



Newsroom>News Releases

## TSTA/NEA News Releases

TSTA and NEA hold news conferences throughout the year to keep the public informed on education issues. Here are some of our recent releases.

April 28, 2006

### Study: Almost Half of Texas Teachers Could Leave Profession

Statement by Donna New Haschke, TSTA President: Almost half of Texas teachers, a record high 46%, are considering leaving the profession, according to a new study conducted this year by Sam Houston State University. Among teachers who may leave the profession, 36% cited compensation and another 36% cited working conditions as key factors that may drive them from the classroom.

Given the fact that the State has not increased teacher pay and benefits and has not taken sufficient steps to ease overcrowding or provide up-to-date textbooks and technology, the alarming figures from the biannual "Texas Teachers, Moonlighting, and Morale" report are not surprising.

The report, conducted by David and Travis Henderson, has tracked teachers' attitudes every two years since 1980. This year's report is especially disturbing because an exodus of teachers leaving the profession could compound the problem posed by having 53,000 Texas classrooms staffed today by inappropriately certified teachers, and that doesn't count the number of classrooms staffed by long-term substitutes.

As the legislature considers school finance this year, 33% of Texas teachers are moonlighting an average of 11 hours a week just to make ends meet, even though 67% believe an extra job has a negative impact on their teaching performance. On average, those teachers would need to make an additional \$6,811 to avoid taking an extra job.

According to the report, the "average" Texas teacher is a 43-year-old female with a bachelor's degree, makes \$42,654, has a working spouse, and spends an average of \$552 per year for school supplies out of her own pocket. Forty-one percent of Texas teachers are the family breadwinner.

Today's teacher spends an average of 12.4 hours a week working at home, the most "homework" time spent since the survey began, but 69% still don't feel like they have time to prepare. The top problems teachers face are discipline (53%) and paperwork (39%). Regarding the emphasis on standardized tests, only 7% believe a single test should be used for student promotion.

The problems that face Texas teachers every day should be a top priority of legislators considering school funding. Changes in the way we operate our schools must address the threat of a more severe teacher shortage and avoid any actions like incentives or eliminating rights and benefits that would make things even worse. Education "reform" that doesn't focus on creating a quality teaching force is doomed to fail our students.

April 20, 2006

### Education Groups Ask Legislators to Listen to the Public

We stand united, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members after three years and five sessions, with new revenue options, a substantial surplus, a strong call to act from the people, and a Supreme Court decision demanding action, and ask this question, if not now, when?



#### Today's Headlines:

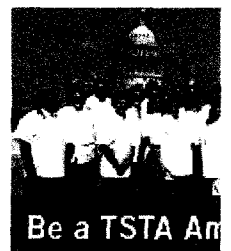
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The public education community has been working in their communities and with their legislators to identify, illuminate, and solve the issues facing Texas schools. Since 2004, the Coalition to Invest in Texas Schools, representing eleven school leadership organizations, and TSTA, ATPE, TCTA, TFT, TEPISA, and TASSP have joined with other concerned groups and citizens to seek lasting solutions to school funding for the 4.5 million children we serve.

Recent events have raised the need for meaningful action to a critical level. The Supreme Court of Texas has recognized that the current property tax system is so overburdened that it has become unconstitutional, and is clearly not providing school districts the means to fulfill obligations to the school children of Texas. The court has ordered the unconstitutional system to be shut down on June 1<sup>st</sup> if real solutions are not provided by the legislature.

The citizens of Texas are making their wishes known as well. Throughout the state, in opinion polls and in the voting booth, Texans are sending the message loud and clear that educating the children of Texas is, as it always has been, a top priority.

We know that legislators and state leaders of parties have recognized the need for action. In legislative districts all over this state, citizens, parents, educators, and legislators have discussed the real issues of school funding. We have seen several new and interesting ideas, from proposals by individual legislators and other state leaders that are good steps toward meaningful dialogue and more lasting solutions. We came to this special session with real optimism.

We are here before you today gravely concerned about the future of the children of Texas. Many of the bills filed and being considered in committees thus far will not accomplish the work required by the courts and demanded by the public.

The legislature needs to accomplish three basic tasks:

- Establish a school finance system that gives local school districts meaningful discretion in using local property taxes to finance education;
- Provide a meaningful, fully funded teacher pay raise, along with restoration of the healthcare supplement for all school employees; and
- Provide meaningful property tax relief.

None of these goals is more or less important than the other. All three are vital to providing a stable, reasonable, constitutional education system for our children. With an \$8.2 billion surplus and a \$5 billion tax bill on the table, it's time to support the public school children of Texas. We ask again, if not now, when?

#### **Associations Present at Today's Press Conference**

- Texas Association of School Administrators
- Texas Association of School Boards
- Equity Center
- South Texas Association of Schools
- Texas Association of Community Schools
- Texas Association of Mid-Size Schools
- Texas Association of Rural Schools

