

Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

SPRING 2006

VOTE!
Ballot Inside

The Wages of Teaching

No school administrator should ever receive a percentage raise greater than the raise teachers get. Neither should state legislators.

By Anna Quindlen



Why Don't Teachers Support Merit Pay?



On February 1, Education Commissioner Shirley Neeley sent out a press release unveiling "The Governor's Educator Excellence Award Program." Under an Executive Order to implement a merit pay plan since

last fall, the Commissioner has attempted to formulate a plan to distribute \$10 million of federal grant funds to 100 campuses (of 7800 total statewide). These campuses, which include charter schools, have high percentages of economically disadvantaged students who have demonstrated high levels of student achievement or have marked student improvement. The schools must have been rated exemplary or recognized or have shown strong performance gains in the areas of math and reading. As with most merit pay plans, funds are limited and all who would be eligible will not receive the bonuses. At a time when Texas teachers are working so hard for so little—and with no statewide pay raise since 1999—this plan is bound to be divisive, hurtful, and downright unfair.

Gordon Gauthier, middle school teacher and president of the Deer Park Education Association, wrote this letter to selected state legislators recently. I share it with you because I couldn't have said it better myself.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna".

Remember Career Ladder? It was a merit pay system based on observable teacher behaviors that failed for one reason—lack of money. Teachers who deserved to be rewarded weren't because there wasn't enough state money available to school districts to make career ladder work as it was intended.

It's not that teachers don't want to work hard; they work harder than ever to help students meet continually increasing performance standards. The question is whose work will be evaluated under the proposed merit pay system? The teachers'? How a student performs on a test depends on many factors outside the control of teachers—home environment, prior learning, mental ability, and so on. Is merit pay based on students' test performance a fair way to reward teachers? Yes, if every child has exactly the same IQ, ancestry, upbringing, socioeconomic conditions, health, diet, prior learning, mental ability, and so on.

The idea that education could be compared to an assembly line is seriously flawed. Education is not a product, it is a process. Each child learns differently because each child is different. If no two children learn the same way and at the same rate, why would anyone think the results of every child's education would be the same? Any parent who has more than one child knows that one child may talk or walk earlier than another. Learning is a developmental process continuing from birth to death.

Some might say that assembling a car is a process, too. However, cars coming off an assembly line are basically the same. The auto company has quality control over parts, equipment, and personnel. Should a worker who installs a single part be rewarded (or not) based on the quality of the entire car? The worker has no control over the quality of the work done before the car reaches him. He has no control over the quality of the parts he must install. The process is controlled from beginning to end but not by just one worker. The quality of the finished car is determined by the sum of everyone's efforts. It is a team approach. Then the customer chooses which car he wants in his garage.

Teachers cannot choose which children they want in their classrooms. There are no "quality controls" to make sure each child is "top of the line" material. Teachers accept all children into their classrooms.

The process of educating a child begins before birth and continues well beyond the influence of a single teacher. When it comes to education, the assembly line analogy is invalid. Giving teachers merit pay based on a student's test performance is the same as assessing one person's job performance based on how another person does their job!

Also, how can a sixth grade social studies teacher or an art or P.E. teacher receive merit pay based on students' performance when social studies isn't tested until eighth grade and art and P.E. aren't tested at all? Who gets the money for their hard work?

Since Texas has a severe shortage of highly qualified, properly-certified teachers, wouldn't it make more sense to use state funds to increase teachers' salaries to a level that will attract the best people to the education profession and keep experienced teachers from leaving? Let's return the promised \$1000 health insurance stipend to every education employee. Let's fund a retirement system that respects teachers by increasing benefits and creating cost-of-living increases. And let's fund an across-the-board pay raise for all Texas teachers before we consider a merit pay plan for less than 5% of them!



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Eva Gonzalez, President Donna New Haschke, Rita Haecker, and Glenda Hawthorne pose with Carole Strayhorn (center) at the TSTA Board meeting

TSTA Backs Strayhorn for Governor

“I could care less what your political affiliation is. What I care about is getting something done in this state, and education is number one.”

“Texas schoolchildren and teachers need a Governor who can forge a bipartisan education funding plan,” TSTA President Donna New Haschke told the media, in announcing TSTA’s decision to recommend state Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn for Governor. “We cannot wait another four years for a Governor with the vision, the skills, and the plan to give our schools the resources they need to succeed. We believe that Carole Keeton Strayhorn is the right person, at the right time, to make that happen.”

The TSTA-Political Action Committee

and TSTA Board of Directors voted overwhelmingly in January to recommend Strayhorn; she visited the January 28 Board meeting to take questions and talk about her plans.

“There is no shortfall in the budget. There’s a shortfall in leadership,” she said, in reference to the nine regular and special legislative sessions that have failed to come up with a solution for funding public schools. “We don’t need to study school finance. We need to fix school finance.”

"We're at a critical crossroads. I do not believe Rick Perry believes in public schools. He has consciously and deliberately undermined our public schools. The height of hypocrisy is the 65% solution," she charged. (See www.tsta.org/news/current/65%25.shtml for background.)

A former Austin high school teacher, school board member, and PTA activist, Strayhorn fully recognizes that Texas educators are "underpaid and underappreciated." **She called for a \$3000 across-the-board increase now for every teacher with an automatic adjustment each biennium, plus a \$2,500 bonus for every teacher on a campus that moves from low performing to academically acceptable.** With that and a good retirement plan, she said, "We'd have no shortage of teachers."

She addressed the repeated attempts by some factions to push private school vouchers. "As Governor, I will veto any plan that puts a single dollar into vouchers," she pledged.

"In my administration, teachers will be the first at the table," Strayhorn said, assuring support professionals that, "I did battle, in my school board days as well as my Texas School Performance days, looking out for support staff just like we did teachers."

"Nothing is more important than education, and nothing is more important to me than having the endorsement of the TSTA," said Strayhorn, who aims to be the first Independent governor since Sam Houston. "I'm a 66-year-old grandmother and I'm not looking for a career in politics. I'm looking for a future for our kids and our state."



WHY CAROLE STRAYHORN?

- At heart, Carole Strayhorn, a former classroom teacher, is an educator.
- She served on the Austin ISD school board from 1972-1977 and was president of the board in 1976-1977.
- She has made her passion for public education the cornerstone of her political career.
- As Comptroller she has helped many school districts with financial performance reviews and recommended ways to save millions of dollars that could be used for student programs or employee benefits.
- In 2003 when the Governor was bragging about a no-tax increase budget, Strayhorn was decrying the fact that he had balanced the state budget on the backs of school teachers and the most vulnerable Texans, our children.
- In 2004 Comptroller Strayhorn released a Special Report on "The Cost of Underpaying Texas Teachers."
- Whether talking to the TSTA convention or a convention of business representatives, Strayhorn has consistently made the case that Texas teachers are underpaid and underappreciated.



Texans Want More Money for Public Schools

Voters in Texas identify public education as the top priority for state government, TSTA's new bipartisan poll, released in February, shows. Texans also believe that to give our children the excellent education they deserve we should increase state education funding and fully fund the state education reforms that already are in place.

Voters continue to believe that state education standards for public schools should be increased, and that the best way to achieve that is to increase teacher pay, hire more and better teachers, and reduce class sizes.

"For more than three years, many state leaders have stuck their head in the sand and ignored the majority of Texans who want the state to make a real

commitment to supporting and improving our children's schools," TSTA President Donna New Haschke told reporters February 21 at TSTA Headquarters.

"Recently, the Governor and many in the legislative leadership have said it's just too much to expect more from a 30-day special session than another 'revenue neutral' plan that merely swaps higher state taxes for property tax relief, with none of the new state tax dollars going out to schoolchildren and their teachers. The public disagrees," she said. "This bipartisan survey, conducted by two of the nation's most respected pollsters, shows that the leadership's greatest failure has been insisting on doing too little instead of

trying to do too much for our schools.

"With the primaries at hand and another special session looming ahead, candidates and officeholders would be wise to review the results of a bipartisan poll of 803 active Texas voters," Haschke noted. **"On every key policy choice, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans opt for more investment in Texas public schools."** Some key poll findings include:

- Public education remains the top state priority: 47% choose public education as the most important issue for state government. That's twice the level of support for any other priority.
- Voters are three times more likely to choose public education than the legislative leadership's priority of cutting property taxes (16%).
- 64% of voters say we need to invest

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS: www.tsta.org/news/current/Poll-memo.pdf

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT: www.tsta.org/news/current/news_releases.shtml

more money in public education, compared to only 29% who believe we can provide our children with a good, adequate education by using our current education dollars.

- By a 59% to 33% margin, voters would also like to see full funding for things like “smaller class sizes, higher state standards, and better teacher pay,” and they consistently reject the performance-based “incentive” approaches to school funding and teacher pay that have been proposed by the leadership.
- By a 58% to 34% margin, voters prefer across-the-board pay raises for all teachers rather than based on standardized test scores.
- Texans want accountability and higher standards to make sure their tax dollars are well spent to educate our children, but a strong bipartisan consensus agrees that standardized testing is overemphasized.
- Seven in 10 Texas voters say they would like to see an increase in state education standards; when asked to name the most important standards, they focus primarily on raising teacher pay/more teachers/better teachers (36%) and smaller class sizes/funding /materials (22%).
- By contrast, when asked about the emphasis on state testing, a 56% majority say there is too much emphasis.
- Teachers are seen as the most important factor in determining the quality of our children's education. In the poll, 88% of parents rated their child's teachers as excellent or good. **When asked to volunteer the most important factor in a good public school, half mentioned teachers first, compared to curriculum, safety, materials, administration, test performance, and all other factors.**



HARD WORK BEATS HARD CASH

TSTA-backed candidate Donna Howard (D-Austin) won the special election for House District 48 February 14. HD 48 had been held by Republican Todd Baxter, who barely won two years ago in a hotly contested general election race. He resigned in the fall.

Education was Howard's top issue. "What we need is what we do not have under our current leadership – a united effort that crosses party lines and ideologies and demands responsible support for public schools from all sectors of our community," she says on her website, votedonna.com. "If we get that right, everything else will follow. If we keep getting it wrong, pretty soon not much else will matter."

Ben Bentzin, who lost to State Senator Gonzalo Barrientos two years ago, emerged as the handpicked candidate of the state leadership. Backed by Governor Perry, who called a quick special election to help Bentzin, and funded by billionaire James Leininger of San Antonio, who has devoted his life and money to pushing vouchers, Bentzin was the early favorite to win the seat.

It didn't turn out that way. Although heavily outspent by Bentzin, a millionaire in his own right, Howard was backed by TSTA, Education Austin (the TSTA/TFT local association) and numerous other grassroots organizations. Education Austin members went all out for her, manning phone banks, writing postcards, and block walking.

The moral of this story, as we head toward the November elections, is that the postcards you send and the phone calls you make and the doors you knock on for a pro-education candidate really do make a difference! Let's get out there and change the players!



Who is James Leininger?

Dr. James Leininger, the San Antonio billionaire who is a major contributor to the voucher movement in the state and nation, is at it again. At press time, he had taken aim at five Republicans who dared to vote against the Speaker (and Leininger) by voting against vouchers in the last session of the legislature. Four of the five—Representatives Merritt, Geren, Jones, and Casteel, who are endorsed by TSTA-Political Action Committee—also voted against HB 2.

The following story, reprinted with the permission of the Quorum Report (www.quorumreport.com), details Leininger's activity in those five races. It may surprise you.

Leininger PAC Runs at Least Five Campaigns, Quorum Report, February 7: Last week we revealed that the Texas Republican Legislative Campaign Committee PAC was apparently a vehicle to conduit funds from San Antonio physician James Leininger into a series of campaigns targeting selected anti-voucher Republicans including Charlie Geren, Carter Casteel, Roy Blake, Tommy Merritt and Delwin Jones. This campaign finance report verifies that assumption.

In this reporting cycle, TRLCC reports only one contribution—\$500,000 from Dr. Leininger and his pledge for another \$250,000. The PAC reports support for five candidates—all opponents to the above listed incumbents.

In fact, in all but one case, Dr. Leininger individually or through his PAC represents 93% or more of the candidate's total contributions. The exception is Chris Hatley who is opposing Geren. Leininger only contributed 88% of his total on this report. But when you add Bob Perry's contributions, the two men are responsible for 97% of the challenger's total dollars.

Rally Brings 300 to Capitol

In spite of freezing temperatures and icy roads, more than 300 educators came to Austin for a rally to demonstrate the united voice of teachers. Their goals are to restore the respect owed teachers by the Governor and the legislature; secure long overdue pay increases; expand health benefits; and make retirement benefits equitable for all retirees.

Speakers included Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn (who was introduced by TSTA President Donna Haschke), inspirational speaker Garre LaGrone, the grassroots East Texas group No Texas Teacher Left Behind, and the presidents of the four teacher organizations, in a show of solidarity for the legislature.

MAKE CALLS ON GPO/WEP APRIL 10-21

NEA's Nationwide Call to Action for Repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) is April 10-21, when members of Congress return to their home states and districts for a two-week work period. NEA is calling on all activists to take this opportunity to bring attention to the need to repeal unfair Social Security Offsets.

At press time, the House version of the Social Security Fairness Act boasted 305 bipartisan cosponsors, and the Senate bill had 24 bipartisan cosponsors. See complete cosponsor lists for both the House and Senate bill as well as additional information on NEA's campaign to repeal the offsets at <http://www.nea.org/lac/socsec/offsets.html>. The latest GPO/WEP news is posted on NEA's Legislative Action Center at www.nea.org/lac/socsec/index.html; click on "latest news."

The candidates themselves have actually received little or no direct funding from Leininger's PAC. The vast majority of the dollars are paid from TRLCC PAC directly to media buyers, production companies, opposition researchers and the like. On January 10, Milton Rister's Keep Texas Strong received five \$1,500 payments totaling \$7,500 for opposition research on behalf of the five challengers. Rister was appointed director of the Legislative Council last week.

The question is whether or not these candidates actually have any control over their own campaigns.

Here are the percentages of Leininger money in their campaigns:

- Mark Williams (\$176,201) challenging Tommy Merritt—94%. With homebuilder Bob Perry's money, the total comes to 96%.
- Wayne Christian (\$172,629) challenging Roy Blake—94%.
- Nathan Macias (\$197,754) challenging Carter Casteel—92%.
- Van Wilson (\$139,281) challenging Delwin Jones—93%. Add Bob Perry's money and it is 97%.
- Chris Hatley (\$62,433) challenging Charlie Geren—88% plus \$10,000 from Bob Perry.

Yesterday (February 6), Republican National Committeeman Bill Crocker claimed that he had founded the PAC to elect true conservatives. However, according to the reports, he has not made a single contribution to the PAC he supposedly founded.

Weaver Elected VP of Education International

Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association, has been elected vice president of the world's largest organization of education em-

ployees. Education International represents 29 million teachers, higher education faculty and education support professionals in 166 countries, and is the voice of education workers worldwide. www.ei-ie.org.

Leadership Academy

Letters will be sent in April to ask local associations to send officers, other leaders, or potential leaders to the

TSTA Leadership Academy June 14-17 at the Austin Airport Hilton Hotel.

The Academy starts Wednesday afternoon and ends Saturday morning. Rooms are \$80 per night (single or double), and the conference registration fee is \$100 per participant, which includes all conference meals except Friday night. Participation is limited to 280 participants, first come, first served.

VOLUNTEER TO BE ON A TSTA COMMITTEE

The TSTA president is charged with appointing individuals to a number of Association statewide and special committees including task forces each year. All members are eligible to serve in these appointed positions; if you are interested in volunteering some time to serve in these appointed positions, please let the TSTA president know by submitting the form below to TSTA, President's Office, 316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701; or faxing to 512-486-7053 by May 26, 2006.

TSTA's statewide committees are in the following areas: Community and Instructional Advocacy; Legislative and Political Advocacy; and Credentials, Bylaws, and Elections.

Other task forces and special committees are formed from time to time, such as the current task force on collective bargaining. Please indicate your particular area of interest and expertise whether or not it is listed above.

You may also recommend a colleague for consideration for an appointed position.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Ph. _____ School Ph. _____

Social Security Number _____

Local Association _____ TSTA Region _____

Classification _____ Ethnic Status _____

Home Email _____

School Email _____

Local Activities _____

State/Regional Activities _____

Please mark the appropriate boxes below:

☐ CIA ☐ LPA ☐ CBE ☐ Other _____

NEA Launches Reading Relief Tour

Books Across America, a nationwide initiative designed to provide new books to public school libraries and students in need, was launched in February by NEA and its partners, The NEA Foundation, First Book, and The Heart of America Foundation.

NEA and its partners traveled to the Gulf Coast region on a weeklong Reading Relief Tour to deliver new books to more than 40 public school libraries in 26 cities impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. The tour kicked off February 27 in three cities: Houston, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; and Jackson, Mississippi. It culminated in New Orleans on Read Across America Day March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss).

"Books Across America addresses a critical issue: Gulf Coast public school

libraries are still in desperate need of new books and supplies, six months after the devastating hurricanes," said NEA President Reg Weaver. "Bringing books back to these schools and students who have lost so much is a top priority for NEA. **We are engaging our 2.7 million members and people nationwide to do everything they can to restock the shelves of public school libraries and classrooms in the Gulf Coast.**"

During the Reading Relief Tour, a host of local celebrities, athletes and notable public figures, as well as NEA members, participated in reading events and helped deliver new books and money to public school libraries and their students. The tour, part of a yearlong effort to bring books to the Gulf Coast, visited Beaumont, Galveston, Port Arthur, Alvin, Nederland, and Pasadena in Texas.

First Book is providing every child in each school visited with a new book, while The Heart of America Foundation is donating new library books for all the schools involved. In addition, The Heart of America Foundation will be pairing up NEA member schools in other parts of the country with Gulf Coast public schools to help provide them with new books. NEA member schools will achieve this through organizing book drives and coordinating fundraisers throughout the year.

"NEA members dedicate their lives to inspiring children to become readers and lifelong learners.

Over the last several months, First Book has seen firsthand the impact of providing millions of new books to children whose lives were so disrupted by the hurricanes," said Kyle Zimmer, president of First Book.



“We are a proud partner of Books Across America and are committed to continuing to provide millions more books to the schools, libraries and to children who need our help the most.”

Books Across America's efforts to restock Gulf Coast public school libraries will continue beyond the Reading Relief Tour. Nearly 45 million individuals nationwide are expected to join the program this year by donating money and new books, fundraising, organizing book drives and volunteering their time to deliver books.

Books Across America's partners are offering a number of ways individuals can help out, including the following:

- The NEA Foundation is collecting monetary contributions to provide directly to public schools so they can replenish their materials. www.neafoundation.org
- Through First Book, individuals can buy specific books for children to read at home. www.firstbook.org
- The Heart of America Foundation is spearheading book drives to get books to public school libraries and classrooms. They are also providing information to volunteers on how to organize their own drives. www.heartofamerica.org

Gulf Coast public school libraries suffered tremendous devastation and destruction. Statistics from the American Library Association are startling:

- In Louisiana more than 150 school libraries were damaged and/or destroyed. New Orleans Parish alone lost 63% of its 126 schools.
- Mississippi lost 43 school libraries. Mississippi's Department of Education estimates it will cost more than \$32 million to replace libraries and media centers. It will take approximately \$6.1 million to replace media materials including periodicals, trade books and supplies.



TSTA President Donna New Haschke joined the NEA Reading Relief Tour as it traveled through the Gulf Coast region of Texas on its way to Louisiana. Haschke is shown reading at Marek Elementary in Pearland.

- Texas library facilities from Beaumont to Orange to Silsbee took a beating.
- Alabama lost not only about 14,000 valuable books, but also the historic Mose Hudson Tapia Public Library in Bayou La Batre. The 73-year-old log building took on about six feet of water. Black mold took over once the water receded.

Books Across America is NEA's second action aimed at providing hurricane relief. In September 2005, immediately

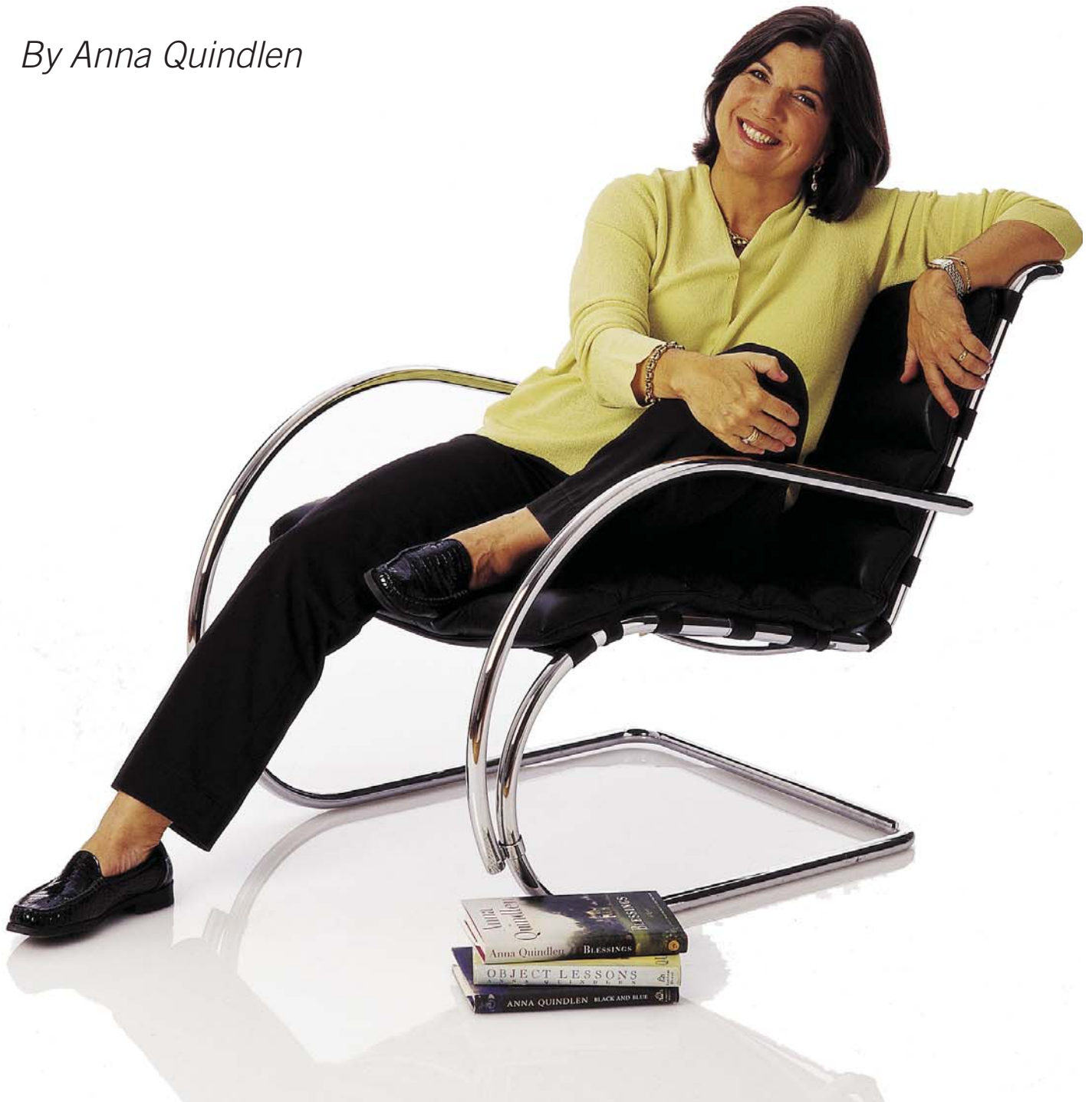
following Hurricane Katrina, the Association set up a Hurricane Relief Fund for students, teachers and school employees affected by the hurricane. In addition, NEA provided \$500,000 in direct aid, set up a toll-free helpline for Gulf Coast school employees and created the NEA Adopt a School Program to match donors with schools and classrooms in need of assistance.

Visit www.nea.org/booksacross to find out how you can help.

The Wages of Teaching

No school administrator should ever receive a percentage raise greater than the raise teachers get. Neither should state legislators.

By Anna Quindlen



A couple of years ago I spent the day at an elementary school in New Jersey. It was a nice average school, a square and solid building with that patented classroom aroma of disinfectant and chalk, chock-full of reasonably well-behaved kids from middle-class families. I handled three classes, and by the time I staggered out the door I wanted to lie down for the rest of the day.

Teaching's the toughest job there is. In his new memoir, "Teacher Man," Frank McCourt recalls telling his students, "Teaching is harder than working on docks and warehouses." Not to mention writing a column. I can stare off into the middle distance with my chin in my hand any time. But you go mentally south for five minutes in front of a class of fifth graders, and you are sunk.

The average new teacher today makes just under \$30,000 a year, which may not look too bad for a twentysomething with no mortgage and no kids. But soon enough the newbies realize that they can make more money and not work anywhere near as hard elsewhere. After a lifetime of hearing the old legends about cushy hours and summer vacations, they figure out that early mornings are for students who need extra help, evenings are for test corrections and lesson plans, and weekends and summers are for second and even third jobs to try to pay the bills.

According to the Department of Education, one in every five teachers leaves after the first year, and almost twice as many leave within three. If any business had that rate of turnover, someone would do something smart and strategic to fix it. This isn't any business. It's the most important business around, the gardeners of the landscape of the human race.

Unfortunately, the current fashion-

able fixes for education take a page directly from the business playbook, and it's a terrible fit. Instead of simply acknowledging that starting salaries are woefully low and committing to increasing them and finding the money for reasonable recurring raises, pols have wasted decades obsessing about something called merit pay. It's a concept that works fine if you're making widgets, but kids aren't widgets, and good teaching isn't an assembly line.

McCourt's book is instructive. Early in his 30-year career, he's teaching at a vocational high school and realizes that his English students are never more inspired than when forging excuse notes from their parents. So McCourt assigns the class to write excuse notes, the results ranging "from a family epidemic of diarrhea to a sixteen-wheeler truck crashing into the house." Pens fly with extravagant lies. You can almost feel the imaginations kick in.

The point about tying teaching salaries to widget standards is that it's hard to figure out a useful way to measure the merit of what a really good teacher does. You can imagine the principal who would see McCourt's gambit as the work of a gifted teacher, and just as easily imagine the one who would find it unseemly. Tying raises to pass rates is a flagrant invitation to inflate student achievement. Tying them to standardized tests makes rote regurgitation the centerpiece of schools. Both are blind to the merit of teachers who shoulder the challenging work of educating those less able, more troubled, from homes where there are no pencils, no books, even no parents. A teacher whose Advanced Placement class sends everyone on to top-tier colleges; a teacher whose remedial-reading class finally gets through to some, but not all, of a student group that is failing. There is merit in both.

The National Education Association has been pushing for a minimum starting salary of \$40,000 for all teachers. Why not? If these people can teach 6-year-olds to add and get adolescents to attend to algebra, surely we can do the math to get them a decent wage. Since the corporate world is the greatest, and richest, beneficiary of well-educated workers, maybe a national brain trust might be set up that would turn a tax on corporate profits into an endowment to raise teacher salaries. Maybe states and communities could also pass regulations with this simple proviso: no school administrator should ever receive a percentage raise greater than the raise teachers get. Neither should state legislators.

In recent years teacher salaries have grown, if they've grown at all, at a far slower rate than those of other professionals, often lagging behind inflation. Yet teachers should have the most powerful group of advocates in the nation: not their union, but we the people, their former students.

I am a writer because of the encouragement of teachers. Surely most Americans must feel the same, that there were women and men who helped them levitate just a little above the commonplace expectations they had for themselves.

At the end of his book McCourt, who is preparing to leave teaching with the idea of living off his pension and maybe writing—and whose maiden effort, "Angela's Ashes," will win the Pulitzer—is giving advice to a young substitute. "You'll never know what you've done to, or for, the hundreds coming and going," he says. Yeah, but the hundreds know, the hundreds who are millions who are us. They made us. We owe them.

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A WARNING ABOUT USING SCHOOL EMAIL

By now, most employees understand and realize that the employer-owned computer they use at work and the school email system may be monitored by the employer just about any time and for just about any reason. Consequently, things you say and do on the computer and computer system may be discovered by the employer without your permission.

Although at least one Attorney General's opinion has stated that purely private emails written by public employees do not constitute "public information" under the Public Information Act, we cannot assume that a public employer would withhold all employee emails pursuant to a public information request.¹ Would you be embarrassed if your private emails written on the school computer were published in the local paper? Although this would be a rare event, it brings to mind a rule of thumb about school computer usage: Do not use your school computer or school email system for anything that you would not want to see published in the local paper, or that you could not proudly defend to the community.

The problem is compounded in the political arena. We all understand that a school district may not spend money or take official positions on campaigns. But what about when school employees talk about such matters among themselves via email? Texas state law says

in part: "An employee of a school district may not knowingly use or authorize the use of an internal mail system for the distribution of political advertising."² Furthermore, an employee of a school district may not spend or authorize the spending of public funds for political advertising.³ A violation of the law is a crime and could also result in a civil penalty assessed by the Texas Ethics Commission.

If you are not engaging in "political advertising" you are not violating the law, so let's go there first. "Political advertising" means:



A communication supporting or opposing:

1. A candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party, a political party, a public officer, or
2. A measure (i.e. a proposition put forth directly to the voters),
3. That appears in a pamphlet, circular, flier, billboard or other sign, bumper sticker, or similar form of written communication; or, on an Internet website.

TSTA does not believe that an email constitutes political advertising because it is not a form of written communication “similar” to a pamphlet, circular, flier, billboard or other sign, or bumper sticker (tangible forms of communication that cost money to print). The Texas Ethics Commission, which enforces the political laws of the state, disagrees.

Furthermore, TSTA does not believe that an email is the use of an “internal mail system” as contemplated under the law. “Internal mail system” means a system operated by a school district to deliver written documents to officers or employees of the school district.⁴ This definition seems to go out of its way to exclude electronic mail, a type of mail system that the legislature has spoken to in other areas of the law, but for some reason omitted here. Again, the Texas Ethics Commission disagrees.

For example, the T.E.C. believes that any email supporting or opposing a school board candidate sent by a school em-

ASSOCIATION SUES OVER FLAGGING

Also in January 2006, TSTA filed a suit against the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to stop the wrongful flagging of educators’ certificates by SBEC. SBEC “flags” an educator’s online certificate (also known as a “cyber cert”) whenever SBEC receives a complaint about the educator. The flag is a warning to all school district employers that the educator is under investigation by SBEC. In theory, SBEC is supposed to file charges against the flagged educator and proceed to a hearing to prove those charges within a reasonable time, or clear the educator in the investigation and remove the flag. The problem is that SBEC is doing neither. Instead, SBEC places a flag on an accused educator’s certificate, and then refuses to set any of these cases for a hearing, and also refuses to clear the educator in an investigation. As a result, educators are stuck with a flag on their certificate, with no right to schedule a hearing to demand that SBEC prove its charges, and no other recourse. Obviously this interferes with the educator’s freedom in obtaining employment and it also maligns the innocent educator’s professional reputation.

TSTA’s lawsuit seeks to force SBEC to remove the flags; or alternatively to force SBEC to expeditiously schedule trials in these cases at which SBEC may prove its charges and the educator may defend against the charges. The case will be heard later this year in Travis County District Court.

ployee on the school email system is illegal “political advertising.” In a 2004 case, a teacher allowed a colleague to send an email on her school computer to all school district staff supporting a candidate for school board. The T.E.C. found that the teacher violated the election code by engaging in “political advertising” on the school’s “internal mail system,” but assessed no civil penalty against the teacher.⁵ The colleague who sent the email was assessed a \$200 fine.⁶ There was no discussion about the use of public funds in these cases.

Currently, TSTA is representing 21 mem-

bers facing similar charges before the T.E.C. We believe strongly in our position and we are optimistic that the T.E.C. will dismiss these complaints without finding a violation. However, TSTA is willing to appeal any sanction to get a second opinion on what the law means.

¹Attorney General Informal Letter Ruling No. OR2003-8273, November 18, 2003.

²Tex. Elec. Code 255.0031(a) (West 2006).

³Tex. Elec. Code Sec. 255.003 (a) (West 2006)

⁴Tex. Elec. Code Sec. 255.0031 (d).

⁵In the matter of Tana Shilling, T.E.C. cause number 2406114.

⁶In the matter of Michael Voit, T.E.C. cause number 2406114.

THE IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ARE:

- Don't use your school computer to run campaigns for candidates or ballot measures.
- Don't use public resources to print or distribute anything related to campaigns.
- Don't use your school computer to do confidential association business.

Notwithstanding state law, consult your district's policies regarding the use of email and mailboxes.

TSTA Questions Hurdles for TOP Raters

On January 6, TSTA filed a suit against Commissioner of Education Shirley Neeley to stop the teacher training and testing component of the Texas Observation Protocols (TOP). TOP is a system developed by the Texas Education Agency to assess students of limited English proficiency (LEP) for state assessment and accountability purposes; it's used to assess LEP students in grades 2-12 in listening, speaking, writing, and reading (grade 2 only). On November 2, 2005, the TEA issued its final draft of a new training and testing system for teachers designated by their school districts to be TOP raters. The new training and testing component for teachers relates solely to the rating of LEP students' writing samples. With only a couple of months notice, the training and testing component required each teacher to attend training in the fall of 2005 for 4-16 hours, and pass a fall qualifying test. Needless to say, this placed teachers and school districts in a bind as school districts tried to find time and resources to train, and teachers tried to find time to attend the training (usually without extra compensation) and pass a test.

Teachers that failed the fall qualifying test were required to take more training before they could take the spring online test administered by the TEA, beginning January 30, 2006 through March 3, 2006. A teacher who failed the spring online test could take it again. If failed twice, the teacher could still be a rater of the LEP students' writing samples, but a "certified rater" (one who passed the spring online test) would have to double-check the first teacher's work.

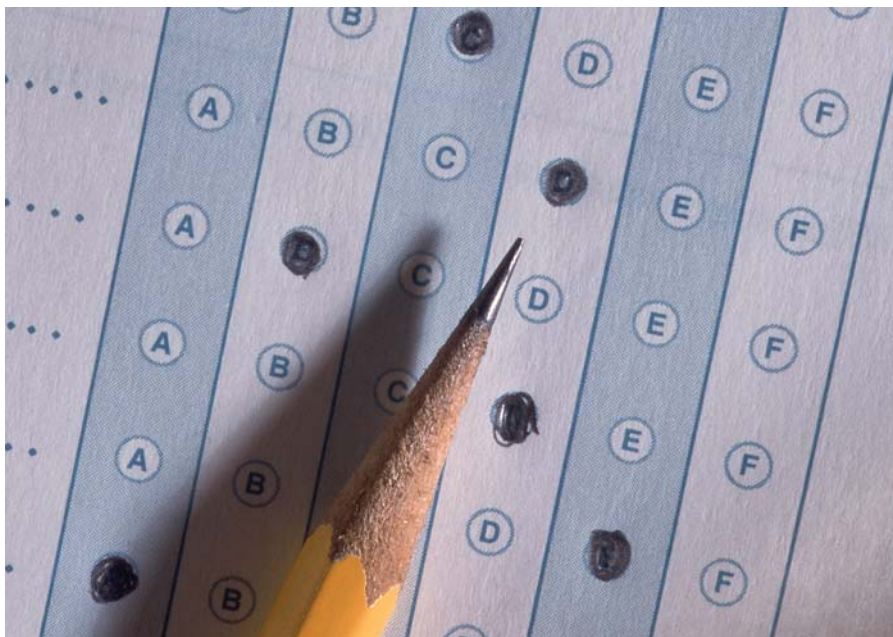
On January 30, 2006, a Travis County District Court judge heard TSTA's motion to enjoin the TEA from imple-

menting the spring online test and the associated training. TSTA members from all over the state affected by these egregious mandates from the Commissioner came to Austin to participate in the hearing. Unfortunately, the judge was not inclined to stop the spring test from occurring. However, the judge persuaded both parties to reach an interim agreement until the ultimate issue concerning the Commissioner's authority could be heard. Consequently, the TEA agreed that for spring 2006, a teacher who is unable to pass the spring 2006 online test after two attempts is still qualified to rate his or her LEP students' writing samples for TOP, without another teacher double-checking the assigned rating, and without additional training and testing. Although training and testing were the real sore spots for TSTA members, the next most prominent concern was having another

teacher double-check a rating. This was a real blow to the first teacher's professionalism, and thanks to TSTA, the requirement that the rating be double-checked has been suspended.

The case has been set for a trial in September 2006 where the judge will decide whether the Commissioner has overstepped her authority by ordering teacher training and testing. Although the spring 2006 test will have come and gone by then, there is no doubt that the Commissioner will continue to attempt to exert her authority by executive fiat over such sensitive matters as teacher testing unless she is challenged. TSTA is the only association fighting on this issue, and we will continue to make our case that the Commissioner lacks authority to mandate teacher training and testing under TOP.

—TSTA General Counsel Kevin Lungwitz



TSTA is the only association fighting on this issue, and we will continue to make our case that the Commissioner lacks authority to mandate teacher training and testing under TOP.



NEA Representative Assembly

June 30-July 5, 2006 • Marriott World Convention Center and Resort • Orlando, Florida

The 2006 NEA Representative Assembly will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. The Texas Delegation to the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly will be housed at the Marriott World Convention Center and Resort. The center is the largest Marriott Resort and Convention Center in the United States. It is a 2,000 room and suite resort with a championship golf course, spa, 10 restaurants and lounges, acres of tropical landscaping, six pools and four hot tubs. It is a world of its own and made for Texas, Alabama and Michigan delegates and their families.

Texas delegates attending the NEA

Representative Assembly will want to view TSTA's website, www.tsta.org, for up-to-date information on lodging, travel, delegate "Night Out" event and Texas' "official uniform" information. If you wish to view the Resort, the website is www.marriottworldcenter.com.

Transportation

The hotel is seven and a half miles from the Orange County Convention Center with the Orlando Airport located 15 miles SW from the Resort.

Mears Transportation service is available from the airport to the Resort with the Resort being the first stop upon leaving the airport. Tickets may be purchased at the Mears desk on the baggage level of the airport and

the cost is \$29 round trip per adult and \$21 per child (ages 4-11). One-way tickets are \$17 per adult and \$13 per child. Reservations from the Resort to the airport are required four hours prior to airline departure time. It is not necessary to have reservations upon arrival at the airport.

NEA-RA INFORMATION

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Miscellaneous Information	p.23

Your ballot and return envelope for State NEA Delegates are inserted between pages 20 and 21.

Cab fares are approximately \$35 to \$40 from the Orlando Airport (MCO) and \$30 from the Resort to the Convention Center. Travel time for Texas delegates to the Orange County Convention Center is approximately thirty (30) minutes in rush hour traffic and approximately fifteen (15) minutes during non-rush hours.

If attendees are driving, the hotel provides valet parking at the rate of \$17 per day or overnight self parking at \$7 per day. Day guest parking is \$8.

Car Rental

Receive discount car rental rates by logging onto TSTA's website and clicking on Member Benefits to request a rental car identification card or calling TSTA's Member Benefits office at 800-364-8622. Delegates will need a rental car identification card in order to receive discounted car rental rates with Advantage, Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar or Hertz. Please call early enough for TSTA to provide you with the card by return mail.

Hotel Reservations

The lodging form is located with this article. Tuesday, May 23, 2006, is the deadline for receiving the form in the Center for Executive and Governance. It is very important that you submit your lodging request forms as early as possible. All rooms will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. As referenced above, Alabama and Michigan delegates will also be housed at the Resort.

Mail lodging forms to the attention of TSTA, Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701 or fax them to 512-486-7053. Do not contact the hotel directly. Reservations must be made through the Executive and Governance Center.

Delegates and guests MUST include a credit card number or check with their reservation for one night's deposit in order to guarantee your reservation. If an incomplete credit card number or no credit card and/or check are submitted, reservations will not be made.

Check-in time is 4 p.m. with check-out being at 11 a.m. If a reservation must be cancelled, it will require a 48 hour notice in order to avoid delegates paying a one-night lodging fee.

Texas Caucus Meetings

The first Texas Caucus meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 30, at 1:00 p.m. All Texas Caucus meetings will be held at the Marriott World Convention Center and Resort. Additionally, delegates must register at the Texas Caucus meeting and with NEA. Registration at the Texas Caucus meetings will begin thirty (30) minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting. Please review the Tentative Meeting Event Schedule for the NEA registration times.

Texas Night Out

TSTA is again coordinating for the Texas delegates a "Night Out" on June 30. As possible options are currently being researched, delegates may monitor the TSTA website for the most up-to-date information on the "Night Out" event. Delegates will also receive information regarding the event with other delegate information in early May. It is estimated that the cost for Texas delegates to attend the Night Out event will be approximately \$30.

Clustering to Elect NEA Delegates

Delegate allocations are based on NEA membership as of January 15,

2006. NEA local affiliates are allocated delegates on a ratio of one (1) delegate for each 150 (or major fraction thereof) active, NEA life, and educational support members of NEA. Thus, local associations with 75 or fewer NEA members must cluster to elect an NEA delegate. If your local association has 75 or fewer NEA members and is interested in clustering to elect an NEA delegate, you will need to contact the Center for Executive and Governance for assistance. Members wishing to cluster are encouraged to contact the Center as soon as possible so that elections may be held. Please submit in writing the request to cluster by mailing the request to TSTA, Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701 or fax the request to 512-486-7053.

The Texas Tradition

Texas delegates capture the eyes of the entire nation at each NEA Representative Assembly. The uniform for all Texas delegates will be a Texas Vest or Texas Shirt (Texas Flag with a white star on the right front side of the vest or shirt) with white or navy blue pants/shirt/dress/shorts (no stone washed jeans).

TSTA has a limited supply of 3 XL and 4 XL Vests. The cost for the Vest is \$37.50 and may be ordered by calling 800-324-5355, ext. 1543. TSTA is currently researching possible options for delegates to order the Texas Shirt direct from a merchant and/or retail store. Information as it becomes available will be posted on TSTA's website.

All Texas delegates are expected to wear the official "uniform" on the days that the NEA Representative Assembly is in session (July 2-5).

TENTATIVE NEA MEETING EVENT SCHEDULE

The schedule outlines all of the activities of the 2006 NEA Convention. Information packets will be mailed to all Texas delegates in early May. The first Texas delegation meeting is scheduled for June 30 at 1:00 p.m.

Pre-Convention Schedule

Sunday, June 25

8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Student Leadership Conference

Monday, June 26

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Ethnic Leaders Meetings
8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Student Leadership Conference
Noon–5:00 p.m. National Council of Urban
Education Associations Meeting
2:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 27

8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Student Leadership Conference
8:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. National Council of Urban
Education Associations Meeting
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Joint Conference on Concerns of
Minorities and Women
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Resolutions Editing Committee
Meeting

Wednesday, June 28

7:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m. Women's Issues Hearing
8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Student Leadership Conference
8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Joint Conference on Concerns of
Minorities and Women
8:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
9:00 a.m.–noon The NEA Fund for Children and
Public Education Meeting
9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. National Council of Urban
Education Associations Meeting
9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Constitution, Bylaws and Rules
Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Resolutions Editing Committee
Meeting
1:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. National Council of State Education
Associations Meeting
4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m. Constitution, Bylaws & Rules
Committee Meeting w/ Candidates
for NEA Office

Thursday, June 29

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Men's Issues Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Candidates Interview Day
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
11:15 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
3:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting

Friday, June 30

8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Open Hearing on Resolutions
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Campaigning; Exhibits
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Delegate, Successor Delegate,
Non-Delegate Registration
9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Read Across America
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. **Texas State Delegation Meeting**
4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m. IDEA Forum
4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. National Council for Higher
Education Conference
4:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. National Council for Educational
Support Professionals

7:00 p.m.–10:30 p.m. Special Guests' Dinner
Evening **Texas Night Out**

Saturday, July 1

All Day Campaigning
7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. State Delegation Meetings
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Delegate, Successor Delegate,
Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Exhibits
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
10:00 a.m.–noon Open Hearing on Budget &
Strategic Planning
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
Noon–1:00 p.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. Legislative Open Hearing
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. Open Hearing on Constitution,
Bylaws and Rules
2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Elections Committee Meeting
5:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Human and Civil Rights Awards
Dinner

Convention Schedule

Sunday, July 2

All Day Campaigning
7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. State Delegation Meetings
9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Exhibits
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Delegate Registration
9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
Friendship Night

Monday, July 3

7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. State Delegation Meetings
8:30 a.m.–noon Voting for Officers
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Profit Fundraising Activities
9:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
LUNCH BREAK Special Interest Caucus Meetings

Tuesday, July 4

7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. State Delegation Meetings
8:30 a.m.–noon Voting on Amendments and Runoff
Elections (if necessary)
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Profit Fundraising Activities
9:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
LUNCH BREAK Special Interest Caucus Meetings

Wednesday, July 5

7:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m. State Delegation Meetings
9:00 a.m.–noon Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Non-Profit Fundraising Activities
9:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
LUNCH BREAK Special Interest Caucus Meetings

Voting for State Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly

PLEASE NOTE: Most members will mark three ballots this year for State Delegates to the NEA RA. One is for Category II delegates, one will be a Statewide ballot and one will be a Delegate District ballot. Please read this before marking your ballots.

Until last year, ballots for State Delegates were specific for each Region. However, last year, because of the variance in the size of our Regions, such an election process would not meet the one-person, one-vote requirement of NEA, so we elected delegates by Area Organizing Team (AOT) districts. While the variance in Region size still prevents an election just by Regions, this year, in an effort to reduce vacant delegate slots, we are combining Regions in a different way into Delegate Districts and we must elect some delegates on a Statewide ballot.

First, there is one ballot that everybody marks, for the Category II delegates (supervisory and Active Life Active candidates). Next, there is a Statewide ballot with the TSTA Vice President as an automatic candidate and a total of two delegates to be elected on this ballot. Again, every eligible member should mark this ballot.

The rest of the ballots are divided into Delegate Districts in a manner to meet the NEA requirements for equal representation based on the one-person, one-vote principle. Members in Region 1C should mark the Delegate District 1 ballot. Members in Regions 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B mark the Delegate District 2 ballot. Members in Regions 2C and 2D mark the Delegate District 3 ballot. Delegate District 4 ballot should be marked by members in Regions 3A and 3B. The Delegate District 5 ballot should be marked by members in Regions 1D, 3C, 3D, 3E and 3F. Members in Regions 2E, 4A, 4B, 4C and TFA should mark the Delegate District 6 ballot. The final district is Delegate District 7 and members in Regions 4D and 4E should mark this ballot. The ballot will list the Regions in each Delegate District.

There is a special insert in the magazine with a return envelope and the ballot. In the return address portion of that envelope most mem-

bers will find printed Del Dist followed by a number up to 7; this is the indication of the Delegate District in which you should vote. Also printed is a code designating your membership category. If your envelope shows only the membership category and does not have a Del Dist designation, then you are eligible to vote only on the Category II ballot and the Statewide ballot. Everybody else should mark three ballots: the Category II ballot, the Statewide ballot and the appropriate Delegate District ballot. **If you believe your envelope is incorrect, then call TSTA immediately (1-877-ASK-TSTA) and ask for Sandra.**

Check the return address portion of the envelope to determine which Delegate District ballot you should mark. First, mark the Category II ballot (vote for three), next the Statewide ballot (vote for two). Then, find the ballot for your Delegate District. The number of delegates for each Delegate District is determined on the basis of the one-person, one-vote principle. The ballot for your Delegate District will tell you how many votes you may cast. On all three ballots, you may vote for the printed name(s), or you may write in a name and vote for the write-in. In order for write-in votes to be counted on the Delegate District ballot, the name must be for a member in

BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED AT TSTA HEADQUARTERS IN AUSTIN BY 5 P.M. O

one of the Regions included in that Delegate District.

Once you have marked your ballot, separate it from, and seal it in the, envelope provided. **The printed information on the envelope verifies for the Elections Committee your right to vote, so you must return your ballot in this envelope. If you lost or didn't get a ballot, call TSTA immediately (1-877-ASK-TSTA) and ask for Sandra.**

In order to encourage more members to vote, some locals may be collecting the sealed envelopes and mailing a group of envelopes together. This is acceptable, but you still must seal your ballot in the special envelope. Check with your Local President to see if your local is collecting and mailing ballots.

Whether you mail it yourself or your local collects and mails envelopes, ballots must be RECEIVED at TSTA headquarters in Austin by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 21, 2006. If the ballot is not in the provided envelope, your vote will not be counted.

Some of the candidates running for State Delegate provided statements that you will find in this issue of the *Advocate*. TSTA policy provides for printing statements from those candidates who file such a statement before the established deadline. TSTA policy also provides that any candidate may have an observer present when the Elections Committee canvasses the ballots on April 22 at the TSTA building in Austin. Please contact Connie or Sandra at 1-877-ASK-TSTA if you are a candidate and want an observer.

THE DELEGATE STORY

NEA Bylaws and policies determine the allocation of delegates to the NEA RA. TSTA is allocated one delegate for every 1,000 NEA active and educational support members. Allocation and election of these delegates must comply with the NEA requirements about open nominations, secret ballots and the one-person, one-vote principle.

Once we receive notification of the number of state delegates to be elected, TSTA Board policy controls how we will allocate those delegates. Again this year, because of the variance in the number of members across TSTA Regions, we can no longer allocate delegates by Regions and still pass the one-person, one-vote tests applied by NEA. Instead, we have combined Regions into Delegate Districts in a way to maximize the likelihood of filling all delegate slots while still complying with the one-person, one-vote requirement. From the beginning this year, we knew that one delegate would have to be elected statewide in order to provide a method for the TSTA Vice President to seek election as a delegate.

TSTA is allocated 37 state delegates for the 2006 NEA RA. Based on proportional representation, three delegates must be elected as "Category II" delegates, representing supervisors and NEA Active Life Active members. We then set aside one delegate for the statewide ballot and looked at various combinations of Regions that would meet the one-person, one-vote requirements. As the numbers worked out, we had to add a second delegate slot to the statewide ballot. So we allocated three delegates to the Category II ballot, two to the Statewide ballot and the remaining 32 State Delegates to be elected in Delegate Districts.

Local associations are allocated one delegate for each 150 active and educational support NEA members or major fraction thereof. Locals with fewer than 76 NEA members may cluster to form delegate units. Presidents of locals that have 76 or more members should receive from NEA in late February the number of delegates to be elected to the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly with an accompanying form that is due at TSTA by April 10 and a copy of guidelines to assure proportional representation by educational position. Local presidents should send the state and NEA copies of the local delegate report forms to TSTA as soon as possible after they conduct their local NEA delegate elections or by April 10. Members from locals of 75 or fewer members also may seek election as "cluster" delegates. If you are interested in this option, please contact Sandra Solimine at 1-877-ASK-TSTA.

One of the core values for both NEA and TSTA is appropriate representation for ethnic minority members. Locals are encouraged to seek and elect ethnic minorities as delegates to help TSTA meet our goals for ethnic minority representation.

N FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2006.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Category 2

- Jerry Watkins, Caucasian. TSTA-Retired Region 4C President; TSTA-R Board of Directors; Past President – Fort Worth Education Association; Lifetime NEA/TSTA member.
- Ignacio Salinas, Jr., Hispanic. I welcome the opportunity to represent TSTA as an administrator delegate to the NEA RA. I appreciate your support and ask for your vote.
- Bobbie Duncan, Caucasian. My experiences as an active member and now as a retiree qualify me to represent you on active and retired issues. I appreciate your vote.

Statewide

- Ann Heuberger. Vice President of Texas State Teachers Association.
- Doris Hill, Caucasian. I have been a TSTA/NEA member for nine years. I am also an Ambassador. I would be honored to be a State Delegate.
- Jeffrey D. Fitzhugh, Caucasian. Mr. Fitzhugh is logical, just, and has a passion for improving public education. He thinks out of the box, yet is still well grounded.

Voting District 1 (Region 1C)

- Mario A. Zaragoza, Hispanic. I serve as Laredo/TSTA/NEA Secretary, State LPAC, AR, participant in summer conferences, leadership conferences, actively in LISD-UISD Boards (2 districts in the NCLB lawsuit).
- Eliza M. Garcia, Hispanic. I have been a TSTA/NEA member for over twenty-five years. I would like to represent you as a Region 1C delegate to the 2006 RA.

Voting District 2 (Regions 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B)

- Yolanda C. Molina, Hispanic. Representing you in Orlando, Florida this summer would be a great Honor and Privilege. I am Qualified, Ready and Eager to be your Voice.
- Barbara Franklin, American Indian/Alaska Native, Caucasian. Very active member for over 25 years.

- Eva G. Gonzalez, Hispanic. Eva Gonzalez needs your vote: Leadership, Commitment, Dedication, Experienced, past NEA DIRECTOR. Allow me to represent YOU! Vote for EVA GONZALEZ.

- Robert C. Fierro, Hispanic. NEA Resolutions has been rewarding. I look forward to being part of Team Texas at the NEA-RA. I need your vote to continue serving you.

- Gilbert F. De La Rosa, Jr. I've represented TSTA in past conventions. I'm currently serving as AR and TSTA LPAC chair. I would like to serve you again. Remember: Gilbert DeLaRosa.

- Delia Camacho, Hispanic. As Chair of the NEA Women's Caucus, I seek your support and your vote to represent you at the NEA Representative Assembly.

Voting District 4 (Regions 3A and 3B)

- Maxine E. Guidry, Black. President—Galveston Education Association; Community and Instructional Advocacy Committee Member; Regional Program/Budget Committee Member; Black Caucus Member; instrumental in increasing local membership for 2005.
- George Helm, Jr., Black. SBEA executive board member in multiple capacities including social and election chair, area representative, assists teachers with grievances and concerns, authored legislation for TSTA.

Voting District 5 (Regions 1D, 3C, 3D, 3E and 3F)

- Stephen Smallwood, American Indian/Alaska Native. As a local president, a past national leader, and a current national cadre member, I offer my experience to promote the Texas position at RA.
- Davey G. Vela, Hispanic. Having been a state delegate for many years, I have the knowledge of how NEA works. I'll work hard for you! Vote for Davey Vela.
- Winifred Jackson, Black. I'm currently Region 3F President and activist for members, students, and public education. I serve on TSTA Advisory Committee, BoD, Vice President of Longview Educators.

- Reagan Hawkins, Hispanic. I am 30 years old, a local vice-president, a regional vice-president, and a proud graduate of TSTA's Ambassador Academy.

- Becky Cerliano, Caucasian. As a 31 year member, I have been an association advocate for 25+. A regional officer for 14 years, I recently started a new local.

Voting District 6 (Regions 2E, 4A, 4B, 4C and TFA)

- Eugene Oehler, Caucasian. I have served as an NEA delegate since 1990. I am willing to serve you again in Orlando.
- Felecia Owens, Black. Local Leader, State Committee Member, Minority Affairs Committee member. Committed TSTA worker and member. Seventh RA helping to meet Texas 3-1-g goals.
- Louise Watkins, Asian. NEA Board of Directors, NEA API Caucus Chair, NEA Minority Affairs Committee, Past TSTA Board of Directors member, Past President—Fort Worth EA.
- Loretta Wheeler, American Indian/Alaska Native. President of Borger Educators; Past President of Region 4A; Held all offices of Local Association; member since 1978 TSTA/NEA.
- Russell Bryant, Caucasian. President Wichita Falls Educators Association, Member Instructional Advocacy Committee, President Region 21, President Region 4B, TSTA Budget Vice-Chair, TSTA Advisory Committee, Region 4B Treasurer.

Voting District 7 (Regions 4D and 4E)

- Rebekah R. Cole, Multiple Races. Education in the United States is taking a toll for the worse. It is time for YOU and Me to stand up and speak!
- Eula M. Axe, Caucasian. I am an experienced leader with a passion for advocating for my profession and am a fourth-term president of my local.
- Ronald L. Savannah, Black. As a delegate to the NEA RA, my votes will be cast in accordance with TSTA goals and objectives.

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM FOR NEA CONVENTION DELEGATES

June 30-July 5, 2006 • Marriott World Convention Center and Resort • Orlando, Florida

Complete all requested information and return to TSTA by **May 23, 2006**. Check-in time 4:00 p.m.-Check-out time is 11:00 a.m.

DO NOT CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY

(PLEASE PRINT)

MARRIOTT WORLD CONVENTION CENTER AND RESORT

(Texas Delegation Hotel)
8701 World Center Drive
Orlando, Florida 32821
Phone: 407-239-4200
Fax: 407-238-8777

ROOM RATE

_____ Single room (1 person—1 bed).....\$135.00
_____ Double room (2 people—2 beds).....\$135.00
_____ Triple room (3 people—2 beds)\$155.00
_____ Quad room (4 people—2 beds)\$175.00
_____ Rollaway (___ \$20 per additional person)

Cut-off date for ALL rooms and room rates is May 23, 2006. All Rooms are subject to a 11.5% sales tax.

Rooms not booked through TSTA may be charged at the hotel rack rate.

I will arrive (June/July) _____, 2006 at _____ (a.m./p.m.) and I will depart July _____, 2006.

Name: _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Home email: _____ School email: _____

List ALL individuals per room (one name per line) and accommodations desired:

Circle Room Type	Room No. 1	Circle Room Type	Room No. 2
Single 1.	_____	Single 1.	_____
Double 2.	_____	Double 2.	_____
Triple 3.	_____	Triple 3.	_____
Quad 4.	_____	Quad 4.	_____

First night's room and tax is due upon receipt of reservation. Deposits can be made by major credit card or check.

Make check payable to **Marriott World Convention Center and Resort**. Should cancellation be necessary, you must advise the resort 48 hours prior to your arrival date. If the resort is not advised, you will be responsible to pay for space held.

Approved major credit card: _____ Exp. date: _____

Credit card #: _____ Name on card: _____

Return to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701, fax 512-486-7053

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

➤ For those delegates that need a little pick me up, Starbucks coffee and Krispy Kreme doughnuts are available at the Resort. For those delegates who want to walk off the coffee and doughnuts, they will be able to shop at the Mangrove Emporium Retail Shops (Tommy Bahama, Brighton, Fossil), Hawk's Landing Pro Shop (Callaway, Cutter & Buck, Slazenger, Nike), and

News Network (gifts, sundries, snacks, magazines, CDs and more). These shops are all located on site.

➤ Shuttle service from the hotel to the Disney attractions is available by 90-minute advance reservations for scheduled morning departure times. The cost is \$12 roundtrip for adults or children. Children under four (4) years are free.

➤ Shuttle service from the hotel to Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure, CityWalk, SeaWorld, Discovery Cove and Wet 'N Wild parks are complimentary by the Resort. Scheduled Shuttle service runs to the parks daily. Reservations are recommended. The concierge desk will be available to provide delegates with the schedule of return times.

HOD Delegates to Elect NEA Director



As some delegates predicted when the change in TSTA Bylaws was made to hold elections for NEA Directors and TSTA State Officers at the State House of Delegates, we have seen increased attendance at the House of Delegates. Last year, with contested races for both TSTA President and Vice-President, we had the highest number of delegates in recent memory. In 2004, showing the importance of every vote, the election for NEA Director was decided by just three votes.

This year, we expect another close and exciting race for NEA Director—with the possibility of something else we have not had since the Bylaw change: a runoff election. With three excellent candidates seeking election to NEA Director for Texas, Place 2, and a requirement that the winner be chosen by a majority vote, it certainly is possible that there will need to be a second round of voting.

In order to help ensure a smooth election process, we encourage delegates to arrive in plenty of time to register and vote. Delegates must have their creden-

tials and a picture ID with them in order to vote.

Registration will be open Friday, April 28, from 7 a.m. until the end of the first General Session (usually between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.). On Saturday, registration will open again at 6:30 a.m.

Regional caucuses are scheduled from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., with voting from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. If you plan on registering on Saturday morning, be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to register and vote. You must have completed registration and be in line to vote no later than 9:30 a.m.

If no candidate has a majority in the first balloting, there will be a runoff election during the lunch recess between the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

Be sure to bring your credentials and photo ID with you and arrive in plenty of time to register and vote.

CANDIDATES FOR NEA DIRECTOR



WINIFRED JACKSON

Professional Training:

University of Texas in Tyler, 1990-92. Wiley College, Bachelor of Science, 1981-84

Professional Experience: Longview ISD, elementary teacher, 1992-present. Gladewater ISD, elementary teacher, 1989-92. Hughes Springs ISD, elementary teacher, 1986-89

Professional Education Associations:

Longview Educators Association, Texas State Teachers Association, National Education Association

Offices Held: Longview Educators Association, vice president, 2005-present; president, 2000-05; secretary, 1999-2000; treasurer, 1995-98. TSTA Board of Directors Advisory Committee, 2004-present. TSTA Region 3F, president, 2003-present. TSTA Region 3F/18, treasurer, 2001-03. TSTA CB&E Committee, chair, member, 2000-03. TSTA Black Caucus, secretary, 1995-2000. NEA Black Caucus, secretary, 2005-present; western region director, 2001-05. NEA Minority Affairs Committee, 2005-present.

Campaign Statement: As public education faces many challenges, you need a leader who will address these challenges with integrity, commitment, and dedication for a quality public education. I will be that leader who advocates for all our members, students, and great public education.

Jimi Hendrix said, "Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens." I have demonstrated when to speak up for all members about their rights and how to listen to their concerns about working conditions. As local and regional president, I handled grievances, provided resources and training for all members on dealing with issues and concerns.

Service on NEA Minority Affairs Committee and liaison to the Budget and Program Committee has provided me with the basic knowledge, understanding and operation of NEA, so I can be that voice. I want to continue the tradition of Texas leadership working for you on all levels.

It's a WIN for Texas when you vote for Winifred.



EVELINA LOYA

Professional Training:

Sul Ross State University, Masters in Education-Reading Specialist, 1992. University of

Texas at El Paso, BS-Elementary Education-Reading, 1973

Professional Experience: Ysleta ISD, middle school reading teacher, curriculum coordinator, yearbook teacher/advisor, department chair, computer lab teacher and reading specialist, 1973-2000; high school freshman initiative coordinator, study center (Plato Lab/Alternative Learning Center) director/department chair, reading specialist, 2001-present

Professional Education Associations:

Ysleta Teachers Association, TSTA-R El Paso (as a pre-retired), Texas State Teachers Association, National Education Association, International Reading Association (National), and Delta Kappa Gamma

Offices Held: Ysleta Teachers Association vice president 1996-98 and 1999-2000; president, 2001-03. Region 2B, president, 2003-05.

Campaign Statement: TSTA has been a part of my life since I joined Future Teachers of America which paved the way to being an active TSTA and NEA leader.

My experience as a local and regional president gave me the opportunity to make a difference. I supported changes that locals wanted in order to better meet the needs of their membership. As a member of the NEA Women's Leadership Cadre, my voice is heard on issues affecting women in education.

I am committed and focused, and I will keep the lines of communication open. Locals know their needs and the issues in their school districts. As your Texas NEA Director for Place 2, I will support your endeavors.

With my leadership and voice, together we will move forward. I appreciate your support. Vote for Evelina Loya, Texas NEA Director Place 2.

LEADERSHIP plus a VOICE equals POWER.



RHONDA GAIL SCHELL

Professional Training:

Lamar University, BS Elementary Education, Certificate for Special Education-Generics,

May 1989

Professional Experience: Beaumont ISD, 1991-present, resource/inclusion teacher; Tarkington ISD, 1990-91, sixth grade math teacher; Beaumont ISD, 1989-90, reading teacher 6th-8th

Professional Education Associations:

TSTA/NEA, TSTA Women's Caucus, NEA GLBT Caucus, Alpha Delta Kappa, National Science Teacher Association, Who's Who Among America's Teachers

Offices Held: Beaumont Teachers Association, president, 2004-present; vice president, 2002-04; treasurer, 1998-2002; secretary, 1995-1998; consultation committee chair, 2003 to present; association rep, 1993-present. TSTA Region 3E, president, 2001-05. TSTA BOD-Advisory, 2002-05. TSTA Women's Caucus, chair, 2003-present; vice chair, 1999-2001; treasurer, 1997-99. NEA Women's Caucus, membership secretary, 2001-08.

Campaign Statement: I believe the key to any successful organization begins with heart and passion for what is truly right. Texas needs an NEA Director to communicate the concerns of all TSTA members. With a voice of experience, combined with total dedication and commitment, I will speak for TSTA.

I will be the person to bring our voice to the NEA level. As the Membership chair of the NEA Women's Caucus and a member of the steering committee, I have built valuable coalitions to benefit all members. Through TSTA and NEA I have been given the opportunity to grow in my profession and gain knowledge to further strengthen my local and region and empower all members. I want to continue to serve the members of TSTA as we fight for children and public education. I ask for your support and your vote for NEA Director for Texas, Place 2.



PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

1 INTENT: To use terminology consistent with the NEA Bylaws and to clarify language related to membership category privileges.

Article III, Section 2

Section 2. Qualifications and Conditions of Membership

There shall be nine (9) classes of membership: Active-~~Professional~~, Life, Active-Educational Support Professional, Substitute, Student, Staff, TSTA-R, Subscriber, and Reserve.

Article III. Section 2, Paragraph B. 2.

2. Privileges

Life members shall be entitled to the same privileges as defined for Active-Professional members.

- ~~f. a. Eligible to vote;~~
- ~~b. Eligible to hold elective position;~~
- ~~c. Eligible to serve as a delegate to both the regional house of delegates and the state House of Delegates; and~~
- ~~d. Entitled to the full rights and privileges of membership;~~

Article III. Section 2, Paragraph C. 3.

3. Privileges

Active-Educational Support Professional members shall be entitled to the same privileges as defined for Active-Professional members ~~[such services as provided for under Article III, Section 2, A, 3, a, b, c, and d].~~

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

2 INTENT: To use terminology consistent with NEA Bylaws regarding Active-Professional and Active-ESP members.

In Article III Members, each time the word "Active" is used as a reference to a category of membership, it shall be changed to "Active-Professional"; and each time the words Educational Support Professional

Amendments and Editorial/Extraneous Language Changes to Consider at the 127th Annual TSTA Convention

April 28-29, 2006 • Renaissance Austin Hotel

If you are a delegate to the 2006 TSTA Convention, you will be voting on thirteen proposed amendments and three editorial/extraneous language changes to TSTA's Bylaws. The amendments are printed below, for your review prior to arriving at the convention. Wording in brackets with strikethrough ~~[-]~~ reflect current language to be deleted and items **bolded** and underscored reflect insertion of proposed new language.

Other information about convention housing and transportation appeared in the winter 2005 Advocate and is available on the TSTA web site, www.tsta.org. Further information about the convention will be mailed directly to delegates.

Wording in **Bold and Underlined** — Proposed Additions

Wording in ~~[Brackets with Strikethrough]~~ — Proposed Deletions

are used as a reference to a category of membership, they shall be changed to “Active-Educational Support Professional”. In all other Articles of these Bylaws, each time “Active”, “Educational Support Professional” or “ESP” appears as a reference to a category of membership, it shall be changed as designated in this list:

Article IV, Section 1, Paragraph C. 4.

Change “Active, Educational Support Professional” to “Active”;

Article IV, Section 1, Paragraph F.

Change “Active and Educational Support Professional” to “Active”;

Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph D. 1. b.

Change “Active, Educational Support Professionals” to “Active”;

Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph E. 4.

Change “ESP” to “Active-ESP”;

Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph G.

Change “Active” to “Active-Professional” and “Educational Support Professional” to “Active-ESP”;

Article V, Section 2, Paragraph B.

Change, in both places, “Active, ESP” to “Active”;

Article VII, Section 3, Paragraph C.

Change “Active, TSTA-R, ESP” to “Active, TSTA-R” and Change “Active, ESP” to “Active”;

Article VII, Section 5, Paragraph E.

Change, in all three places, “Educational Support Professional” to “Active-ESP”;

Article VIII, Section 2, Paragraph A.

Change “Active, Life, and Educational Support Professional” to “Active and Life”;

Article XII, Section 3, Paragraph A.

Change “Active, Life, ESP” to “Active, Life”;

Article XII, Section 3, Paragraph B.

Change “Active, Life, ESP” to “Active, Life”;

Further, add a new definition to Article XII, Section 2, as follows:

K. Active

When the term Active is used in these Bylaws as a reference to a category of membership, it shall mean both the Active-Professional and Active-Educational Support Professional categories.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: The implication of the current designation of the membership categories “active” and “ESP” is that only professional members can be active. This is patently false as Educational Support Professional members are just as active as professional members. This would correct that misimpression by calling both groups of members “active” and drawing the distinction based on the use of “professional” or “educational support professional”. This change was made several years ago in the NEA Bylaws, and this change would allow TSTA Bylaws to once again be consistent with NEA Bylaws.

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

3 INTENT: To ensure that the pro-rated dues for staff members joining after December 1 is only applied for the first year of membership.

Article III, Section 2, Paragraph F. 2. b. Staff Members

- b. Persons employed after December 1 shall pay one-fourth (1/4) the amount of the dues of Active-Professional members for the remainder of that year.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

4 INTENT: To clarify and update language that conforms to the current practices and procedures of TSTA-Retired.

Article III. Section 2, G.

G. TSTA-R Members

1. Qualifications
TSTA-R members shall:
 - a. Be ~~[retired school personnel or]~~ any person who pays the required dues who is at least forty-five years of age or who is eligible to receive a pension from an educational employment re-

tirement system including social security and who was employed at least five (5) years in a position that qualified him or her for active membership but who is no longer ~~so~~ employed;

- b. Maintain membership in NEA-R, and TSTA-R;
- c. ~~[May not]~~ Maintain membership in a TSTA-R [local] affiliate as provided in the TSTA-R Bylaws [where eligible under the constitution or bylaws of the local affiliate];
- d. ~~[TSTA life members must]~~ Join TSTA-R and NEA-R to participate in TSTA-R (even if a TSTA Life member); and
- e. Support the goals and objectives of TSTA and abide by these Bylaws.

2. Dues

~~[TSTA-R members shall pay annual dues of twenty-nine dollars (\$29) or payable life membership of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00).]~~

- a. Annual dues shall be set by TSTA-R, but shall not be less than twenty-nine dollars (\$29). TSTA shall rebate any amount over fifteen dollars (\$15) to TSTA-R. Unless a life member of NEA-R, annual dues-paying members of TSTA-R must also pay annual dues to NEA-R.
- b. In lieu of annual dues, a member may pay Life TSTA-R dues of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250). Members who join by paying Life TSTA-R dues shall not be required to pay any additional annual amount. A member who pays Life TSTA-R dues, but does not pay Life NEA-R dues, shall be declared inactive and not entitled to any benefits of TSTA-R membership after November 1 for that year or any subsequent year until NEA-R annual dues are paid.

3. Privileges

TSTA-R members shall be:

- a. Eligible to serve as a ~~[statewide]~~ voting delegate to the State House of Delegates if elected as a TSTA-R delegate [under

provisions of Article VIII, Section 2, D].

- b. ~~[Eligible to serve as a local voting delegate to the state House of Delegates if elected under the same ratio stipulated in Article VIII, Section 2, D.~~
 - e. Eligible to serve as a voting delegate to the regional house of delegates if elected under provisions of Article IV, Section 2, D. 1. e.
 - ~~d.]~~ Eligible to serve in appointed positions.
 - ~~[e.]~~ c. Entitled to such services as may be authorized by the Board of Directors.
4. Restrictions
- TSTA-R members shall not be eligible to be counted for any other local affiliate delegate allocations.
5. TSTA-R **Pre-Retired Life Dues** ~~[Membership]~~

- a. **Pre-Retired Life dues** ~~[Membership]~~ shall be **available** ~~[open]~~ to anyone who is eligible to receive a pension from an education retirement system including social security and who was employed at least five (5) years in a position that qualified him or her for active membership **but who is not yet eligible for TSTA-R membership because of remaining eligible for active TSTA membership. Pre-Retired Life dues shall be the amount of Life TSTA-R Pre-Retired dues at the time of application for payment of Pre-Retired Life dues.**
- b. TSTA-R Life **dues payers** ~~[Membership members]~~ have no governance rights through TSTA-R until **they are no longer eligible for active membership and notify TSTA to activate their TSTA-R Life membership** ~~[retirement]~~.
- c. TSTA-R Life Membership, **when activated**, does not constitute membership in NEA-R. **TSTA-R members must maintain membership in NEA-R as provided in paragraph G. 2. above. NEA Bylaws may provide for pre-retired dues payment for NEA-R Life membership.** ~~[Application]~~

for membership to NEA-R must be made at the time of retirement to remain a member of TSTA-R according to TSTA Bylaws and Standing Rules Article III, G. b. or an NEA-R life membership may be pre-purchased through NEA according to the current NEA Bylaws at the time of application for membership.]

- d. Application and full payment of **Pre-Retired Life dues** ~~[\$250.00]~~ may be made at any time after the eligibility requirements are met but must be made no later than August 31 of the year retirement benefits commence.

Article VIII, Section 2, E.

- E. TSTA-R Members
- TSTA-R members shall elect one (1) delegate for each seventy-five (75) members or major fraction thereof based on unified membership in TSTA-R and NEA-R on January 15 immediately preceding the state House of Delegates. **TSTA-R Bylaws may provide for the election of some or all TSTA-R delegates by TSTA-R affiliates.** The number of TSTA-R members who are elected delegates from eligible **TSTA-R** ~~[locals]~~ **affiliates** will be subtracted from the number of statewide delegates to be elected. TSTA-R members who are eligible to run for and vote in ~~[local]~~ **affiliate** elections **for delegates** are ineligible to run for and vote in the TSTA-R delegate statewide elections.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

5 INTENT: To enhance local association development and power by authorizing the Board to adopt a policy linking all or a part of the dues rebate for locals to the local adopting a plan to advance toward becoming a full-capacity local.

Article IV Affiliate Structure
Section 1 Local Affiliates

C. Minimum Standards of Compliance for Active Local Affiliates

An active local affiliate shall:

11. Adopt and work to implement an annual plan to advance toward becoming a full-capacity local as specified by the TSTA Board of Directors;

re-number current 11. as **12.** and current 12. as **13.**

- F. Grants
- Local affiliates in compliance with minimum standards shall receive a three percent (3%) grant of the membership dues paid to TSTA by Active and Educational Support Professional members of the local affiliate to be used for organizing and membership promotion. The Board of Directors may adopt a policy that permits local associations to receive interim grants. ~~[For every FTE (Full Time Equivalent) membership increase in the local association, the local will receive \$5.00 per every FTE member increase. TSTA will use the numbers from the previous calendar year, January 31 to the current calendar year of January 31, to award them payments on August 1 for membership increases.]~~ **The Board of Directors shall adopt a policy specifying under what circumstances a local that does not meet all standards of compliance may receive a grant of up to three percent(3%). Such policy may also include additional grants for locals that achieve membership growth, not to exceed \$5 per each FTE (Full Time Equivalent) member increase.**

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee as directed by 2005 House of Delegates in approving recommendations included in the Report of Collective Bargaining Task Force

Rationale: In order to achieve Collective Bargaining for education employees in Texas, the CB Task Force, in Recommendation 2, called on TSTA to develop a continuum for locals to follow in order to achieve enough power at the local level to get the local school board to implement an exclusive consultation policy. Recommendation 2, as approved by the 2005 House of Delegates, also called on appropriate governing bodies to take steps to link progress on

this continuum to receiving grants and rebates. This proposed amendment would change the name of the “local continuum” to “full-capacity local” and would require the Board to adopt a policy creating a link between progress and rebates. By authorizing the Board to do this through policy, rather than making the Bylaws more specific, it will allow the Board to take into consideration the different issues facing different locals relating to such factors as potential numbers, size and geography and more easily to make necessary adjustments over time. The change in the membership growth incentive is needed because the increasingly complex dues structure makes it difficult to determine a straight-forward “FTE” increase. Allowing the Board to deal with this through a policy will make it easier to deal with that complexity—and to ease the administrative burden of this incentive.

Vote Required: Simple Majority

Financial Impact: The financial impact on TSTA will be determined by how many and which of the locals currently meeting the minimum standards continue to do so and by the language in the policy adopted by the Board. Since the intent of the Amendment is to help locals build power and strength, it is anticipated that any savings to TSTA generated by some locals no longer receiving a grant would be offset by increased expenditures on behalf of those locals that do move toward becoming full-capacity locals, resulting in minimal financial impact on TSTA.

CB&E Recommends: Support

6 INTENT: To update language that conforms with current policies and procedures as well as use current year membership data to allocate delegates to the Regional House of Delegates.

Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph D. 1.

The Regional House of Delegates shall be composed of:

- c. ~~[TSTA SP delegates elected on the basis of one (1) delegate for each seventy five (75) TSTA SP members or major fraction thereof on May 31 of the preceding year in those regions that may provide such allocations;~~
- d. ~~Substitute Teacher members referenced under the provisions of~~

Article III, Section 2, D, 2, a, ~~[shall elected [delegates] on the basis of one (1) delegate for each seventy-five (75) Substitute Teacher members or major fraction thereof as of January 15 [May 31 of the year] immediately preceding the house of delegates in those regions which provide such allocation.~~

- e. ~~TSTA R members shall elect delegates on the basis of one (1) delegate for each seventy five (75) TSTA R members or major fraction thereof as of May 31 of the year immediately preceding the house of delegates in those regions which provide such allocation.~~
- f. ~~Texas Faculty Association members shall elect delegates on the basis of one (1) delegate for each fifty (50) TFA members or major fraction thereof as of May 31 of the year immediately preceding the house of delegates in those regions which provide such allocation.]~~

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

7 INTENT: To clarify the nomination and election timeline of candidates and to make the campaign time period for officers consistent with that for NEA Directors now that both elections are held at the House of Delegates.

Article V. Section 4.

Section 4. Nomination and Election

- A. Any qualified member seeking the office of President and Vice President shall file in writing with the Executive Director no later than September 15 of the membership year when the election is to be held.
- E. The election campaign time period for President and Vice President shall be from the end of business at the House of Delegates [July 15] prior to the election through the time of the election.

Maker: 2005 House of Delegates, NBI CB&E-1

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Simple Majority

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

8 INTENT: To provide a process for re-opening filing in case of an unforeseen event after the filing deadline has passed.

Article V. Section 4. Paragraph A.

Section 4. Nomination and Election

- A. Any qualified member seeking the office of President and Vice President shall file in writing with the Executive Director no later than September 15, except as provided below.
 - 1. If, after September 15 but more than thirty (30) days before the first day of the House of Delegates where the election is to occur, the withdrawal of a candidate from either race leaves fewer than two eligible candidates in that race, then filing for that office shall re-open for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of such withdrawal.
 - 2. If such a withdrawal occurs thirty (30) days or fewer before the first day of the House of Delegates where the election is to occur, open nominations from the floor of the House of Delegates shall be taken as the first order of business of the House of Delegates.
- B. The election of the President and Vice President shall be conducted at the state House of Delegates by secret ballot. In the event that only one candidate files for an office, or in the event that the procedures in either Paragraph A. 1. or A. 2. of Article V. Section 4 leave only one candidate for either office, then that individual shall be declared elected.
- C. In the event no candidate files for President or Vice President, the House of Delegates shall elect the President and/or Vice President using open nominations and secret ballot. In the event that there is only one candidate for a

position, secret balloting may be waived and the candidate declared elected.

D. In the event no candidate receives a majority, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

E. The election campaign time period for President and Vice President shall be from July 15 prior to the election through the time of the election.

F. Violations of the campaign time period will be reported, in writing, to the Advisory Committee. After a hearing before the Advisory Committee, the candidate will be removed from the ballot if the allegations are proven to be true.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Current Bylaws provide no method to add additional candidates to the ballot if some unexpected event were to cause a candidate to be removed from the ballot. This amendment would remedy that situation by re-opening the filing period. This would not apply so long as at least two candidates remain on the ballot (since there would still be an election) or if no candidate remained (paragraph C. deals with this contingency).

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

9 INTENT: To clarify language so that it reflects the intent of Article IX, Section 1, Paragraph A. 1 of the TSTA Bylaws.

Article V, Section 5, Paragraph A. 4.

4. Appoint all statewide committee members and chairpersons subject to the approval of the Board of Directors unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws;

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: This has always been interpreted to mean “statewide” committee members and not ad-hoc committees, so this change will simply clarify the language.

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

10 INTENT: To provide a procedure for at-large Board of Directors members to continue to have representation on the Board of Directors in the event of membership loss that would prevent supervisory and educational support professionals representation on the Board of Directors.

Article VII. Section 5.

B. The state House of Delegates shall elect by plurality vote sufficient supervisory at-large members to guarantee supervisory membership on the Board of Directors proportionate to the supervisory membership in TSTA as of January 15 immediately preceding the House of Delegates. In the event that the supervisory membership is not sufficient to provide for at least one such at-large place, the House of Delegates shall still elect one at-large supervisory Board member and the weighted vote for this Board member shall be adjusted to comply with the proportionate representation requirement.

E. The state House of Delegates shall elect by plurality vote sufficient Educational Support Professional at-large members to guarantee educational support professional membership on the Board of Directors proportionate to the educational support professional membership in TSTA as of January 15 immediately preceding the House of Delegates. In the event that the Active-ESP membership is not sufficient to provide for at least one such at-large place, the House of Delegates shall still elect one at-large Active-ESP Board member and the weighted vote for this Board member shall be adjusted to comply with the proportionate representation requirement.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: While it is unlikely the ESP membership would ever drop below the number required to ensure representation on the TSTA Board, it is possible that, as non-supervisory membership continues to grow, the supervisory membership may

drop below the percentage required to continue to have a supervisor on the Board. On many issues before the Board, it is helpful to have input from an administrative point of view before decisions are made. This would guarantee the continuation of that viewpoint on the Board. Use of weighted voting could ensure that supervisors do not vote with a strength beyond their numbers.

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

11 INTENT: To confirm Board authority to establish additional funds as necessary for financial stability and efficient operation of the Association.

Article X

Section 2. The Available Fund

A. The Available Fund shall consist of all funds received with the exception of those funds designated to the Permanent Fund and except as provided in Section 5.

Section 5. Other Funds

- A. The Board of Directors may, by Policy, establish such other Funds as deemed necessary for the financial stability and efficient operation of the Association.
- B. The Policy for each such Fund established shall specify the source of funding and the operating guidelines for said Fund.
- C. No Policy adopted pursuant to this Section may conflict with the provisions of this Article concerning the Permanent Fund.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

12 INTENT: To remain in alignment with NEA Bylaws and procedures.

Article XII, Section 2, E.

E. Ethnic minority:

Ethnic minority shall mean those persons designated as ethnic minority by statistics published by the United States Bureau of the Census. This designation shall conform to such designations used by the National Education Association [~~specifically include Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific American~~].

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: This will ensure that TSTA will stay in alignment with NEA on this matter and eliminate the need to come back and amend our Bylaws whenever NEA makes a change in these designations.

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

13 INTENT: To clarify and update language.

Article XIII, Section 4.

Section 4. Withdrawal of Proposed Amendments

A. Requests for withdrawal of proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee at least ninety (90) days prior to the state House of Delegates.

B. Requests for withdrawal of proposed amendments that meet the 90-day requirement [~~to the Bylaws received ninety (90) days prior to the state House of Delegates~~] may be granted by the Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee prior to being published as required above in Article XIII, Section 1. D. or, after such publication by the state House of Delegates, if [~~in session, based on requests made in the following manner~~] such requests meet one of the following requirements:

1. If originally proposed by a member(s), the request shall be signed by person(s) proposing the amendment;
2. If originally proposed by an affiliate, the request shall be signed by an elected officer and approved by at least a majority of the members of

the highest governing body of the affiliate;

3. If originally proposed by the Board of Directors, the request shall be signed by at least sixty percent (60%) of the members of that body, based on a weighed vote;
4. [~~If originally proposed by a previous House of Delegates, the request shall be signed by a majority of the delegates who attended that House of Delegates;~~
- 5.] If originally proposed by a TSTA Committee, the request shall be signed by sixty percent (60%) of the members of the committee(s) submitting the amendment.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Most of the changes are needed just to make it clear what the process is for withdrawing a proposed amendment before voting. However, number 4 is being removed because 1) it is unlikely ever to be used; 2) the administrative effort and cost for verifying signatures would be prohibitive; and 3) given that most delegates to a TSTA HoD one year were also delegates the previous year it would be much simpler just to vote down the proposed amendment if there has been a change of heart or mind.

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds)

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

PROPOSED EDITORIAL AND EXTRANEOUS LANGUAGE

1 INTENT: To change Article II Mission to reflect the changes made by the 2005 House of Delegates to the TSTA Mission Statement. In the future changes to the Mission Statement will be made as proposed Bylaw Amendments.

If this Editorial Change is Approved, Article II would then read:

The Texas State Teachers Association will unite, organize and empower public education advocates to shape public education in Texas thus providing a quality public school for every child.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds) by Voice Vote

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

2 INTENT: To make language grammatically correct in Article IV. 2. D. 1. b.

Article IV. 2. D. 1. Composition

The Regional House of Delegates shall be composed of:

- b. Local affiliate delegates shall be elected on the ratio set by each region's governing document provided the ratio maintains the one-person/ one-vote principle. Delegates shall be allocated on the number of Active, Educational Support Professionals, and Life members holding membership in the local affiliate on January 15 immediately preceding the House of Delegates. Major fraction shall be used in allocation of delegates. Locals not allocated a delegate based on the above ratio, but which maintain annual officers and meet the requirement under Article IV, Section 1, C, 11, shall be allocated one (1) delegate to the Regional House of Delegates;

Rationale: Same as Intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds) by Voice Vote

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

3 INTENT: To remove the transition proviso from Article IX Committees.

This proviso is no longer necessary as all of the terms are now staggered.

Maker: Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee

Rationale: Same as intent

Vote Required: Two-Thirds (2/3rds) by Voice Vote

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support



NASA Educator Astronauts Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger, Ricky Arnold, Joe Acaba, and Barbara Morgan with TSTA President Donna New Haschke (far left) and LaBeth Pondish (third from left) at Clear Creek Educators Association's "Lessons Learned from Space" event.

CLEAR CREEK

Sharing Space

"How did being a teacher prepare you to be an astronaut?" NASA's educator astronauts were asked at Clear Creek Educators Association's "Lessons Learned from Space" event in February.

"Being able to balance 15 things at the same time prepares you well," Ricky Arnold of Maryland, formerly a math and science teacher at the American International School in Bucharest, Romania, responded.

"Working with complex people in complex situations, and also being learners," said Barbara Morgan of Idaho, whose teaching experience ranged from Idaho to Ecuador to an Indian Reservation in Montana.

"Flexibility. As a teacher you have to be

flexible," Joe Acaba of California said. The former Florida math/science teacher gave a knowing smile to the crowd of Clear Creek ISD educators. "Do you show up at 8 and leave at 5? That never really happens, does it?"

During an informal chat at Space Center Intermediate School, the astronauts talked about their lives — before, during and after training to be astronauts (see <http://edspace.nasa.gov> for information about the training program). At tables around the room, educators and students shared ideas on integrating space-related lessons into the curriculum and TEKS, and NASA offered free materials.

Retired teacher LaBeth Pondish worked for a year to bring "Lessons Learned from Space" into being, based on her belief that, as Ricky Arnold put it, "Science is about the joy of discovery. It's

not about memorizing facts. It's about doing something!"

The event was sponsored by Clear Creek Educators Association, NASA, and Gulf Coast Educators Federal Credit Union.

The Clear Creek Educators Association invites interested teachers to participate in a space integration share-a-thon and reception.

Lessons Learned from SPACE

Clear Creek Educators Association

Meet NASA's Educator Astronauts: Barbara Morgan, Joe Acaba, Ricky Arnold and Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger as they share their enthusiasm for education. Come and learn the many exciting ways space can be integrated into classroom curriculum.

What: Clear Creek Educators Association, NASA/JSC and Gulf Coast Educators Federal Credit Union invite local educators to meet the newest educator astronauts during a reception and education share-a-thon.

Where: Space Center Intermediate School 17400 Saturn Lane, Houston, 77058

When: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16

Attendees receive two CPE hours

Tables are being provided to allow educators an opportunity to show how they integrate space-related lessons into the curriculum and TEKS. Come and gather new ideas from your peers.

Door prizes are being provided by the Gulf Coast Educators Federal Credit Union.

DONNA AND HOUSTON

Texas School Libraries Get NEA Foundation Grants

The NEA Foundation has presented A. M. Ochoa Elementary School in Donna (lead applicant: Dulce M. Castillo) and Epps Island Elementary School in Houston (lead applicant: Peggy Lobato) with Read Across America Library Books Awards. The \$5,000 awards were presented on behalf of NEA, with generous support from Warner Brothers, Inc., as part of the Polar Express Reading Challenge. They are to help public schools that serve economically disadvantaged students to purchase books for school libraries.

For more on the Foundation and all of its good work, see www.neafoundation.org.



CLEAR CREEK

The Power of One Person

Author Stephen Covey once said, "I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a 'transformer' in any situation, any organization." Pam Moak was that person in Clear Creek ISD three years ago.

Moak is a P.E. teacher at Landolt Elementary, which, at that time, was one of eight elementaries in the district with rundown, unattached gyms that desperately needed to be replaced.

"It had to do with health, safety and security," Moak said. "There weren't even any bathrooms in the gym; the children had to walk back to the main building."

Moak emailed all the P.E. teachers that were currently teaching, or had taught, in the detached gyms and asked for their experiences. "I found out that we had problems with black mold, rain leaking down gym walls, and that we had a PE teacher who had developed chronic bronchitis, and one who suffered permanent hearing loss, among other things, from teaching in those gyms," she said. "What I tried to do was include everyone who was being affected by this in the process. I guess that was my Site Based Decision Making Cadre training that I received from TSTA coming through!"

She called the chairman of the bond committee and wasn't even halfway through her list of reasons the schools needed new gyms when he stopped her. "Why has nobody brought this up before?" he asked, and he encouraged Moak to speak at the community input meetings.

"I went to two of the three meetings and took a different P.E. teacher with me to each one," Moak said. "I talked about the problem in general, and they talked about the specific issues in their schools, such as mold problems and bug problems. The bond committee voted to include us in the bond and it passed. My gym was just finished in November; the rest will be finished before the end of this school year. Even though we're the oldest schools, we have the best PE facilities in the entire district!"

Visit www.ccisd.net/schools/schoolwebs/112/pages/newgym.htm to see photos.



Thanks, Support Staff!

At its February 16 Winter Meeting, the Deer Park Education Association honored the Educational Support Professionals of the Year for each worksite in the Deer Park ISD. Presenting the awards were DPEA Vice-President Jocelyn Chauvin (front left) and DPEA President Gordon Gauthier (back row on the right).

NEA-Retired Discussion Boards

Now you can weigh in with your colleagues around the country at one of our discussion boards in the “Members Only” section of nea.org. Here's how you get there:

- Go to nea.org and click on “Members & Educators.” Click “login/register” in the top right corner of the nea.org banner OR click “Members Only” toward the bottom of the left menu column.
- On the right side of the registration screen click the “Register” button.
- Fill out the form.
- Now that you've registered, go back to the log in page (<https://login.nea.org/index.cgi>) and enter your e-mail address and password.
- When you get to the “Members Only” area, click “discussion boards” at the bottom of the page.
- Scroll to the “Member Groups” and click “NEA-Retired” to join or start a discussion.

Convention and Membership Information

- Active members can purchase pre-retired memberships. Purchase your life memberships for \$350 (\$250 TSTA-Retired/\$100 NEA-Retired). After September 1, 2006, an NEA-Retired Life membership will cost \$200.
- TSTA-Retired members should send total hours for their volunteer time to TSTA-R in Austin by April 18 for recognition at the convention (see bullet below for contact information).
- All current TSTA-Retired/NEA-Retired members are delegates to the state TSTA-R convention. It begins with registration at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 26; a House of Delegates, a banquet with NEA-Retired Vice President Tom Curan, several workshops, and a sightseeing trip are planned. The State Convention is at the La Quinta Inn & Suites, 11901 North Mopac Expressway in Austin, 800-531-5900. Rates are \$74/night plus tax; the deadline for making reservations is April 18. You also must let TSTA-R know by April 18 if you are coming to the convention; call Nina Armstrong at 800-324-5355, email ninaa@tsta.org or fill out the form below and mail it to TSTA-Retired, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701. Visit www.tsta.org/inside/retired/index.shtml for updates.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

TSTA-Retired State Convention

April 26-27, 2006 • La Quinta Inn & Suites—Mopac North
11901 North Mopac Expressway, Austin, Texas

For hotel reservations, call 800-531-5900 by April 18, 2006

Name _____

Street/P.O. Box _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home Phone _____

**Return completed registration form by April 18, 2006 to:
TSTA-Retired, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701**

NEA President to Speak at Student Convention



It's TSTA-Student Program's 50th anniversary, and NEA President Reg Weaver is flying in from Washington, D.C., to help celebrate! The convention is April 7-8 at the Red Lion Hotel in Austin.

Here She Is: A Student Program Member!

Miss Oklahoma, Jennifer Berry, was crowned Miss America 2006 in January. Berry, 22, is an elementary education major at the University of Oklahoma and a member of the NEA-Student Program. With the title comes a \$30,000 scholarship; Berry plans to pursue a masters degree.



G'day from Australia



President Haley Eska came home in December from student teaching in Australia. From her journal: “I have 25 students here in-

stead of my 82 in Waco, which is nice, but their 6th and 7th graders have all of the subjects with one teacher, which means I am ‘marking’ (grading) math papers and helping them with times tables and such. I have had to really go out of my comfort zone, since I am so used to teaching English only.

“The students have two play times, one at tea and one at lunch. I am here at the end of their year, so there are a lot of activities going on, like their swim carnival. Their PE time is swimming. Everyone must bring his or her ‘togs’ (swimsuit). I am having a lot of fun here and the students are awesome.”



Be a Presenter!

Spotlight your school district by participating in the Education Excellence Fair November 8 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. This is a chance to showcase what is happening in your school district with regard to technology. The submission deadline is April 22. www.nsba.org/t+l

Learn to Use Technology!

Are you an educator who recognizes the impact technology has on improving student achievement? If your answer is "yes" then the T+L conference in Dallas, Texas on November 8 -10 is the conference for you!

Cosponsored by TSTA, the T+L conference is recognized as the premier national event for educators interested in using technology in the classroom. The conference attracts over 2,200 educators from throughout the United States as well as internationally. It offers:

- Outstanding General Session speakers who will provide insights on classroom technology.
- Over 200 exhibits displaying the latest school technology products.
- Sessions to help you maximize the value of the technology in your classroom and the technology investment of your school.
- A wealth of unique networking and professional development opportunities, both during the conference and in pre-conference workshops and programs.
- It will help you address NCLB requirements, technology funding, strategies for closing the achievement gap, and new solutions to assessing student learning.

School districts are encouraged to send a team. Many districts send teachers, school board members, the superintendent, principals, technology directors, instructional coordinators, and even PTA members. A team discount is available. Districts that are members of NSBA's Technology Leadership Network (www.nsba.org/tln) receive a significant discount on registration, so be sure to check with your district technology director first. Conference registration opens in May, so bookmark www.nsba.org/t+l.



EDUCATE • INNOVATE • CELEBRATE

Dallas, TX • November 8 - 10, 2006



LiftOff This Summer!

You'll have the best "what I did on my summer vacation" story in the teacher lounge if you're selected to participate in the Texas Space Grant Consortium's weeklong professional development training for teachers. Known as "LiftOff 2006: Return to the Moon," the training emphasizes science, math, and technology learning experiences with a space science theme. Held at the Johnson Space Center, LiftOff 2006 features:

- Presentations by NASA scientists and engineers
- Tours of NASA and Space Center Houston
- Hands-on, inquiry based classroom activities
- Free curricula and space science materials aligned to educational standards
- Teacher Feature (sharing of ideas and activities)
- Opportunity to interact with researchers dedicated to space missions

Application deadline is April 14; see www.tsgc.utexas.edu/liftoff for more information. While you're at their website, visit the "Just for Fun" area, where students can play "Who Wants to Be A Martian?" and send a really cool postcard to their friends.

It's the Gold Standard

"Making the Choice to Be More," an article on National Board Certification that appeared in the winter issue of the *Advocate*, has sparked some interest. Here's a few tips on how you, too, can earn National Board Certification:

- Candidates submit four portfolio entries. Three of the entries are classroom-based and include videotapes and examples of student work as supporting documentation. One portfolio documents activities outside the classroom.
- At computer-based assessment centers, candidates are presented with six computer-delivered prompts (each allowing up to 30 minutes for response) that are designed to elicit knowledge of subject-matter content.
- Once the portfolio entries and the assessment center exercises are submitted to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, they are scored by classroom teachers and school counselors who have successfully completed intensive training (see related article).

Certification can take up to three years to complete, depending on the pace you choose. Some school districts offer stipends for certification; others equate it to an advanced degree.

Board certification costs about \$2400. The National Education Association offers low interest loans to cover the costs while you complete the certification (call 800-603-3953 or visit www.neamb.com/loans/loanbc.jsp for more information).

Two good websites for additional information are www.nbpts.org and www.nea.org/nationalboard/index.html.

Need a Summer Job? Become an Assessor

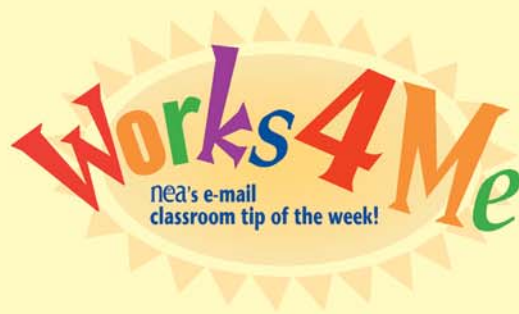
National Board Certification Assessor trainings will be happening in San Antonio and Dallas this year. Stipends are \$150 per day. Assessment will take place from June through mid-August. Those who serve as assessors find that their experience with NBPTS is better than any professional development that they experience. After all, assessing is a chance to read, see, and hear the best ideas from the best teachers in the nation! To apply for an Assessor position, go to www.nbpts.org/standards/assessors.cfm.

Are You a Star Teacher?

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting nominations for its 2006 American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize teachers who are improving student achievement using innovative strategies and making a difference in their lives. The deadline is April 15. For more information, go to www.teacherquality.us/Teacher-ToTeacher/AmericanStars.asp.

May the Exemplary Be With You

The George Lucas Educational Foundation was founded in 1991 as a nonprofit operating foundation to celebrate and encourage innovation in schools. Since that time, they have been documenting, disseminating, and advocating for exemplary programs in K-12 public schools to help these practices spread nationwide. The foundation publishes a useful and insightful monthly magazine called "Edutopia" as well as an electronic newsletter. Subscriptions are free! Go to www.edutopia.org.



NEA's Works4Me publishes weekly tips year round to subscribers. Sign up for weekly emails, submit tips, or view the library of more than 400 tips at www.nea.org/tips. Here are some recent tips, submitted by members just like you:

HALL PASS

"I use a small dry erase board as a hall pass. I ran across one at a discount store that was designed to be hung on a doorknob, so it has a hole at the top that becomes a handle for the student carrying it. I can write the student's destination on it with a dry erase marker, sign my name, and send him on his way. The marker stays in the classroom, so hopefully they go only where they have permission to go. It is kind of a novelty for the students, so they rarely leave the room without the pass, which helps me follow the rule about always giving students a hall pass."

SAVING THE MASTER COPY

"Have you ever used the master of a test or worksheet before you realized it? I've found a little trick to solve that dilemma. Just use a fluorescent yellow marker to write 'Master' on the top of the paper. The fluorescent won't show when the paper is copied, and the yellow will stop you from accidentally using the master."

FIRST NAME ALPHABETICAL LINES

"Kids often whine about cutting in line. To solve this, I have them line up alphabetically by FIRST name. This first person is the line leader all week. The next week, the line leader goes to the end of the line and a new line leader comes forward. Anytime the class needs to line up, it's done in this order. Kids who don't get along in line eventually find a truce through mediation and class meetings. I've done this with classes up through eighth grade in both urban and suburban settings."

PREVENTING SHOUT OUTS

"To prevent distracting shout outs, my students use sign language and gestures taught on the first day of class. I reinforce the signs throughout the first week. If a student needs to use the restroom, he/she forms the letter T by putting the thumb between the forefinger and middle finger in a raised fist position. I simply look at the student and shake my head yes or no. A raised pencil means it needed sharpening. I keep replacements handy. The letter W is formed with three middle fingers raised meaning water. For sickness, I request that students not stop and ask, but immediately go to the trashcan. I can figure that one out."



Personal Recordkeeping: What to Keep, What to Toss

By Liz Picone, NEA Member Benefits Consultant

How long should you hang on to your tax returns and other such documents and paperwork that tend to crowd your home office?

DOCUMENT	KEEP FOR	WHY
Tax returns & receipts	Seven years from filing date	The IRS has three years from filing date to audit your return and six years if they suspect significant underreporting of income.
Pay stubs	One year	Once you receive your annual W-2 form from your employer and check that they match up, you can shred or toss the stubs.
Home & auto titles, home repair	As long as you own the items	Titles are essential to transfer when you sell; receipts are necessary when you sell your house to calculate capital gains.
Bank statements, cancelled checks	Six years	Keep checks related to your taxes, business expenses or mortgage payments, and all bank statements, in case of audit.
Sales receipts and warranties	Varies	For insurance purposes, save receipts for expensive items, keep warranties until they expire.

More detailed information can be found at
www.neamb.com/memsvcr/communications/articles/0405_fb.jsp



TSTA/NEA

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org

2006 SPRING ENROLLMENT FORM

Please return this completed form to your Association Representative or mail to TSTA Membership Department, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-1892. If you have questions, call **877-ASK-TSTA**.

<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		
NAME			SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER			DATE OF BIRTH (M/D/Y)		
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		
ADDRESS			LOCAL ASSOCIATION			HIRE DATE (M/D/Y)		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>					
CITY	STATE	ZIP	NAME OF ISD					
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>					
EMAIL AT HOME			CAMPUS/WORKSITE					
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>					
EMAIL AT WORK			POSITION (I.E. CLASSROOM TEACHER, LIBRARIAN, BUS DRIVER, ETC.)					
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>					
AREA CODE	HOME PHONE	AREA CODE	WORK PHONE					

ETHNICITY

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-ethnic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | |

Ethnicity information is optional and failure to provide it will in no way affect your membership status, rights or benefits in NEA, TSTA or any of their affiliates. This information will be kept confidential.

METHOD OF PAYMENT

PAYROLL DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION (BELOW)

I hereby authorize the _____ School District to deduct the total amount of the annual obligation as set by the appropriate Association governance bodies in _____ equal payments in order to pay my dues to the professional associations and organizations listed and for political action contributions indicated. The authorization will continue in effect for the 2006-07 school year and future years, including any increase that may occur, until I give written notice to the local by September 15 of that year to revoke. I further authorize any unpaid annual balance to be deducted from my final check. The Local Association will notify School District officials of the annual dues amounts for all levels of the Association each year.

_____ Please check if you would like to receive TSTA's electronic newsletter, the *TSTA Briefing*, which is distributed by email at least once a week.

Send to: ☐ home email address ☐ work email address

FORMER TSTA-SP MEMBER?
____ YES ____ NO

The TSTA Political Action Committee (TSTA-PAC) and the National Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education collect voluntary contributions from Association members and use these contributions for political purposes, including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal office. Contributions to TSTA-PAC and The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. Although The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education requests an annual contribution of \$15, this is only a suggestion. A member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount, or may contribute nothing at all, without it affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or any of its affiliates.

Contributions or gifts to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, TSTA-PAC and local PACs are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

Federal law prohibits The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education from receiving donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families. All donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families, will be returned forthwith.

"I decline to contribute to TSTA-PAC and I understand this will not in any way affect my membership status or rights." _____ INITIAL _____

Annual membership dues to NEA include \$4.65 for NEA Today, \$2.60 for NEA-Retired and/or \$19.00 for the Higher Education publications. The NEA publication(s) received by members are based on membership category. Annual membership dues to TSTA include subscription to the TSTA Advocate. Membership is open only to those who agree to subscribe to the goals and objectives of the Association and to abide by its constitution and bylaws. To be eligible for TSTA legal defense funding, a member must have been a TSTA/NEA local member at least thirty (30) calendar days before the member knew or should have known of the events or occurrences upon which the action complained of is based. Exception may apply to first year employees who are members. As a participant in the Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association Early Enrollment Membership Program, I am eligible to receive prior to September 1, 2006 (but in no event before April 1, 2006) access to coverage under the NEA Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program, as well as access to select MBC programs. As a condition of eligibility for these benefits, I agree to pay the appropriate "unified" Active membership dues for the 2006-2007 membership year in accordance with the regular payment procedures. Should I fail to do so, my eligibility to receive benefits under the NEA EEL Program shall immediately terminate. In addition, I shall be liable for the cost of any benefits that were provided to me under the NEA EEL Program prior to September 1, 2006.

MEMBER SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

LOCAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE _____

TSTA receives high honors at La Quinta® and Baymont® Hotels Nationwide.



Up to 35%* off at more than 600 Locations Nationwide

We invite you to stretch your legs in our spacious rooms, recharge with a free continental breakfast and stay connected with free high-speed Internet access. All of our rooms offer the comforts of home like a coffee maker, hair dryer, iron and ironing board. Plus, kids 18 and under stay free in their parents' room.

**For reservations visit us online and use promotional code TSTA.
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