becoming the kind of educator that inspired me and instilled in me a lifelong passion for learning.

### Why TSTA/NEA?

When I heard about TSTA, I knew I had found an organization through which I could have an impact on Texas education. In just over a year since I joined, I have held several positions, including local, district, and now state office.

This summer, nine members from the Texas student program attended the NEA Student Leadership Conference in Orlando. I went, expecting it to be similar to the Denver conference of 2014, but found it to be far more edifying. The Denver conference provided an excellent foundation for my tenure in student leadership, but the Orlando conference armed me with invaluable tools and advice to help me make the most of my term as state president.

A true highlight was the state president meeting, attended by several departing state presidents including Texas' own Katie Bruno. These seasoned student leaders gave us advice they wish they had received before starting their terms. All of the participants from Texas enjoyed the confer-

ence and gained valuable information for the upcoming year!

### What are your goals for the student program?

Before the Orlando conference, I was somewhat overwhelmed and unsure of my goals for this term; however, I left with clearly defined action items for my state association and the confidence to see them to fruition. I am committed to fostering membership growth in the student program, but more importantly, I want to increase involvement among current members.

I want to light a fire within our existing membership base and encourage them to become more proactive and passionate about TSTA. I also plan to unite every chapter in Texas to organize a

statewide backpack and school supply drive for schools and students in need. Profound movements like this will demonstrate to current and future members alike that TSTA does make a difference.

### How can TSTA members help?

I encourage TSTA members to take an active role in the student program chapters in their area. Our student members are constantly seeking input and help from active TSTA locals. The partnerships that many have already developed have been so beneficial. If I can assist you in forming a partnership with students in your area, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [rjberger14@gmail.com](mailto:rjberger14@gmail.com). I look forward to a great year!

### TSTA RETIRED: INVOLVED AND BUSY

From monitoring the final days of the legislative session to helping active members welcome new employees at New Teacher Orientations, TSTA-Retired officers and members have been involved and busy.

The legislative session wrapped up at the end of May, and for retirees, there was some good news. Your cost for TRS-Care health insurance will not increase this year, as legislators found the money to fund it. In the interim before the 2017 session, the legislature will research how to cover the continuous increases in premiums.

In June, several members attended the NEA Retired Annual Meeting in Orlando, where they participated in workshops and voted for national officers.

Three of us — Bobbie Duncan, Clarence Phinisee, and I — remained in Orlando as elected delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, where we partici-

pated in five days of business deliberations and voted on officers.

TSTA-R officers and directors held our first meeting of the year on Sept. 9-11. If you have questions or suggestions, submit them to your regional president who will bring them to an upcoming meeting.

We are already preparing for the 2016 TSTA-R annual meeting, which will come right on the heels of an officer election. This year, the positions of Secretary and Treasurer are open, and the individuals elected will serve a three-year term. The officer nomination form is printed on this page; nominations are due at TSTA Headquarters by Jan. 15. Once again, TSTA-Retired's major

fundraiser will be the quilt raffle. This year's quilt has a Texas theme and can be seen in the photo on page 24 and on TSTA's Flickr site, [www.flickr.com/photos/tstapublicaffairs/sets](http://www.flickr.com/photos/tstapublicaffairs/sets). Tickets can be purchased for \$2 from regional retired officers or any of the TSTA-R officers.

TSTA-R has been making a point of joining the technology world. Please friend us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TSTAR>. NEAR and feel free to make comments on our page. Also, you can obtain information and membership forms at <http://tsta.org/for-members/affiliates/tsta-retired>.

— Louise Watkins, TSTA-Retired president

TSTA-RETIRED OFFICER NOMINATION FORM

Check box beside office this nomination is for:  
☐ TSTA-Retired Secretary ☐ TSTA-Retired Treasurer

QUALIFICATIONS: Must be an active member of TSTA-Retired and NEA-Retired

Deadline for receipt at TSTA Headquarters is **January 15, 2016, 5:00 p.m.**

Nominee's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above information is true and correct  
(must be signed by person running for office).

Nominee's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above information is true and correct.

Nominator's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Send by FAX to 512-486-7043 or email to [TSTA-R@tsta.org](mailto:TSTA-R@tsta.org) or  
mail to TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.





# TSTA state convention delegate elections

**Contact TSTA’s Center for Executive and Governance to participate in a cluster election.**

The 2016 convention will be April 8-9, 2016, at the El Paso Convention and Performing Arts Center in El Paso. State delegate allocations for local associations (including the Texas Faculty Association) to attend the TSTA House of Delegates are sent to local presidents at the end of January or early February.

**LOCAL DELEGATES**

Delegates are allocated to locals in a ratio of one (1) delegate for each fifty (50) members, or major fraction thereof, based on the local’s Active Professional, Active ESP, and TSTA Life membership on Jan. 15, 2016. However, a local may conduct its

election for delegates prior to Jan. 15 by keeping a list of delegates in the order of votes received, then reporting the top vote getters as delegates and listing the remaining vote getters as alternates.

The forms for reporting local delegate elections, available online and sent to local presidents with the allocations, are due to TSTA by March 15, 2016.

**CLUSTER DELEGATES**

TSTA members who have no opportunity to join a local association or who belong to a local that is not eligible to elect a delegate are still eligible to seek

election as a delegate to the TSTA House of Delegates through a cluster election.

The member must notify the TSTA Center for Executive and Governance of his or her interest in seeking election as a cluster delegate no later than Feb. 11, 2016.

**RETIRED DELEGATES**

Retired at-large delegates are allocated to TSTA-Retired in a ratio of one (1) delegate for each seventy-five (75) members, or major fraction thereof, as of Jan. 15, 2016. In order to run for a TSTA-R at-large delegate position, the candidate must be a member of both TSTA-R and NEA-R. Nomination forms are due to TSTA no later than close of business on Jan. 15, 2016.

Ballots for the election will be sent to TSTA-R members in February. Please be sure to contact TSTA with any updates to your email address and/or postal mailing address. Updates may be emailed to TSTA-R@tsta.org.

**BUDGET PLANNING**

Locals and/or individual delegates may want to start planning now for travel expenses to the state convention. The TSTA convention hotel is the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso. Located near the El Paso Convention and Performing Arts Center, the hotel’s nightly room rate for members in the TSTA conven-

tion room block is approximately \$100 for a single or a double, plus taxes.

**QUESTIONS**

Contact Neocha Campbell in the Organizing Center for Executive and Governance at 877-ASK-TSTA, extension 1514, or neochac@tsta.org if you have questions regarding the elections.

CLUSTER ELECTION REQUEST FORM

**TSTA House of Delegates—April 8-9, 2016**  
The deadline for receipt of this nomination form at TSTA Headquarters is Feb. 11, 2016.  
(This form is also available online at [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org). Confirmation issued upon receipt.)

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School District \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**Check the appropriate box:**  
☐ There is no TSTA local in my area.  
☐ My local has fewer than 50 people and is not eligible to elect a delegate.  
Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_  
**Send to:** Neocha Campbell, TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, by mail:  
316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701; email: [neochac@tsta.org](mailto:neochac@tsta.org); or fax: 512-486-7053.

TSTA HOD RETIRED DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

**Retired At-Large Delegate Positions — TSTA House of Delegates — April 8-9, 2016**  
The deadline for receipt of this nomination form at TSTA Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)**  
☐ American Indian/Alaska Native    ☐ Asian    ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander    ☐ Multi-ethnic  
☐ Black    ☐ Hispanic    ☐ Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin)    ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed  
☐ Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less, which I understand will be sent with the ballot. (Note: Statements exceeding 25 words will be cut after the 25th word.)  
☐ Check here if you will be a first-time delegate  
Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_  
**Send by FAX to 512-486-7043 or EMAIL to TSTA-R@tsta.org or MAIL to: TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701**





# National delegate elections

We're headed to Washington, D.C. for the 2016 National Education Association Representative Assembly and Annual Meeting on July 2-7, 2016.

The number of Texas delegates is determined by our TSTA/NEA membership on Jan. 15, 2016. TSTA is allocated one (1) state delegate for every 1,000 Active members, as defined in NEA Bylaws, and locals are allocated one (1) local delegate for every 150 Active members, or major fraction thereof.

## MINORITY REPRESENTATION

NEA policy encourages ethnic-minority representation reflective of the ethnic make-up of the state's population. TSTA's goal is to elect at least 55 percent of our total delegation from among our ethnic-minority members. We rely on all of our leaders and caucuses to help recruit ethnic-minority candidates to run for delegate positions at both the state and local levels.

## FUNDING, COSTS AND ATTIRE

TSTA does not fund state delegates to the NEA RA, though they may receive a small stipend, budget permitting. A few regions and locals provide partial funding for state or local delegates, but most do not fund delegate expenses. Candidates for NEA delegate should verify whether or not there is

funding available with their region or their specific local when seeking nomination.

Texas delegates capture the eyes of the entire nation at each NEA RA by dressing uniformly in Texas Flag attire. All Texas delegates should wear a "Texas" vest or shirt — i.e. Texas flag design with a white star on the right front chest — with white or navy blue pants, skirt, or shorts. All Texas delegates are expected to wear the official "uniform" on the days the NEA RA is in session. Texas delegates will stay at the Grand Hyatt Washington, where nightly rates will be approximately \$199-224 plus tax; watch [tsta.org](https://tsta.wufoo.com/forms/nea-ra-state-delegate-nomination) for updates.

## STATE DELEGATES

NEA requires open nominations and secret ballots for all state and local delegate elections. If you would like to run for a state delegate position, please complete the nomination form at the end of this article or visit <https://tsta.wufoo.com/forms/nea-ra-state-delegate-nomination>.

Each candidate on the ballot for state delegate is entitled to have his or her name and ethnic status published in the Advocate, along with a short statement (25 words or less). For your name to appear on the printed ballot, **TSTA must**

**receive the nomination form in the Center for Executive and Governance no later than Jan. 15, 2016.**

Members should receive the Advocate containing ballots for election of state delegates by late March. The deadline for return receipt of ballots to TSTA is April 13, 2016, by 5:00 p.m.

Although we cannot know the exact number of delegates to be elected until after Jan. 15, typically we elect one state delegate on a statewide ballot and the remaining state delegates are assigned to individual regions, clusters of regions, or, possibly, statewide in a manner consistent with NEA rules on one-person, one-vote, and in accordance with TSTA policy.

## CATEGORY 2 DELEGATES/ SUPERVISORY MEMBERS

NEA also requires proportional representation for supervisory and non-supervisory members. In order to ensure this is not violated, supervisory members are not eligible to run for state delegate as outlined above. Instead, all supervisory members are eligible to run in a separate election for Category 2 state at-large delegate (which also includes NEA Active Life Retired members).

Supervisory members who also are members of a local additionally may run in the statewide supervisory cluster election, unless their local is not part of that cluster. TSTA removes locals from this cluster only if inclusion would cost the local a non-supervisory delegate. Locals will be notified in February if they have been removed from the cluster.

Supervisory members seeking election as a delegate should complete and re-

turn the nomination form at the end of this article (marking the box designated for Category 2 delegates), along with their maximum 25-word statement. Supervisory members who return the form and are eligible to run in the Supervisory Cluster will automatically be included on the ballot for that election as well.

## LOCAL DELEGATES

NEA will notify locals by early February of the number of delegates allocated for each local. NEA will send official forms to each local in order for the local to report who their elected delegates and alternates ("successor delegates") will be. To ensure delegates have proper credentials at the NEA RA, **the forms are due to TSTA by April 11, 2016.**

Locals must conduct an election that provides for open nominations and secret ballots. This can be accomplished either by (1) delivering a nomination form to each member (using a local newsletter is permissible), then ensuring each member receives a ballot with the names of those who returned the nomination form, or (2) holding an all-member meeting, with proper notice of the meeting sent to each member, and accepting nominations at the meeting, then voting by secret ballot.

## LOCAL CLUSTER DELEGATES

A local must have at least 76 members (Active and Life) to qualify for a delegate. Locals with fewer than 76 members may cluster together for the

purpose of electing local delegates. TSTA coordinates these cluster elections, so any member interested in seeking election as a cluster delegate must notify the TSTA Center for Executive and Governance. To request a cluster election, return the request form at the end of this article to Neocha Campbell in the TSTA office or submit online by visiting the following link: <https://tsta.wufoo.com/forms/local-cluster-election-form-nea-ra/>.

## RETIRED DELEGATES

NEA allocates one delegate for the first 50 TSTA-R/NEA-R members, and one (1) additional delegate for each 1,000 TSTA-R/NEA-R members thereafter. To seek election as a retired delegate, return the NEA Retired Delegate Nomination Form to TSTA by Jan. 15, 2016. The form is available at the end of this article and online at [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org).

A member who was an NEA Active Life member while teaching, but is now retired, has the option of seeking nomination as a Category 2 state at-large delegate rather than a retired delegate. However, anyone eligible to run in both elections must choose; he or she may only file in one election. To run as a **retired delegate**, complete the NEA Retired Delegate Nomination Form. To run as a **Category 2 delegate**, complete the NEA State Delegate Nomination Form and check the Category 2 box. **Nominations are due by close of business Jan. 15, 2016.**

**Questions: Anyone with questions about the elections, or needing other information about the process, should contact Neocha Campbell at TSTA, 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514 or email [neochac@tsta.org](mailto:neochac@tsta.org).**



NEA CLUSTER DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

2016 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY LOCAL CLUSTER ELECTION REQUEST FORM

For use by TSTA/NEA members in a local with fewer than 76 members. Please return this form to TSTA Headquarters by April 11, 2016.

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Neocha Campbell, TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, by mail: 316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701; email: neochac@tsta.org; or fax: 512-486-7053. This form is also available online at www.tsta.org. Confirmation issued upon receipt.

NEA RETIRED DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

2016 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY TSTA/NEA-RETIRED DELEGATE POSITIONS

The deadline for receipt of this nomination form at TSTA Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2016, 5:00 p.m.

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Day phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ Multi-ethnic

☐ Black ☐ Hispanic ☐ Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed

☐ Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less, which I understand will be sent with the ballot. (Note: Statements exceeding 25 words will be cut after the 25th word.)

☐ Check here if you will be a first-time delegate

Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Send by FAX to 512-486-7043 or EMAIL to TSTA-R@tsta.org or MAIL to: TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701

NEA STATE DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

2016 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY STATE DELEGATES — WASHINGTON, D.C.

The deadline for receipt of this nomination form at TSTA's Headquarters is Jan. 15, 2016.  
(This form is also available online at www.tsta.org. Confirmation issued upon receipt.)

NOMINEE FOR: (Check one)

☐ State At-Large Delegate: Category 1—Teacher, ESP or other Non-Supervisor

☐ State At-Large Delegate: Category 2—Supervisor or NEA Active Life Retired

☐ Statewide Supervisory Cluster—Supervisors who are members of a local association

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ Multi-ethnic

☐ Black ☐ Hispanic ☐ Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed

☐ Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less, which I understand will be sent with the ballot. (Note: Statements exceeding 25 words will be cut after the 25th word.)

☐ Check here if you will be a first-time delegate

Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Neocha Campbell, TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, by mail: 316 W. 12th St., Austin TX 78701; email: neochac@tsta.org; or fax: 512-486-7053.





## Texas State Teachers Association

316 West 12th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701



[www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org)

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"I had to get involved. I could no longer keep silent. The individuality, that spark, that excitement that made education what it was back in the day — I feel strongly that we've lost a lot of that. If I could take these standardized tests, I'd have a bonfire, because they're not benefiting anybody but the people who created them for their financial gain."



— Angelia Hudson, Judson Education Association