



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TSTA launches statewide, “Invest, not Test” media campaign

The Texas State Teachers Association today launched a rolling, statewide campaign, beginning with television spots in El Paso, to remind policymakers that our children’s education is about much more than teaching to the test.

According to a bipartisan poll sponsored by TSTA in March, the top two things most Texans want for improving our schools are not vouchers or other privatization schemes. What Texans really want are:

- A real investment in our children’s neighborhood public schools; and
- A reduction in standardized testing.

TSTA is launching its [“Invest, not Test”](#) campaign in El Paso, where parents and community leaders — like parents and community leaders across the state — recognize the importance of local schools. Funded with a \$174,000 media grant from the National Education Association, “Invest, Not Test” will become a statewide effort, fueled by social media, over the next several weeks.

“We don’t have standardized students, and education is about more than a standardized test score,” TSTA President Noel Candelaria said. “Testing takes away time that teachers and students need for real teaching and learning, and we are launching this campaign to focus on the issue that matters most to our kids: making a real investment in their future.”

“It is time to invest, not test, and that means investing in our neighborhood schools, not imposing so-called reforms that would turn our neighborhood schools over to for-profit operators that aren’t accountable to local taxpayers,” he added.

When 800 Texas voters were polled by TSTA in March, they — both Democrats and Republicans — said the two most important things that could be done to improve education were to increase teacher pay to attract more highly qualified individuals to the classroom and reduce high-stakes standardized testing. An overwhelming majority also said education funding should be increased.

The new state budget approved by the Texas House would add \$3 billion to public education, over and above what is needed to cover enrollment growth. That is about twice as much as the Senate approved in additional school funding and is a step in the right direction. But both budgets would leave billions of available dollars unspent or dedicated to tax reductions while Texas continues to rank near the bottom of states in per-pupil spending and teacher salaries.

The average teacher salary in Texas is about \$6,900 below the national average, according to recent National Education Association rankings. Some 83 percent of all respondents to the TSTA poll — and 76 percent of Republican primary voters — said they favored increasing teacher pay by \$7,000 to meet the national average.

Attached is a video of TSTA's ["Invest, not Test"](#) ad, which launched today on television in El Paso.