



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

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Contact: Clay Robison, TSTA Public Affairs  
512.476.5355, ext. 1233; clayr@tsta.org  
Cell: 512.535.8994

## **TSTA: Dewhurst out of touch with teachers**

In remarks to The Texas Tribune today, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst demonstrated he is out of touch with the needs of Texas teachers, ignores their financial reality and doesn't understand what effective classroom instruction requires.

Dewhurst wrongly said that the average teacher salary in Texas is "a little north of (more than) \$50,000" and, when national cost-of-living differences are factored in, "Texas pays our school teachers well above a 50 percent median."

"To David Dewhurst, a teacher's classroom may as well be a foreign land," said Texas State Teachers Association President Rita Haecker. "Teachers are dedicated professionals who work under difficult circumstances that state leaders should try to improve, not dismiss with inaccurate statements designed to cover up their failure to provide for our children's classrooms."

Dewhurst also suggested the state may consider more online instruction "so we can give our children the best education possible."

"Technology is essential in 21<sup>st</sup> century education," Haecker said. "But the heart of a world-class education is a classroom teacher who can give students the individual attention at the heart of the learning experience."

### **FACT CHECK:**

- The average teacher pay in Texas for the 2012-13 school year, the most recent data available, was \$48,110 — more than \$8,000 below the national average.
- Far from ranking in "the median," Texas ranked 38<sup>th</sup> among the states and D.C. in teacher pay.
- The average Texas teacher pay dropped by \$528 following the \$5.4 billion in school budget cuts imposed by Dewhurst and the legislative majority during the 2011 session.
- According to a Sam Houston State University survey commissioned by TSTA last spring, the cost of living in Texas cities is high enough that 44 percent of Texas teachers take second jobs during the school year to make ends meet, and the average Texas teacher spends \$697 a year out of pocket for school supplies because the school finance system is so poorly funded.