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# ADVOCATE

Winter 2014



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MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE: NEA's Degrees Not Debt campaign launches at Brazosport College.

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## ADVOCATE

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## Make your voices heard

Now that the dust is settling on the 2014 elections, attention is turning to Austin and the upcoming legislative session, but victory or defeat for Texas' public schools will be decided on the home front in local communities throughout the state.

When the Legislature convenes its five-month session on Jan. 13, education will again be high on the agenda. Educators and students will have a lot at stake as lawmakers consider a range of issues — from funding to testing to evaluations to privatization.

TSTA will be well represented in the front lines of the debate at the Capitol, and we have excellent working relationships with some genuine, pro-education officeholders — from both parties — in the Texas House and Senate, in addition to trustees on a number of local school boards. However, we lost some key races, including the crucial lieutenant governor's office, from which the victor, Dan Patrick, will attempt to enact vouchers and other privatization schemes that would rob our neighborhood public schools and the vast majority of Texas students of critical state revenue.

But Patrick can't accomplish his agenda singlehandedly, and neither can anyone else. They need the votes of a majority of senators and representatives or, in the case of school boards, a majority of fellow trustees. And that's where you and everyone else on the home front can make a difference. Eventually, you and your students will have to live with decisions made by the Legislature or your local school board. So don't wait for bad decisions to happen to you. Make your opinions heard — loud, clear, and frequently — before the decisions are made.

If you don't know them already, get to know your state senator, representative, and school board members and let them hear from you. Encourage your work colleagues, friends, neighbors, family members, and everyone else who shares your commitment to public education to do the same. When the legislative membership lists are updated for the session, #TeamTSTA will tell you how you can contact your lawmakers.

Are standardized tests and test preparation still disrupting your class schedule, robbing you of quality teaching time, and your students of quality learning time? Tell your legislators and demand they do something about it — and encourage the parents in your community to join you.

Do you want your hard-earned tax dollars spent on vouchers for a select group of private school students? Of course you don't. But make sure to tell your legislators that you don't, keep telling them that you don't, and demand that they vote against vouchers.

Tell them to spend that money, instead, to increase the state contribution to health insurance premiums for educators, a contribution that hasn't been increased in 12 years, despite ever-rising health costs for school employees.

Has your district disregarded you as a professional and demanded that you teach from a script? Demand professional respect, and demand that your school board members put a stop to scripted instruction.

You may not be able to meet personally with legislators when they are in session in Austin, but you can meet with your senator and representative when they are back in your community. And you should visit school board members about local and legislative issues, make calls, and send emails on key issues. You and other members of your local can write letters to the editor, get on social media, and organize rallies or other media events in your community to make sure everyone knows what the real education experts think about what political leaders are doing. If you need assistance, contact #TeamTSTA headquarters in Austin.

All politics is local, according to an old saying. That means that legislators and other policymakers are sensitive to the wishes of the local voters who elected them. Or they should be.

But the theory works only if local constituents — people like you — tell policymakers, in no uncertain terms, what their priorities are and keep the heat on them to do the right thing for our public schools, our students, and you — the educators.

— TSTA President Noel Candelaria

## ¡Haga oír sus voces!

Ahora que las elecciones han terminado, la atención estará de nuevo en la sesión legislativa que esta a punto de comenzar. Pero la derrota o la victoria de las escuelas públicas será decidida en el frente de las batallas en nuestras comunidades locales a través del estado.

Cuando la legislatura se reúna para la sesión de cinco meses el 13 de enero, la educación estará en el tope de la agenda una vez más. Estudiantes y educadores tendrán mucho en juego mientras los legisladores consideran una lista de asuntos — desde fondos hasta exámenes, desde evaluaciones hasta privatización.

TSTA estará muy bien representada en la línea de batalla en el Capitolio, y tenemos relaciones excelentes con representantes pro-educación — de ambos partidos — en el Senado y la Cámara de Tejas, además de miembros de varios de los comités escolares. Sin embargo, perdimos unas competencias importantes, incluyendo la posición crucial de vicegobernador. El nuevo vicegobernador, Dan Patrick, intentará establecer planes de privatización como vales, que le robarían a nuestras escuelas vecinales y a la mayoría de los estudiantes tejanos los fondos estatales críticos que se merecen.

Pero Patrick no puede cumplir su agenda solo. Necesita los votos de una mayoría de los senadores y representantes o, en el caso de los comités escolares en sus comunidades, una mayoría de los miembros. Y ahí es donde tu y todos los demás en la comunidad pueden hacer la diferencia. Eventualmente, tu y tus estudiantes tendrán que vivir con las decisiones tomadas por la legislatura o por tu comité escolar local. Así que no esperes a que esas decisiones te afecten. Haz que tu voz sea escuchada — de manera alta, clara y frecuente — antes de que las decisiones sean tomadas.

Si no sabes quienes son, aprende quien es tu senador estatal, tu representante estatal y los miembros de tu comité escolar y déjales saber quien eres. Alienta a tus colegas, amigos, vecinos y familia a que hagan lo mismo, y todos los demás que compartan tu compromiso por la educación pública. Cuando la lista de miembros de la legislatura estén actualizadas para la nueva sesión, #teamTSTA te dirá como puedes contactar a tus legisladores.

¿Los exámenes estandarizados y la preparación de exámenes siguen interrumpiendo tu cronograma de clases, robándote tu valioso tiempo y el tiempo de aprendizaje de tus estudiantes? Dile a tus legisladores y exige que hagan algo al respecto — y alienta a los padres de tu comunidad que se unan a ti.

¿Quieres que tus impuestos sean gastados en vales para un grupo selecto de estudiantes de escuelas privadas? Claro que no. Pero asegúrate de decirle a tus legisladores que no, díselo una y otra vez, y exige que voten en contra de los vales. Diles que gasten ese dinero para aumentar la contribución estatal para el cuidado de salud de educadores, una contribución que no ha sido aumentada en 12 años, aún cuando el precio del cuidado de salud sigue subiendo para empleados escolares.

¿Tu distrito te ha menospreciado como profesional y te exige que enseñes usando un guión? Exige respeto profesional, y exige que los miembros de tu comité escolar detengan la enseñanza por guión.

Es posible que no puedas reunirte personalmente con tus legisladores mientras están en Austin durante la sesión, pero puedes reunirte con tu senador y con tu representante estatal cuando regresen a tu comunidad. Y deberías visitar a los miembros de tu comité escolar sobre asuntos locales, hacer llamadas, y enviar correo electrónico sobre asuntos críticos. Y tu y otros miembros de tu unión pueden escribir cartas al editor de sus periódicos locales, participar en medios sociales, y organizar marchas u otros eventos mediáticos en tu comunidad para asegurar que todos sepan lo que piensan los verdaderos expertos en educación sobre la labor de los líderes políticos. Si necesitas asistencia, contacta a la sede #teamTSTA en Austin.

Como dice el dicho: Toda la política es local. Eso significa que los legisladores son susceptibles a los deseos de los votantes locales que los eligieron. O por lo menos deberían serlo.

Pero la teoría sólo funciona si los constituyentes locales — personas como tu — le dicen a los legisladores, sin pelos en la boca, cuales son sus prioridades y mantienen la presión para que hagan lo correcto para nuestras escuelas públicas, nuestros estudiantes y para ti — nuestros educadores.

# TSTA president represents NEA on national panel

He was joined at the Sept. 20 event by Reps. Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Pedro Pierluisi of Puerto Rico, Libby Doggett of the U.S. Department of Education, Ana Gallegos of Tucson USD, and Dr. Ana Maria Garcia Blanco of the Instituto Nueva Escuela of Puerto Rico.



TSTA President Noel Candelaria represented NEA on a panel to discuss Early Childhood Education: Why Universal Pre-K Makes Sense for America during the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's Public Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

"It was a great opportunity to talk about the overwhelming need to provide access to pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds, especially in our neediest communities, to eradicate the school-to-prison pipeline," Candelaria said.

"A lot of great data was shared about the need for adequate funding for quality, full-day pre-k programs with small class sizes; certified teachers with adequate professional development as early childhood specialists; and doing away with the punitive overemphasis on testing that is robbing our children of learning — a toxic environment that goes against everything we know about children's brain development," he said. "I also spoke about Race to the Top funding for pre-k that creates a system of winners and losers when we cannot afford to lose one blessed child to inadequate funding."



## TSTA MEMBER NAMED TEXAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Shanna Peeples, who was named Teacher of the Year on Oct. 24! She will represent Texas in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

She is shown in the photo with 2014 Texas Teacher of the Year Monica Washington (left) and TSTA Vice President Ovidia Molina (center).

Two TSTA members made the list of six finalists: Peeples, who is an English teacher at Palo Duro High School in Amarillo ISD and member of Amarillo Education Association, and Irene Kistler, a librarian at White Middle School in North East ISD (San Antonio) and member of North East Education Association.

Four other TSTA members made regional teacher of the year: Jesus Razo, Mission Junior High School, Mission Consolidated ISD; Stephen Smallwood, North Lamar High School, North Lamar ISD (now retired); Tara Salisbury, Grape Creek Elementary, Grape Creek-Pulliam ISD; and Jessica Brown, Evans Middle School, Lubbock ISD.



RABBLE ROUSERS: TSTA President Noel Candelaria, Deputy Advocacy Director for United We Dream Julieta Garibay, Alberto García, and Lily Eskelsen García.

## Ordinary people who dared to dream

TSTA President Noel Candelaria attended a book signing event for "Rabble Rousers: Fearless Fighters for Social Justice" ("Agitadores: Luchadores Valientes por la Justicia"), which was written by NEA President Lily Eskelsen García and illustrated by her husband, Alberto García. All proceeds from the book go to United We Dream and other fighters for social justice.

"The book chronicles ordinary people who dared to dream," Eskelsen García said. "They used their voices, commitment, and passion to organize communities to fight injustice. They moved

the masses who joined the fight to try to change the world from what it was into what it should be."

Activists profiled are Mother Jones, José Martí, Emmeline Pankhurst, Francis Townsend, Mohandas Gandhi, Francisco I. Madero, Nelson Mandela, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, Jr., Harvey Milk, Frieda Zames, Václav Havel, Aung San Suu Kyi, Rigoberta Menchú, Marina Rikhvanova, Dalia Ziada, and Gabby Pacheco.

You can buy and read more about the book at [www.nearabblerrousers.com](http://www.nearabblerrousers.com).



A SIMPLE PROGRAM TO PROMOTE HEALTH

NEA's Health Information Network wants you to take a few minutes and put yourself first, with the help of the Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge. You'll have a healthier, happier, less stressful school year!

This simple commitment to yourself will benefit everyone — students, colleagues, families, and the school community. A healthier year for you means a better school year overall.

Sign on to <http://www.neahin.org/get-involved> and choose from the list, which is printed below.

- Start my day with a healthy breakfast.
- Choose foods and drinks that nourish me.
- Sit alone with eyes closed for 5 minutes, focused only on my breathing, because high stress levels affect my wellbeing.
- Make time for fun! I will take at least 10 minutes in my day for laughter and joy.
- Move my body for at least 15 minutes every day.
- Find a few minutes daily to get outside, breathe in fresh air, and recharge my batteries.

Connect with others using #NewSelfie1415 on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/neahin> and Twitter @NEAHIN.



SCHOOL SAFETY: PREPAREDNESS IS KEY

The Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University is the state's central location for the dissemination of safety and security information, including research, training, and technical assistance for K-12 schools and junior colleges.

"We provide educators, parents, community organizations, and stakeholders with an array of evidence-based practices, standards, and tools to strengthen emergency preparedness and create healthy schools and communities," TxSSC Executive Director Dr. Victoria Calder said.

School districts are urged to work with their community partners to plan for a wide range of possible emergencies, whether natural, human-caused, or health-related.

TxSSC recommends that campuses involve all students and staff members in monthly drills that include evacuation, reverse evacuation, severe weather, shelter in place, and lockdown.

"Regardless of the amount of time and effort spent on emergency preparedness for our schools, the plan is only as good as the ability of students, faculty, and staff to execute it," Calder said. "When everyone on campus has practiced the plan, they are ready to make effective decisions. With good training, everyone involved will respond in a way that increases positive outcomes."

Access the TxSSC emergency management toolkit at <http://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/emergency-management-toolkit>.



CORRECTION

On page 14 of the Fall Advocate, the Brownsville members in this photo should have been identified as, left to right, Claudia Cortez, Fabian Salcedo, and Delia Benavidez.



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Our TSTA app's new toolbar helps you stay in contact with TSTA and your local association. In addition to better design and flow, the improved app allows you to easily:

- Share the app with a friend
- Share education news stories
- Access a list of other locals' social media

- Update your TSTA contact information
- Stay logged in

Update today or download free from iTunes or Google Play.

APPLY FOR AN ATHLETICS GRANT

California Casualty, provider of the NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program, is taking applications for the California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant program. The grant program was created to offset severe budget cuts that have forced public high schools across the nation to decrease, eliminate, or implement fees for their sporting programs, leaving some students sitting on the sidelines

unable to participate. Schools demonstrating the most need will receive grants of \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Applications for the 2014-15 academic year must be received by Jan. 15. Details and application forms can be found at [www.calcasathleticsgrant.com](http://www.calcasathleticsgrant.com).

NOMINATIONS DUE FOR TSTA-RETIRED OFFICERS

Nominations are open for TSTA-Retired president and vice president. Please fill out the form below and send to TSTA-R, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, or submit by FAX or email. All nominations must be received at TSTA headquarters by 5 p.m., Jan. 16, 2015.

TSTA-RETIRED OFFICER NOMINATION FORM

Check box beside office this nomination is for:  
☐ TSTA-Retired President   ☐ TSTA-Retired Vice President

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

Deadline for receipt at TSTA Headquarters is January 16, 2015, 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 \_\_\_\_\_

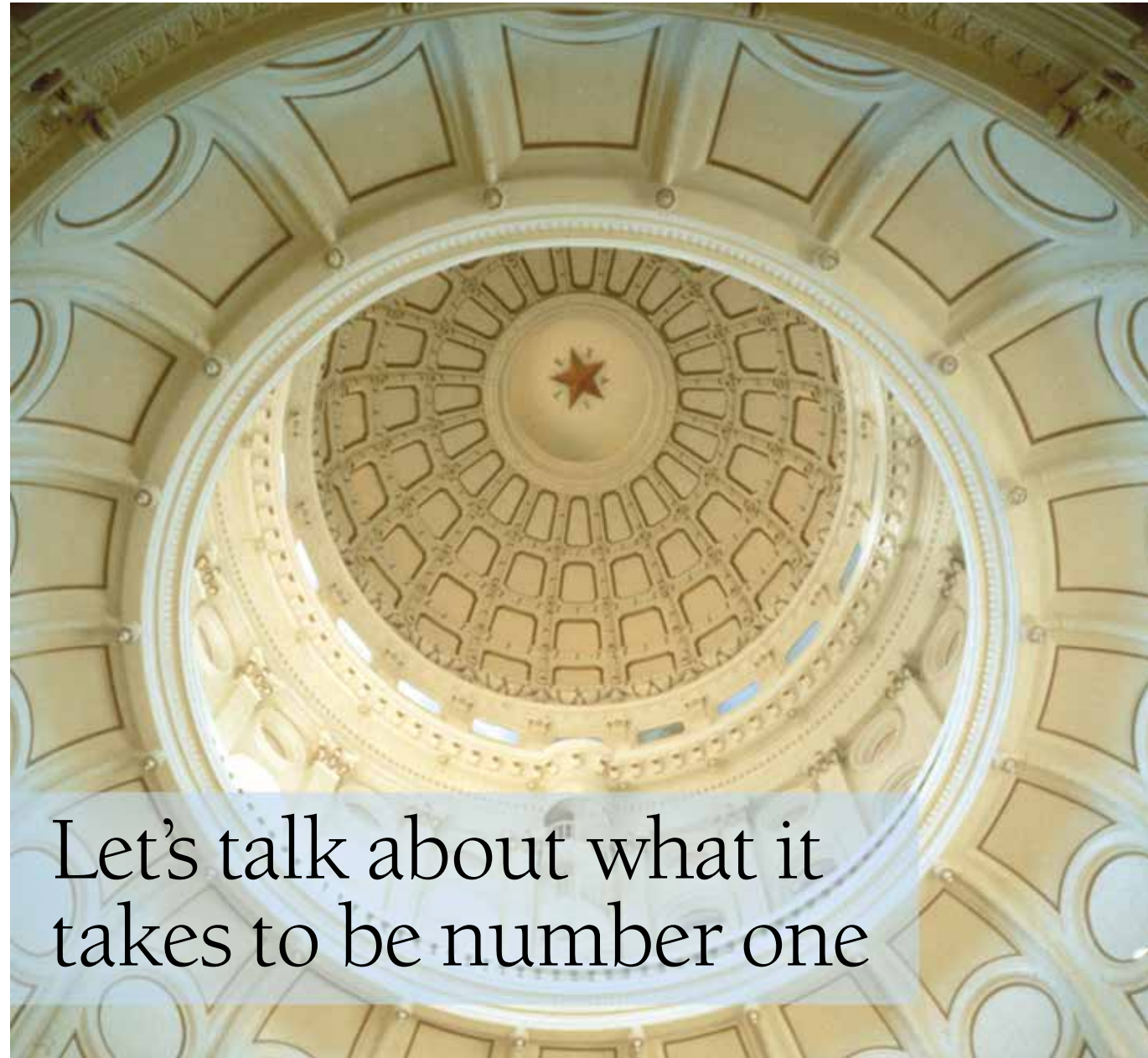
I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above information is true and correct.

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 St., Austin, TX 78701.

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## Let's talk about what it takes to be number one

By Clay Robison, Public Affairs Specialist

During his campaign, Governor-elect Greg Abbott promised to make Texas number one in education, a goal that TSTA strongly endorses, even though Abbott has provided no details about how he intends to get there. With the Legislature set to convene a five-month session on Jan. 13, we are willing to help the next governor start filling in the blanks.

Abbott, the candidate, ran an attractive television ad focusing on an Hispanic student named Miranda, but it didn't say how he would address the educational needs of thousands of Mirandas, who are part of a growing public school enrollment that is now largely Hispanic and low-income.

The governor-elect proposed a limited, pre-kindergarten program that would set a "gold standard" for performance but exclude the vast majority of young children who need it the most. He proposed a limited "bonus" plan for teachers whose students do well on selected tests, an idea that not only ignores the fact that no single teacher alone is responsible for a test score but also flies in the face of public opposition to excessive testing and teaching-to-the-test.

As attorney general, Abbott also spent millions of tax dollars defending an unconstitutional school finance system that includes \$5.4 billion in school budget cuts imposed by the legislative majority in 2011, and he appealed the district court decision that found state funding inadequate and unfair, stalling action for another year or longer. TSTA does not see that as a pathway to becoming number one in education, especially when the state's strong economy is generating billions of dollars in new revenue that could be used to draft a strong school funding plan now without raising anyone's taxes.

"There is no reason, financially, for the Legislature to delay a real school finance remedy," TSTA President Noel

TSTA is eager to work with anyone who truly is committed to great public schools, not misnamed "reform" efforts.

Candelaria said. "Lawmakers need to begin work to develop a reliable school funding plan now, so all our children can have equal educational opportunity."

Dan Patrick, the next lieutenant governor, is a longtime advocate of school vouchers and other privatization schemes and, as a state senator, voted for the 2011 budget cuts.

All that said, we are willing to talk to anyone who is willing to ask the real education experts — those of you who work with our students every day — what it takes to be number one.

TSTA is eager to work with anyone who truly is committed to great public schools, not misnamed "reform" efforts like vouchers, which would weaken public schools for the benefit of a select few students and educational entrepreneurs.

We and other public school advocates will have our work cut out for us on funding and a number of other critical education issues during the upcoming session. Here is a summary of some of our major concerns:

### SCHOOL FUNDING

The bottom line for public education is the state budget. The amount of money legislators appropriate for schools — and how that money is

distributed — affects every education concern, including salaries and health insurance for teachers and support staff, classroom sizes, the availability of pre-kindergarten programs, and the quality of instructional materials and laboratory equipment.

With the help of our members, TSTA and other public school advocates convinced the 2013 Legislature to restore about 80 percent of the \$5.4 billion that was cut from public school budgets in 2011. But with school enrollment in Texas increasing by about 80,000 children a year, school districts, on average, are still spending about \$600 less per student than they did six years ago. Texas' per-pupil spending was more than \$2,600 below the national average during the 2013-14 school year.

In a strongly worded opinion issued this past summer, state District Judge John Dietz of Austin agreed with several hundred school districts and other plaintiffs that the school funding system is inadequate, unfair, and unconstitutional. Dietz believes the Legislature can — and must — do better, and so does TSTA. And the state can afford to do so without raising anyone's taxes.

The Texas economy is strong, generating billions of additional dollars from existing state revenue sources. The comptroller's office reported a 5.5

percent annual growth in sales tax receipts last year, and similar growth is expected this year. The Rainy Day Fund is at \$8.4 billion and will soon swell to double digits, thanks to robust oil and natural gas production.

TESTING AND TEACHER EVALUATIONS

Yielding to the concerns of educators and parents angered over excessive standardized testing, in 2013 the Legislature reduced the number of end-of-course exams required for high school graduation from 15 to five. But there has been no relief in the lower grades, where students as young as third-graders continue to lose valuable learning time as teachers are pressured to teach to the test.

Making matters worse, state Education Commissioner Michael Williams is expected to ask the Legislature to approve a new teacher evaluation system that would use test scores to help determine teacher ratings and compensation. Although numerous research studies demonstrate the flaws in using so-called value-added measures (VAM), such as test scores, to evaluate teacher performance, the state is under pressure from the U.S. Department of Education to impose such an evaluation system.

Williams launched a pilot evaluation system in a limited number of school districts this year in an effort to seek a waiver from some sanctions under the No Child Left Behind Act. TSTA will continue to fight excessive testing and

efforts to link test scores to teacher evaluations.

HEALTH INSURANCE: BENEFIT OR BURDEN?

Thousands of teachers and other school employees saw their health insurance premiums increase again this year. Some teachers with family coverage are paying \$900 or more a month — a huge chunk of their paychecks — for premiums under TRS-ActiveCare, the state health insurance plan. Premiums for some educators have increased by as much as 238 percent since 2002. During that same period, the state hasn't increased its contribution by a dime. The state still contributes only \$75 a month to each educator's health premium, the same amount it paid 12 years ago.

School districts are required to cover at least \$150 of each employee's monthly premium. Some contribute more, but others don't.

"Thousands of dedicated school workers are taking a take-home pay cut every time their health insurance premiums increase, and that's not right," said Ed Martin, TSTA's public affairs director. "Stopping these take-home pay cuts will be a top priority for TSTA this session."

The average teacher in Texas is paid about \$7,000 less than the national average.

The TRS-Care insurance program for retired teachers, many of whom are on fixed incomes, also faces financial diffi-

culties that will require legislative action, Martin said.

TRS PENSIONS

TSTA helped convince legislators in 2013 to strengthen the Teacher Retirement System's defined benefit plan, the only nest egg for many former educators who, under federal law, don't receive Social Security benefits. About two-thirds of retirees — those who retired on or before Aug. 31, 2004 — received a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment, the first COLA since 2001.

The state increased its contribution to the TRS fund by almost \$100 million over two years. Employee contributions also were increased, but they were phased in to avoid an immediate reduction in take-home pay for active teachers, and the employee contribution rate will remain lower than the state and local school district contributions.

Continued protection of TRS pensions will remain a top TSTA priority during the upcoming session. We will continue to fight efforts to convert the defined benefit plan into a risky 401(k) style plan.

VOUCHERS AND OTHER PRIVATIZATION SCHEMES

For several sessions now, TSTA has been instrumental in defeating efforts to siphon tax dollars from public schools to pay for private school vouchers, which would benefit only a handful of students and enrich private school owners. But that fight is far from over. Lieutenant Governor-elect Dan

Patrick is a champion of vouchers, as well as the expansion of corporate-style charter schools, and he will try again.

He will be backed by a cadre of pro-privatization groups and entrepreneurs eager to line their pockets with state tax dollars. Many of these groups will characterize their schemes as "school choice," although, in fact, they would offer no choice to the vast majority of Texas children who will continue to be educated in traditional, neighborhood schools.

HOME RULE

So far, a group attempting to take over Dallas ISD by converting it into a home rule charter district has made only lim-

ited progress, but the issue remains unresolved. The group with the misleading name, Support Our Public Schools, acquired enough signatures to force DISD to appoint a home rule charter commission, but the commission was not able to complete a proposed charter in time to hold a November 2014 election. That means the home rule petition and charter election effort will have to start all over again in Dallas, and home rule advocates could ask the Legislature to change state law to make the conversion process easier.

Under a 1995 state law, which has never been used before, a home rule charter could create a new governance structure abolishing all state public

school standards, including employee contractual and grievance rights, the minimum salary schedule, class size limits, parental rights, and much more.

TSTA opposes the elimination of important education standards and employee safeguards and will fight any attempt to speed up the Dallas effort or encourage similar conversion attempts in other school districts. One of the biggest financial backers of the pro-home rule group in Dallas is John Arnold, a former Enron trader, hedge fund manager, and Houston billionaire who also wants to replace defined-benefits retirement plans for teachers and other public employees with risky 401(k) style investments.



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\*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

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## Ovidia Molina: teachers see the effects of high-stakes tests every day

**The message should be congratulations, you almost passed and you've only been here eight months. Instead, we make them feel like they are stupid.**

The fight to curtail high-stakes testing is personal for Ovidia Molina, who taught ESL English language arts and U.S. history in Alief ISD before taking office as TSTA vice president in July.

When she was student teaching, she asked to be assigned to O'Donnell Middle School, which is surrounded by low-income housing.

"I felt like that's where I needed to be," Molina said. "That's why I became a teacher: I've always just wanted to help people."

She understood her students' struggle. When she came to the United States from El Salvador at age seven, she was demoted to first grade because she didn't know English. She felt isolated and every day she missed her extended family, the grandparents and aunts who helped raise her in El Salvador.

"I told my kids we are never going to be whole — when you're here, you'll want to be with your family there, and when you're there, you'll miss your family here. You just have to be happy with

the half that you have. My students really understood that," Molina said.

"Alief became very diverse very quickly," she said, noting that the Southwest Houston district included students from Africa, Europe, Asia, South America, and Central America.

Molina made her classroom a safety net for her students, finding a common thread among students whose backgrounds and communication skills varied. "We were all from somewhere else, all trying to learn to live in a different place," she said.

She was amazed at the gains they made in academics and confidence — until they took the STAAR tests. She recalled a Vietnamese student who had been in America only eight months when he was tested. Although he passed the math test on the second try, he couldn't pass the reading test.

"The pressure of having to pass a test to move to the next grade is just unbearable for a kid anyway, and then to be tested in a language you're just barely learning when the other kids at school have been studying it for nine years — it's a horrible thing to do to a child," Molina said.

"The message should be congratulations, you almost passed and you've only been here eight months. You're doing great! Instead, we make them feel like they are stupid," she said. "High-stakes testing hurts our students with learning disabilities, too. Not all kids are the same."

Molina's daughter Kalynn struggles

with memory and higher order thinking, as the result of a brain injury from an accident when she was four. After failing the biology test several times, Kalynn considered quitting school because she thought she couldn't get a diploma anyway.

"That's where many of our kids are. They think they can't pass the test, so why not just quit," Molina said.

Instead of focusing on test results, she encouraged her students and her own children to simply "believe." Her daughter, who is now a senior in high school, plans to attend culinary school, and her son Tristan is studying computer technology in college.

"You have to believe in yourself. You have to believe you can do whatever you set your mind to," Molina said.

When Kalynn was four, the family was traveling in El Salvador when a truck hit their car so hard that it rolled over. Kalynn had to learn to talk, walk, and feed herself again.

"I flew out the back window and the car rolled around me," Molina said. "People were helping everyone but me, because they thought I was dead. The fact that I survived made me believe we are all here for a reason, and that fuels me."

She knows the important role teachers play in the lives of their students and regrets that some lawmakers seem to have forgotten that.

"We need to rebuild respect for the professions," Molina said. "I come

from a country — and a time — where teachers and support staff were respected. We need to get that back so we can attract the kind of people who need to be in our classrooms, our schools, and our bus barns."

She joined TSTA because it's a group of people who support one another. "Everybody helps everybody else, and I was attracted to that," Molina said. "Being part of TSTA also made us more knowledgeable, and that made our experience at school a little easier. If someone in the administration said something that was not 100 percent the truth, we could ask questions and get the facts straight. We didn't get as much misinformation."

Running for state vice president was a big step, but "I saw it as another way I could help, just on a bigger scale. Instead of the kids in my classroom, I would be helping all the kids in Texas public schools," she said. "By then, my kids were 18 and 19, and they encouraged me. Having the support of my family made it all come together."

Her goals for her three-year term include helping TSTA-Student Program members make the transition to the classroom and recruiting more TSTA leaders.

"We aren't here forever, but TSTA needs to be. We always need to plan for what, and who, comes next," Molina said.

Her primary goal, not surprisingly, is "to make sure our members know I'm here to help." You can contact her at [ovidiam@tsta.org](mailto:ovidiam@tsta.org).



Working to achieve TSTA’s vision for the future

Committees will share information and tools at the convention



AT THE OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Shown at top is the Compliance Committee with TSTA Vice President Ovidia Molina (standing, right end); at the bottom of this page is the Legislative Committee.

Expect to see ideas for using social media, winning school board elections, being an effective “first responder,” applying for ESP grants, coping with proposed changes in teacher evaluation, and much more at the TSTA Convention in April.

TSTA has 10 state committees. In their reports to the delegation, they will make recommendations in the following areas: member advocacy, legislative, education support professionals, school board policies, special education, teaching profession, political advocacy (not pictured), communications and community outreach, compliance, and credentials, bylaws, and elections (not pictured).

For a list of committee members, see [www.tsta.org/committees](http://www.tsta.org/committees).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Special Education, Member Advocacy, School Board Policies, Teaching Profession, ESP, and Communications and Community Outreach Committees.





## Exemplifying excellence in education

"Sometimes I go to bed stressed out, but I always wake up ready to go back to school. I love this job," said Nick Solis, a fourth grade teacher at Hillcrest Elementary in Del Valle ISD and winner of the H-E-B Leadership Award.

In May, H-E-B honored educators, school districts, early childhood facilities, and school boards for their outstanding commitment to education.

The celebration at Houston's Royal

Sonesta Hotel included a keynote speech by legendary broadcast journalist Tom Brokaw who said, "This is the calling of our generation — to improve education, especially across economic and racial lines."

"It's a noble profession," Solis, who is in his 15th year of teaching, said at the event. "We are creating a new future for ourselves and our kids."

Later, back at school, he reflected on

why he was drawn to teaching. "It's the only job that never gets boring. Every day is different. Every day there are new challenges," he said, adding that he is lucky to work at a school full of people who love working with kids. "They love the kids, and they want to be here. I'm one of those guys, too."

Each year since 2002, H-E-B has presented its Excellence in Education Awards because, "Life and work as a public school teacher in Texas is not

LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER: Nick Solis with H-E-B CEO Charles Butt at the Excellence in Education Awards; top left, Tom Brokaw was the keynote speaker. Photos courtesy of H-E-B.

an easy calling, yet we rarely celebrate great teachers and the enormous impact they have on students and community."

The six winning teachers include one elementary and one secondary teacher in each of three categories:

- Rising Star Award, which honors exceptionally promising teachers with less than 10 years of experience. Winners receive \$5,000 for themselves and a \$5,000 grant for their schools.
- Leadership Award, which honors teachers with 10 to 20 years in the classroom. Winners receive \$10,000 for themselves and a \$10,000 grant for their schools.
- Lifetime Achievement Award, which salutes teachers with more than 20 years of experience. Winners receive \$25,000 for themselves and a \$25,000 grant for their schools.

You can learn more about the H-E-B award application process at <http://bit.ly/1zL7sU5>.

Hear Nick Solis talk about his students <http://bit.ly/1zL7sU5>



## What's a music teacher doing at space camp?

"Learning team building, experimentation, and problem solving skills," Rick Beaulé, a music teacher at West Ward Elementary in Killeen, said.

West Ward is one of 126 NASA Explorer Schools that send teachers to summer camp at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Alabama, where they use the same equipment astronauts use.

"We learned scientific and space concepts — and how to apply them in the classroom — through actual mission simulations, building a rocket, and working through problem-solving scenarios," Beaulé explained.

His favorite simulations were a zipline parachute jump, and a helicopter crash and rescue that was run by actual U.S. fighter pilots.

"One of the more difficult things for me was translating all of the science concepts into ideas that work in a music classroom," Beaulé said. "I was

the only music teacher out of nearly 30 teachers in my group. I had to think fast to find ways to contribute."

He has found several ways to apply what he learned to his music classes; for example, a paper-folding exercise that showed the relative distances between planets worked well for showing rhythms. And he ran an acoustical dampening experiment for West Ward's annual Space Week celebration.

Meeting former shuttle pilots, rocket engineers, and Homer Hickam, the NASA engineer whose book "Rocket Boys" was the basis for the movie "October Sky," were experiences Beaulé said he would never forget, but what he prized most was the teamwork.

"The intensity of the experience caused me to make friends that I would gladly invite to stay at my house, even after only knowing them for a week," he said. "Good people, good teaching, and a great cause."



# TSTA Back Home Lobbying Project moves forward

Backed by a grant from NEA, TSTA-Retired will work with TSTA's Public Affairs Division to lobby legislators "back home" during the 2015 Legislature.

Critical issues to be considered this session include retiree and active health care, public school funding, and retention of the Teacher Retirement System defined benefit pension program.

Health insurance for both retired and active school employees is sorely underfunded. Absent additional funds, both groups will be forced to pick up huge premium increases.

State funding for active employee health insurance — currently \$75 per month — has not increased since 2002, forcing repeated premium increases.

Due to unpredictable schedules, late night hearings, and travel distances, it can be difficult for retired members to be in Austin, but for much of the session, legislators are "back home" for three- to four-day weekends, where TSTA-R members can meet with them, in addition to organizing calls and emails.

Many critical issues — including student testing, teacher evaluations tied

to test scores, and vouchers — are considered by local school boards, and TSTA-R will be helping with those lobby efforts as well.

TSTA-R is a political powerhouse, with members in every region of the state. As part of its 2015 strategy, the group will reach out to more than 1,000 retired NEA members who taught in other states but now live in Texas and may be interested in helping with lobby efforts.

For more information on the Back Home Lobbying Project, contact staff consultant Gerald Haschke at [geraldh@tsta.org](mailto:geraldh@tsta.org).



Education Austin and Del Valle Education Association get out the vote for their endorsed school board candidates.

## LOCALS WIN IN MANY KEY SCHOOL BOARD RACES

TSTA supports local associations that endorse and work to elect school board candidates who will work with us to provide the kind of classroom environment, pay and benefits, and other district policies needed to provide a first-class education.

Seven TSTA locals endorsed a total of 24 candidates in non-partisan elections held Nov. 4, and we made real progress.

Candidates endorsed by our locals in Brownsville, Austin, Edgewood, Laredo United, Mercedes, Edinburg, and Del Valle won in 11 of 22 races. Two more endorsed candidates were ahead going into the December runoff elections, so the final tally could be 13 of 24. And at least three locals should come out of the election with a Board majority that will work closely with our members on important policy decisions.



"There is power in numbers. When we work together, TSTA becomes a powerful voice for public education, students, and all of us who work in the public schools."

Alejandra Lightner, Region 1C president and member of Laredo-United TSTA/NEA



"TSTA staff and leaders provide training and guidance to help us negotiate more effectively for our members."

Karen Barnes, education support professional representative on both the NEA and TSTA Boards of Directors and member of Education Austin (shown with fellow TSTA Board member Norman Quigley)



"A teacher should not be evaluated based on a single standardized test score. TSTA is working for a fair and constructive evaluation process."

Jessica Powell, Region 3D president and member of Cy-Fair TSTA/NEA

**Around the state**

Members often tell us what attracted them to TSTA is it feels like family. Our locals are busy making a difference for public education and employees every day, but sometimes it's the little things that bring us together: 10-minute meetings, back-to-school socials, and sharing concerns that may become organizing issues.



Lubbock Educators Association had a great exchange of ideas at Smith Elementary School.



North East Education Association held a back-to-school social.



Education Abilene worked on local issues at a fall meeting.



Cy-Fair TSTA/NEA welcomed members with a social.



Beaumont Teachers Association planned for the new school year.



San Marcos Educators TSTA hosted a back-to-school social at the Railyard Grill.



Alief TSTA/NEA held its monthly 10-minute meeting at O'Donnell Middle School.



TSTA STUDENT PROGRAM: Bottom left, TSTA members take the Degrees Not Debt pledge during a game at the Alamodome in San Antonio; student members at the University of Houston-Clear Lake and Brazosport College learn about NEA's Degrees Not Debt campaign from Rita Haecker, former TSTA president who is now on the NEA staff (right end, back row) and TSTA Vice President Ovidia Molina (center, back row).

## Student Program: Degrees Not Debt campaign begins

The TSTA-Student Program kicked off the Degrees not Debt campaign in Texas at Brazosport College and the University of Houston-Clear Lake by holding workshops sponsored by NEA. Students learned how to enroll in programs to lower student loan payments and public service loan forgiveness programs.

At the event, hundreds of college students signed the pledge to lower student debt. Between Nov. 10-18, NEA members across the country will be hosting campus-based and community events to spread the word about college debt and provide resources on how to kick that debt.

Student members all over Texas are joining the effort to make college more affordable. If you haven't already, take the pledge to lower student debt at [www.nea.org/degreesnotdebt](http://www.nea.org/degreesnotdebt).

The student chapter hit the ground running this school year by recruiting many new members, participating in professional development, and engaging the community.

Texas Wesleyan University (District 4), University of Texas at El Paso (District 6), and University of Houston-Clear Lake (District 3) held their district conventions in October and November. Each offered students an array of professional development opportunities, including classroom management, interviewing skills, and crafts.

When attending these conventions, I was empowered by how much my generation of teachers truly cares about becoming the best teachers they can be. As a whole, we are determined to learn the most effective teaching strategies and want to provide our stu-

dents with the most inclusive and positive learning environment. These conventions reflect our purpose and room to grow.

Student members will have another opportunity to continue their learning at the TSTA-Student Program state convention in Austin on Feb. 27-March 1. Every year, members look forward to this event, and we are hoping for the greatest turnout yet.

—Katie Bruno, TSTA-Student Program president

### TSTA-RETIRED: STAY AWARE AND STAY INVOLVED

It's hard to believe the school year is nearly half over; there is still so much to do. As educators, both active and retired, our most important concern is the upcoming legislative session.

With the elections behind us, it is time to start lobbying our legislators on those issues that will impact all educators — insurance being at the top of the list.

Retiree TRS Care is not a given. It must be approved by the Legislature every two years. We will have to work hard to keep our premiums at an affordable level. Other issues will come up; please stay alert and prepared to help when needed.

We've just learned the NEA Retired Organizing Conference will be March 24-26 at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. With a theme of "Organize, Educate, and Lead," it's open to all NEA-Retired members who would like to learn to organize their communities to advance the cause of public education.

The event will feature national speakers, skill development, and knowledge building as well as opportunities to network with peers. You can find information on registration and reservations at [www.nea.org/grants/54535.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/54535.htm).

Nominations are open for the TSTA-Retired President and Vice-President (form on page 9), as well as delegates to the TSTA House of Delegates (HOD) in Frisco in April and NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando in June. Nomination forms were in the Fall 2014 Advocate and can also be found on the TSTA website.

TSTA-R has a beautiful quilt to be raffled away at the TSTA HOD. Its ticket sales are the primary fundraiser for our organization. Tickets are \$2 and can be purchased from any member of the TSTA-R Board of Directors. If you would like to help sell tickets, contact your Regional President.

I am so proud of our Regional Retired Presidents and their local Board members, who have been working so hard to generate membership and get members involved not only in TSTA-R, but also in other things that impact their lives, such as politics.

Activities and meetings are happening in most of the regions; the following are just a few examples:

- El Paso has drafted plans to increase membership and applied for an NEA grant. They have already begun implementing their plans and I anticipate many good things to come. If you want to be involved in the activities in the El Paso Retired Region, contact Paul Haupt.
- The San Antonio Region met on Oct. 14 to plan this year's activities. President Barbara Franklin brought many good ideas to be discussed.

All retired members in that region have received mailers and calls to inform them of upcoming meetings. They have selected two areas to focus on — membership and political activities — and have set their first event: a "Get to Know the Candidates" breakfast where members have an opportunity to meet newly elected officials.

- The Dallas Region has always been one of our most active regions. They have monthly meetings, conduct workshops, and keep their members actively involved about Retired issues. President Geraldine Williams works hard to ensure that the members are kept informed.
- Capitol Area Retired Educators, which includes Austin and the surrounding area, is also an active group. They meet on a regular basis and will be an important part of our lobbying effort since they are closest to Austin. President Patricia Budak is our liaison to the Teacher Retirement System, attending meetings and making sure TSTA-R is aware of what is happening in that arena.

In closing, please do not forget the importance of staying in contact with your legislators in person, by phone, or by email. Our main focus will be funding for TRS Care. We need to make sure our premiums are not increased dramatically. Stay aware and stay involved!

—Louise Watkins, TSTA-Retired President

# How you can help students feel connected

By Bryan Weatherford, TSTA Teaching and Learning Specialist



Protective factors are defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “individual or environmental characteristics that reduce the effects of stressful life events, increase a person’s ability to avoid risks or hazards, and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life.”

School connectedness — the degree to which students and their families feel part of the school community — is an important protective factor. Research shows that students who feel connected are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and more likely to achieve academically.

CDC has outlined strategies and specific actions teachers and other staff can take to help their students feel connected.

**STRATEGY 1:** Create processes that

engage students, families, and communities and that facilitate academic achievement.

- Brainstorm and get involved in taking steps to improve the school climate and students’ sense of connectedness to school. Involve diverse groups of school staff, students, and families in these efforts.
- Help plan school policies and activities with teams of students, faculty, staff, and parents.
- Encourage students to talk openly with school staff and parents. Involve students in parent-teacher conferences, teacher evaluation, curriculum selection committees, and school health teams.

**STRATEGY 2:** Provide opportunities for families to be actively involved in their children’s academic and school life.

- Engage parents in meaningful ways in school activities, such as school health teams, tutoring, mentoring, or assisting with grant writing. Identify special opportunities for parents with limited resources or scheduling difficulties to participate in or contribute to classroom or extracurricular activities.
- Seek opportunities for parents and students to share their culture with others in school.
- Communicate regularly with families about school and classroom activities and policies by email, letters, or updates on the school’s website.
- Translate materials into languages spoken in students’ homes.
- Establish regular meetings with parents to discuss their children’s behavior, grades, and accomplishments.
- Request interpreters as needed to ensure clear communication and to avoid misunderstandings arising from language barriers.

**STRATEGY 3:** Provide students with the academic, emotional, and social skills they need to engage in school.

- Provide opportunities for students to improve their interpersonal, stress management, and decision-making skills.
- Foster critical and reflective thinking, problem solving, and working effectively with others.
- Allow and encourage students to identify, label, express, and assess their feelings.

- Use classroom and extracurricular activities to explore and discuss empathy, personal strengths, fairness, kindness, and social responsibility.
- Use interactive, experiential activities, and help students personalize the information they learn.
- Encourage students to be involved in service learning, peer tutoring, classroom chores, teacher assistance, extracurricular activities, sports programs, and creative projects. Provide public recognition for students’ accomplishments in these areas.
- Correct inaccurate perceptions about what are “normal” behaviors among students. For example, compare the number of students who actually smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol with the perception that “everyone is doing it.”
- Help students identify their career and personal goals and map out the steps they can take to meet them.

**STRATEGY 4:** Use effective classroom management and teaching methods to foster a positive learning environment.

- Clearly communicate expectations for learning and behavior that are developmentally appropriate and applied equitably. Describe the goals of the lesson and relate them to your students’ lives and the real world.
- Ensure lessons are linked to standards and that student learning is sequential and builds upon prior lessons.
- Be flexible with instructional strategies to allow for teachable moments and personalization of lessons.
- Use student-centered pedagogy and appropriate classroom management

and discipline strategies that meet students’ diverse needs and learning styles.

- Engage students in appropriate leadership positions and decision-making processes in the classroom and school.
- Establish a reward system for both academic and extracurricular achievements, but also encourage the intrinsic rewards of learning and excelling in extracurricular programs.
- Fairly enforce reasonable and consistent disciplinary policies.
- Encourage open, respectful communication about differing viewpoints.
- Advocate for class-size reduction to ensure more time for individualized assistance.

**STRATEGY 5:** Participate in professional development opportunities to enhance your abilities to meet the diverse needs of your students.

- Further develop your expertise in child and adolescent development, and share lessons learned with other school staff to increase understanding about the needs of the students.
- Participate in professional development opportunities on implementing required school curricula, using effective teaching methods, and organizing the classroom and school to promote a positive environment.
- Attend workshops and trainings on communicating effectively with and involving parents in school activities, and share ideas for involving parents with other staff at your school.
- Request materials, time, resources, and support to use the skills you learn in training.

- Form learning teams to observe experienced teachers who effectively manage classrooms and facilitate group work.
- Coach or mentor other teachers and staff to develop effective teaching techniques and classroom management strategies, and engage in creative problem-solving.

**STRATEGY 6:** Promote open communication, trust, and caring among school staff, families, and community partners.

- Communicate expectations, values, and norms that support positive health and academic behaviors to your peers throughout the school community.
- Provide opportunities for students of all levels to interact, develop friendships, and engage in teamwork.
- Support student clubs and activities that promote a positive school climate, such as gay-straight alliances and multi-cultural clubs.
- Create opportunities for students to partner with and help adults, such as internships and service learning projects.
- Commit to and model respectful behavior toward principals, other teachers, and school staff.
- Challenge all school staff to greet each student by name.
- Encourage teachers, counselors, health service professionals, coaches, and other school staff to build stronger relationships with students who are experiencing academic or personal issues.
- Request access to a school counselor, psychologist, or other expert for consultations or student referrals when needed.



# Frisco hosts the 136th annual TSTA Convention

This year’s convention will be held in Frisco on April 10-11. All convention events will take place at the Embassy Suites Frisco, a comfortable, all-suite property including complimentary cook-to-order breakfast and evening manager’s reception. The House of Delegates will begin Friday afternoon and continue throughout Saturday. Voting will take place Saturday morn-

ing. Additional information and convention updates will be posted on the TSTA website in the members only, “Leaders Login” area.

**BECOME A DELEGATE**

The House of Delegates (HoD) serves a vital role in the governance of TSTA and helps to shape the future of our organization. The HoD may establish

goals for TSTA, amend its bylaws, and act on recommendations from the TSTA officers, board, or committees. TSTA statewide elections are held at the HoD annual meeting. This year delegates will elect the NEA Director for Texas, Place 2, and if necessary, at-large members of the TSTA Board of Directors.

Please contact your local president for details on how delegates are elected in your local. Delegate allocations are based on membership totals as of Jan. 15. Local delegate election results must be reported to TSTA by March 15.

**REGISTRATION**

Registration for the convention begins at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, April 10, and continues to Saturday, April 11. All TSTA members and guests are welcome to attend the convention, but only delegates with proper delegate badges are allowed in the designated delegate section and voting area. Non-delegates/alternates and guests are encouraged to register.

**HEARINGS AND WORKSHOPS**

Open hearings will be held Friday morning on the proposed 2015-16 TSTA budget and any proposed bylaws amendments or NEA Resolutions. Additional topics may be added. Professional development workshops eligible for continuing education credit also will be offered on Friday.

**HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Embassy Suites Frisco is holding a

room block for TSTA convention attendees. Reserve your room directly with the hotel by **March 15, 2015**, to ensure your room at the group rate of \$156 (plus tax). This rate includes full breakfast and evening reception. All rooms include a separate bedroom and living room with sofa bed, microwave, and refrigerator. Self parking is free. The hotel is within walking distance of Stonebriar Centre, which houses a movie theater, restaurants, and shopping.

Make your reservation by using the Online Passkey link posted in the Conventions and Conferences section under the For Members tab of the TSTA website ([www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org)). If you would like the link emailed to you or need help with making reservations, please contact Jan Parks at [janp@tsta.org](mailto:janp@tsta.org) or call TSTA’s Center for Executive and Governance at 800-324-5355, ext. 1543.

The hotel is 23 miles from DFW Airport and 22 miles from Dallas Love Field Airport. You must make your own arrangements for transportation between the airport and hotel.

One-way ground transportation is approximately \$65 for taxi service or \$32 for individual shuttle service. Round trip shuttle discounts may be available. Exclusive van service is around \$90 for up to 10 passengers. Shuttle reservations should be made through SuperShuttle at 800-BLUE-VAN or [www.supershuttle.com](http://www.supershuttle.com).

**SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

Members who do not have a roommate but would like to share accommodations should contact TSTA’s Center for Executive and Governance (CEG) at 800-324-5355, ext. 1543 or 1514, **before** making your hotel reservation. We will attempt to match members who want to share expenses, though we cannot guarantee a roommate for everyone.

Physically challenged delegates or delegates who have special needs should contact the CEG no later than **March 27, 2015**, to arrange assistance during

the convention. Payment for special needs requests such as wheelchairs or transportation is the responsibility of the member or delegate, but TSTA will help arrange for services.

**TSTA HOST COMMITTEE**

TSTA would like to thank this year’s host committee for their efforts to help ensure a successful and fun convention. The host committee members, appointed by President Candelaria, are: Angela Davis, Evelina Loya, Winifred Jackson, Lisa Wingo, Norman Quigley, Delna Bryan, and Anna Louise Watkins.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE	
<b>Thursday, April 9</b>	
8:00 a.m. . . . .	Advisory Committee Meeting
1:30 p.m. . . . .	Board of Directors Meeting
6:00 p.m. . . . .	Candidates Meeting
<b>Friday, April 10</b>	
7:00 a.m. . . . .	Registration
8:00 a.m. . . . .	Special Interest Exhibits
8:00 a.m. . . . .	Open Hearings
9:15 a.m. . . . .	Professional Development Workshops (CPE Credit)
10:30 a.m. . . . .	Professional Development Workshops (CPE Credit)
12:30 p.m. . . . .	Parliamentary Procedures Workshop
2:00 p.m. . . . .	House of Delegates Opening Ceremony and Meeting
<b>Saturday, April 11</b>	
6:30 a.m. . . . .	Registration
7:00 a.m. . . . .	Regional/TSTA-Student Program/TSTA-Retired Meetings
8:00 a.m. . . . .	Special Interest Exhibits
8:30 a.m. . . . .	Voting/Elections
10:00 a.m. . . . .	House of Delegates Meeting
12:30 p.m. . . . .	Lunch and Recognized Caucus Meetings
2:00 p.m. . . . .	House of Delegates Meeting

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Signature of Nominee

## Texas State Teachers Association

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"Sometimes I go to bed stressed out, but I always wake up ready to go back to school. I love this job."

Nick Solis, fourth grade teacher at Hillcrest Elementary in Del Valle ISD  
and winner of the H-E-B Leadership Award at the elementary level

