

READ ABOUT THE TEXAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR AND TSTA ESP OF THE YEAR

Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

WINTER 2007-08

GREAT TEACHING!

The path may be rocky but
the rewards are exhilarating.

Come to our Celebration of
Great Teaching, page 4

Stories about teaching,
pages 12 and 16



You Are Making Good Things Happen in Schools



As I travel the state, visiting schools and classrooms, I never cease to be amazed by what I see, as you are all working your magic to ensure the learning of ALL our children. Despite over-testing requirements and tons of paperwork and administrivia, you continue to persevere, teaching our kids and setting the example for them as superior role models. I commend you!

To that end, this month's Advocate features the Texas Teacher of the Year, the TSTA Educational Support Professional of the Year, a teacher whose life was forever changed by his first year in the classroom, an update on our parental involvement campaign, and news about our upcoming TSTA Educational Issues Conference entitled, "A Celebration of Great Teaching."

In light of what is happening around us, such as the controversy over the re-authorization of the No Child Left Behind (ESEA) law, the great debate over incentive pay and its various incarnations and implementations, other legislation that affects our lives as educators every day, and the looming 2008 elections, we need to reflect upon the positive side of our profession and those who represent us so well.

I know you will enjoy reading about Texas Teacher of the Year and TSTA member Paul Cain, a 30-year teaching veteran, who teaches math and physics at Ysleta High School in El Paso. You'll meet him at our "Celebration of Great Teaching" (below), along with previous Teachers of the Year Karen Shepherd and Dana Boyd.

Meet Ernie Salinas, the 2007 TSTA ESP of the Year, from Donna. Ernie is a walking success story, community activist, association leader, the voice for so many people in the Valley who look to him for support and assistance. What a wonderful example and role model he is!

Our Educational Issues Conference will be held January 11-13 in Austin. "A Celebration of Great Teaching" will inspire and excite all who participate, so I hope you will attend. You know, this collegiality, camaraderie and advocacy within our TSTA/NEA family reminds us that what we do every day in every way in the service of children is so very important. It is the reason why we became educators in the first place! It's all about the belief we have in what we do in our public schools that is so vital to this country.

It is, after all, about belief—no matter how many obstacles or challenges we face—we believe in each other, in hope, about never giving up or never giving in when it comes to helping our children succeed. It is about spending that extra 5-10 minutes giving a troubled youth our time and attention, for example. It's about belief that each and every child has a right to a quality education and a great public school. That each child, no matter what they do or say or how they look, has the potential to learn. And that you have the ability to help make that happen.

It is about YOU—the men and women in the education profession—who show your strength and courage every day. Yes, you never really give up or give in when it comes to kids.

THANK YOU for all you do. You truly are THE BEST!



TEXAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR: "I think it's imperative to start with the positive. We all strive for success."

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Advocate

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No matter how many obstacles or challenges we face, we believe in each other, in hope, about never giving up or never giving in when it comes to helping our children succeed.

Let's Celebrate!

Our TSTA Educational Issues Conference is
'A Celebration of Great Teaching.'

Great speakers,
great workshops,
great location.
You'll return home
ready to take on
the world, or at
least five more
months of school.



You know you're going to need a jump-start when you come back for the spring semester. We have what you need, all wrapped up in a weekend package.

"A Celebration of Great Teaching," TSTA's Educational Issues Conference, is January 11-13, 2008, at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel. Great speakers, great workshops, great location. You'll return home ready to take on the world, or at least five more months of school.

Read more about the conference and download hotel reservation and conference registration forms at www.tsta.org/teaching/current/teic07.shtml.

SPEAKERS: Our keynote speakers are House Public Education Committee Chair Rob Eissler and Harvey Kronberg of the Quorum Report.

Eissler was elected to the state House of Representatives to represent District 15 in November 2002. In his third session, he was appointed to serve as chairman of the House Public Education Committee; he also serves on the Human Services Committee. He has won several awards for his work in the legislature, including Honorable Mention in Texas Monthly magazine's Ten Best Legislators issue.

Back home, Eissler is the president of Eissler and Associates, an executive recruiting firm based in The Woodlands. A little personal background: after earning a B.A. in architecture from Princeton University, he served as a carrier-based attack pilot on the USS John F. Kennedy in the United States Navy. He was named one of 25 "Original Hometown Heroes" for The Woodlands and "Citizen of the Year" by the Chamber of Commerce. Eissler has also served as president of the Woodlands Rotary Club and a board member of the South Montgomery YMCA; he coached youth sports for 20 years; and he's one of the voices of high school football on the local radio broadcast of area games.

Harvey Kronberg is the writer, editor, and publisher of the Quorum Report,

which is self-described as "a multi-dimensional news, information and gossip source for the politically involved" that combines "fast breaking news along with institutional memory and a healthy skepticism as befits a publication whose subscribers include most of Texas elected officials, most of the lobby as well as most law firms with a legislative practice."

Former Lt. Governor Bob Bullock called Kronberg "the Capitol's most astute observer." He has been covering Texas politics since 1989. In addition to the Quorum, he is also a political commentator for News 8 Austin, a 24-hour news channel serving central Texas, and he has been cited in publications as diverse as Congressional Quarterly, The Wall Street Journal, The Dallas Morning News, The Houston Chronicle, and The Christian Science Monitor.

WORKSHOPS: Presenters include three Texas Teachers of the Year and experts in a variety of fields. TSTA is an approved continuing professional education provider; for those individuals who are on renewable certificates and

need continuing professional education, we will offer workshops that can be taken for credit. Here's a rundown of all the workshops we're offering.

Preparing Our Students to Be Active Citizens When We Don't Have a Test

Linda Krause, Lewisville Education Association and TCSS Outstanding Social Studies Teacher of the Year

In this time of high stakes testing, teaching social studies in the elementary classrooms often does not occur. This session will look at the effect high stakes testing is having on the curricular area that is not included in the assessment process of No Child Left Behind. Join us for some lively discussions.

A Conversation About Teaching: Why I Love It

Karen Shepherd, Plano Education Association and 2005-2006 Texas Teacher of the Year

Karen talks about the ups and downs of teaching that include her experience as a department chair and the importance of showing appreciation to both students and teachers.

TOP 10 REASONS TO GO TO TSTA'S EDUCATIONAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

1. It's fun.
2. It's motivational.
3. It's in Austin.
4. The three most recent Texas Teachers of the Year are presenting.
5. Rob Eissler, chairman of the House Public Education Committee, is the keynote speaker.
6. Harvey Kronberg of the Quorum Report will give us insider info on the legislature.
7. You can get continuing professional education credit.
8. Where else can you learn about everything from using Hollywood films in social studies to extreme strategies for extreme behavior, all in one place?
9. We'll have chicken fried steak.
10. You get to hang out for three days with a group of people who completely understand and appreciate what you do every day.

Go to www.tsta.org/teaching/current/teic07.shtml or call 877-ASK-TSTA.

Theater I as Core Curriculum, or Using Hollywood Films in Social Studies

Joel Rosenzweig, President, Association of Richardson Educators

Beginning with *In the Heat of the Night* and closing with a quiz—"Name that Era," a TAKS tutorial for 11th grade U.S. History—participants will use theater games and acting techniques to bring life to all social studies classes and see the value of Theater I as core curriculum.

Turning Teachers into Leaders Is the Path to Student Success

Dana Boyd, Ysleta Teachers Association and 2006-2007 Texas Teacher of the Year

Dana will discuss how her campus began to build teachers as leaders. After attending this session, you will leave with ideas on how you can do these same SIMPLE things to build teachers as leaders at your school which will lead to enhanced student success.

National Board Certification—Making Myself Better

Cynthia Carroll, Education Austin and 2007 Milken Award Winner

Becoming a National Board Certified

teacher will make you more effective in your classroom. Cynthia will take you behind the scenes and discuss her experience with the process as well as the benefits of the experience.

After School Activities—They're Not Just for Athletes!

Paul Cain, Ysleta Teachers Association and 2007-2008 Texas Teacher of the Year

This session focuses on the importance of after school activities that involve non-athletes. This session will be informative, interactive, and helpful to all teachers.

Response to Intervention in Texas

Texas Education Agency Staff

The Texas Education Agency's Special Services Division will provide the latest information on Response to Intervention as it relates to classroom teachers and special education teachers. Participants will benefit by learning state policy as well as ideas to implement effective RtI strategies.

Pre-K in Texas: Today and Beyond

Libby Doggett, Executive Director, Pre-K Now, Washington, D.C.

Voluntary, high quality pre-kindergarten

is spreading across the country as a proven way to narrow the readiness gap. This session will highlight what is happening with pre-K across the country with particular emphasis on Texas and discuss what teachers can do to help expand pre-K to more children.

Childhood Obesity: An Epidemic We Can't Ignore

Bryan Weatherford, Organizational Development Specialist, TSTA

The risk factors linked to childhood obesity and how the school experience is affected for children identified as being obese is something every educator should be able to identify. We will also review what educators can do to make the school environment a healthier place for all children.

Workplace Safety: Staying on the Job by Staying Aware

Greg Springer, Texas Department of Insurance Safety Training and Inspections

Know how to identify and use specific strategies to avoid dangerous situations and maintain your well-being.

Identity Theft & Cyber Security: Protect Yourself at Home and Online

Liz Picone, NEA Member Benefits

Picture yourself on a busy day. You write a check to the dry cleaner, withdraw money from an ATM, toss out junk mail, call to switch your phone service plan, pay for the tickets you won in an eBay auction and order a few things online before you go to bed. Chances are you don't give any of those transactions a second thought. But identity thieves do. They see your busy day as six opportunities to steal your money, your credit rating and your good name. Come learn ways to minimize your risk at home and online.

Extreme Strategies for Extreme Behaviors—There is Hope

Anna Jackson, Lubbock Educators Association

Learn how to modify behaviors of children who test your patience. This workshop involves self-evaluation as it

relates to your current discipline strategy and offers options for your future.

Healthy Bodies—Healthy Minds

Frederick Higgins, Assistant Commissioner for Food and Nutrition, Texas Department of Agriculture

This presentation provides an overview of the Texas Child Nutrition Program and highlights the nutritional value of school meals, including the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy, and how nutritious meals positively affect a child's learning ability.

Avoiding the Perfect Storm: Limiting Your Liability as an Educational Professional

Joey Moore, Legal Services Manager, TSTA

School employees can face a number of problems (employment, certification, civil, criminal) just performing their daily duties. This session will provide important information about legal

immunity and ways to avoid liability in the school house, school yard, or bus barn.

It May Be a New Year, But It's the Same Old Legislature, Unless...

Jack Kelly and Portia Bosse, Governmental Relations Specialists, TSTA

A brief recap of the actions of the 80th Legislature and why it will be important to get involved in the primary and general elections in 2008.

CANDIDATES ANNOUNCE FOR TSTA PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, NEA DIRECTOR AND ALTERNATE DIRECTOR

The TSTA election filing deadline for all available positions was September 15, 2007. Elections will be held at the State House of Delegates in Plano on April 19. Candidate statements and biographical information will appear in the Spring 2008 Advocate.

The candidates and position(s) for which they have filed are as follows:

- TSTA President/First Alternate NEA Director—Bayardo Arellano, NEA-Dallas; Rita C. Haecker, Education Austin; and Ann Heuberger, College Station Education Association.

- TSTA Vice President/Second Alternate NEA Director—Jason Reid Hillman, Klein Education Association; Wanda Nealy-Ward, Corsicana Educators Association; Joel Rosenzweig, Association of Richardson Educators; and Frances H. Smith, Cy Fair TSTA/NEA.

- NEA Director for Texas, Place 3—Ginny Lee Evans, Lewisville Education Association; and Winifred Jackson, Longview Educators Association.

- Third Alternate NEA Director—George E. Borrego, Association of Brownsville Educators; and Winifred Jackson, Longview Educators Association.




ELECT Rita Haecker TSTA President



One Strong Voice Your Association Choice

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Rita Haecker TSTA President



**Ann Heuberger for
TSTA President**
Experience...Commitment...Integrity
Proven Leadership

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Ann Heuberger TSTA President

IMPORTANT NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

Watch closely for the Spring issue of the Advocate. Ballots for electing TSTA state delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly will be printed in that issue. The deadline for the marked ballot to be received at TSTA Headquarters is 5 p.m., CDT, Friday, April 25.

TSTA/NEA 2007-08 EDUCATORS EMPLOYMENT LIABILITY PROGRAM

As a member of TSTA/NEA you are protected by comprehensive employment insurance against most legal claims while acting within the scope of employment. You are automatically covered by NEA's \$1 million policy (\$300,000 in employment-related civil rights violations) and by an additional \$5 million excess policy.* You are covered:

- If you are sued for liability arising out of your educational employment activities (as defined by the NEA coverage brochure).*
- Up to \$35,000 for attorney fee reimbursement if you are charged in an employment-related criminal proceeding and you are exonerated or all charges are dropped.*
- Up to \$1,000 for bail bond premium if you are arrested in an employment-related criminal matter. *
- Up to \$500 for personal property damage if you are assaulted on the job.*

*All coverages are subject to the specific terms, conditions and exclusions of the policies which are available to members upon request by calling the TSTA Help Center at 877-ASK-TSTA. The \$1 million NEA policy is underwritten by Lexington Insurance Co., a member company of AIG. The \$5 million excess policy is underwritten by United National Insurance Co., an A.M. Best Rated A+ (superior) carrier, and does not include civil rights coverage. Notice required by Art. 21.54 of the Texas Insurance Code: The insurers named herein may not be subject to all the laws and regulations of Texas. The

insurance solvency guarantee fund may not be available to you or to TSTA.

If you are involved in any situation which you believe may be covered by the TSTA/NEA liability insurance, immediately contact the TSTA Help Center.

NOMINATE YOUR MEDIA FOR A SCHOOL BELL

Community understanding and support for public education are significantly advanced by the media, through their interpretation of issues affecting public schools in our state. TSTA takes pride in sponsoring the annual TSTA School Bell Awards competition to recognize these contributions.

In addition to honoring outstanding Texas newspapers and local radio and television stations, TSTA this year has added an electronic media classification to recognize outstanding education web sites and outstanding education blogs.

Local associations will receive forms and instructions to submit entries in the various classifications (by size and/or frequency) and by the categories listed below.

Entries must have been aired, published or posted January 1 through December 31, 2007, and must be received no later than midnight, January 31, 2008, by the TSTA Center for Public Affairs, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701.

First place winners in each category will receive School Bell trophies at the April 2008 TSTA Convention in Plano. See www.tsta.org/news/current/awards.shtml for details.

The categories are:

PRINT MEDIA

- Outstanding continuous coverage of education news, increasing public understanding of school achievements, problems and programs
- Outstanding feature story interpreting school programs and education issues

- Outstanding collection of feature stories on a single topic interpreting school programs and education issues
- Outstanding feature series interpreting school programs and education issues
- Outstanding editorial interpreting school achievements, issues, and needs
- Outstanding collection of editorials interpreting school achievements, issues, and needs
- Outstanding continuing column interpreting school programs and education issues
- Outstanding special supplement featuring special events and educational programs
- Outstanding regular supplement featuring special events and educational programs
- Outstanding magazine article featuring stories interpreting school programs and education issues
- Outstanding political cartoon
- Special consideration

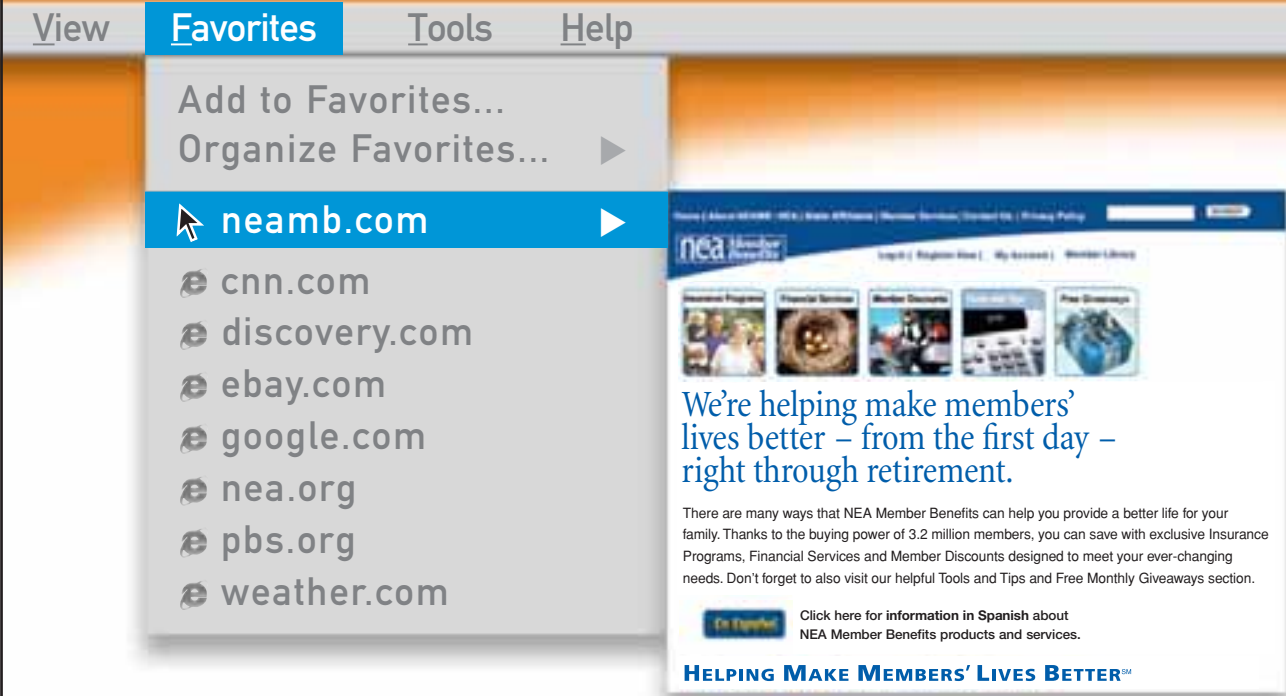
RADIO AND TELEVISION

- Outstanding continuous coverage of education issues and events
- Outstanding locally produced single program interpreting school programs or education issues
- Outstanding locally produced program series interpreting school programs or education issues
- Outstanding station editorial interpreting school achievements, issues and needs
- Outstanding collection of station editorials interpreting school achievements, issues and needs
- Special consideration

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- Outstanding education web site
- Outstanding education blog

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For more information, call 1-800-637-4636 Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET. Representantes que hablan español están disponibles a pedido.



Laredo Locals Promote Parental Involvement

The leaders of the TSTA locals in Laredo see major benefits from the parental involvement effort they teamed with Laredo ISD and United ISD to implement.

The three parental involvement meetings Laredo TSTA/NEA and Laredo ISD hosted, one at each of the district's three high schools, marked the first time in history that the Laredo school board and superintendent have supported a TSTA initiative, local leaders say.



TSTA ran radio spots in the Laredo, Brownsville, McAllen and El Paso media markets as the new school year began. The Spanish-language advertisements, funded by an NEA grant, promoted parental involvement to reduce the border region's high dropout rate. TSTA also developed posters and a brochure to accompany the radio spots.

TSTA's Laredo and Laredo United locals mobilized to supplement the radio advertisements with meetings to invite parents to become involved or to be more involved in their children's schools and homework.



In the photo at left: Ed Ronda, NEA Intern; Yolanda Gonzalez, TSTA Organizational Development Specialist; Dr. Sonia Sanchez, Cigarroa High School Principal; Rene De La Vina, Laredo TSTA/NEA President; Donna New Haschke, TSTA President; Marcelino Rivera, TSTA Organizational Development Specialist; Cordelia Cantu, Laredo ISD Parental Involvement Coordinator; Susan Salinas, TSTA Organizational Development Specialist; Deborah Flores and Ricardo Casiano, part-time TSTA consultants. In the photo above: Hilario Cavazos, Region 1C President.

The three Laredo ISD meetings drew 1,500 registrants, and the local estimates that many more parents actually attended than registered. The United ISD series of four meetings, one at each of the district's high schools, began later and was still under way as the Advocate was being compiled.

"We reached a milestone and a new future" thanks to the parental involvement effort, said Scott Roberts, the secretary of the Laredo local. The meetings gave parents a feeling of "ownership of schools," and that in turn gives students "a feeling of accomplishment, of being wanted."

"Teachers have always known that parental involvement is important," said Blanca Balboa, the president of the Laredo United Education Association.

"If you look at the successful children, they've got parental involvement," added Lorraine Squires, the United Education Association's treasurer.

"Parental involvement will counteract the gangs," which is a major concern in Laredo, said James Squires, United Education Association's vice president.

"This partnership is very, very important, and it's going to help us," said Cordelia Cantu, Laredo ISD's parent involvement coordinator.

Cantu explained that teachers alone can't bring about student success. Nor can schools do it alone. Nor even can parents do it alone. A partnership that involves parents, teachers and schools will do much more to accomplish that goal.

"I'm glad they approached us," United ISD Superintendent Roberto Santos said of TSTA's "extremely important" parental involvement effort. "It's going to be good for our parents."

The two Laredo districts have active volunteer programs, and the meetings with parents highlight those opportunities for parental involvement, recruiting more volunteers.

At Laredo ISD's Ryan and Hachar elementary schools, for example, parent volunteers provide much-needed assistance for teachers and administrators. That enables school personnel to spend more time with the students in their charge.

Children are more interested in school when they see their parents there. That motivates the kids and gives them confidence, parent volunteers from Hachar Elementary told the Advocate.

Parents who volunteer at school make a difference in the academic performance of their children and other kids, Ryan parent volunteers noted.

Parents see that becoming involved in their schools is easier now, said Kenneth Lara, a Laredo TSTA/NEA board member. And other parents can get ideas and inspiration from parents who are involved.

The effort also showcases TSTA as an association that not only stands for its members, but also is parent-friendly, the Laredo TSTA/NEA officers said. They expect this to significantly benefit the local.

The Laredo locals and school districts are talking about how to follow up the radio spots and parental involvement meetings to keep the excitement and momentum going. That will decide how successful the effort is in the long term.—Joe Bean

How My First Year Teaching Changed My Favorite Movie

BY MATTHEW WEBSTER

On any given Monday, I would be happy, sad, frustrated, elated, and worried all in the matter of five 50-minute periods.

For years, *Dead Poets Society* has been my favorite movie. This film, starring Robin Williams, details a charismatic teacher who turns his prep school students onto poetry, “not because it’s cute...[but] because we are members of the human race.”

Williams’ stirring performance propelled me through college. I delved deep into poetry because I, too, had been inspired, along with his students. I majored in English because my heart stirred when his character said, “medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for.” Idealistically, I hoped to write a few good verses which might encapsulate what Whitman, Louise Gluck, Robert Frost, and Charles Simic had. I dreamed of living as a penniless poet, true to my ideals and my art.

Six months after graduation, I was working as a waiter in a restaurant, frustrated that I had so little time for my “art” when I had to make ends meet. Plus, writing poetry and trying to get it submitted felt tawdry and forced. Not only that, but it was painstakingly slow; my creativity chafed with impatience, waiting for the rejection letters to come back. I also realized that I liked talking too much to be only a writer. That’s when I made the career change which forever altered my life.

I took a winsome challenge by applying for Teach For America in the spring of 2006. When I found out I was accepted and would be placed in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, I hesitated for a few days. My fiancée was only a year away from graduating law school in New York City, and this would be a two-year commitment. Plus, it was over 2,000 miles away from my nearest relatives and the majority of my friends. Still, I took it because it represented a change and a chance at satisfying work.

Traveling down to the Valley, I imagined it would be tumbleweed Cowboy country. In reality, I was headed to America’s Mexico. I was stunned to drive by a security checkpoint some 50 miles north of where I would be living. If the checkpoint is here, I wondered, does that mean everything south of it is no-man’s land, half Mexico and half America? The answer was a definitive “yes.”

The first year of teaching is a bipolar experience. Every day you give the same presentation to 130-140 students at least five times a day. You are invigorated by every student success, no matter how small. Conversely, you are distressed by every iota of disrespect and each hint of apathy. On any given Monday, I would be happy, sad, frustrated, elated, and worried all in the matter of five 50-minute periods.

I was beyond excited when I learned that I would be teaching a Creative Writing class at Rivera High School in Brownsville, Texas. Having studied poetry and submitted several poems for publication myself, I was eager to teach students with the same passion as me. On the first day of school, I learned otherwise.

“Mister, do we have to be here? I don’t think I get credit for this course.”

Unbeknownst to me, Creative Writing was a politically-correct term for TAKS remedial writing. Students had no choice in selecting my class—if they failed the written segment of the yearly TAKS state test, they had to take my class. Gone, then, were many of the intricate writing exercises and poetic forms I had hoped to cover throughout the year. I needed to make these students want to read and write. I had to become Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*.

I would be humoring myself to suggest that I had anywhere near the success of Mr. Keating, Robin Williams’ charismatic teacher. But I did manage to get my students to read self-written and published children’s stories at the local elementary. We did write letters to the editor of the Brownsville Herald, and my students posted book reviews on Amazon.com. Most importantly, we wrote a plethora of letters to our state senators and officials about our stance on the border wall.

Although I contemplated impersonating Senator John Cornyn when we had waited two months without an answer, we did finally receive an encouraging letter from him, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, and President George Bush. My students were amazed and empowered.

Which brings me to the present. I am now in my second year of teaching, though now I am teaching ESL students. *Dead Poets Society* is still my favorite movie, though for a very different reason now. I had it all wrong. At its heart, this movie is not about poetry—it’s about teaching and mentoring young people. Not a day goes by that I am not overwhelmed by the responsibility invested in me by my occupation. In teaching high-school English, I am forming people’s lives. I must always be reminded of my impact and my opportunity for shaping our future today.

Though my students tire of hearing me say this, I do love my job, and I feel my job is to give them the education they need to get a job they are going to love. Mr. Keating loved his job in *Dead Poets Society*, and I love my own role in the classroom, be it teaching poems or nonviolence, grammar or volunteerism, plot analysis or problem-solving. My life was forever changed in my first year of teaching. I will always respect the job of teaching; I could never dream of passing a bus whose lights are flashing. Gone are days of college socializing; I am a role model now, and I like that.

If Mr. Keating were a real person, I would write him a letter to tell him just how much his passion meant to me. As it is, I owe the world to my own teachers, Mr. Putnam, Mrs. Yoder, Mr. Guestwicki, and Mrs. Jannone. My hope is that their legacy lives on in some of my lessons each semester.

Matthew Webster teaches at Rivera High School in Brownsville ISD

Dead Poets Society is still my favorite movie, though for a very different reason now. I had it all wrong. At its heart, this movie is not about poetry—it’s about teaching and mentoring young people.

Ernesto Salinas Jr. identifies people who participate in the local's activities, then offers them greater involvement and training. That is vital to the local's future, he says.



Award Recipient Advocates for Members

BY JOE BEAN, TSTA PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

When the *Advocate* tried to reach Ernesto Salinas Jr. to arrange an interview, he wasn't able to respond immediately. He was busy advocating on behalf of members of Donna TSTA/NEA. A magazine profile was a lower priority for the 2007 recipient of TSTA's Ronnie Ray Educational Support Professional Advocate of the Year Award.

"If I can't help you, I'll find someone who will help you," the Donna local president tells prospective members. "That very day you have a problem, somebody's going to help you in some way."

Salinas' unstinting commitment to his local's members explains not only why TSTA recognized him with its coveted ESP of the year award, but also why Donna TSTA/NEA's ranks have grown from fewer than 200 to more than 800 under his leadership. He wants that number to reach 1,000 before he steps down as the local's president.

The Donna local president emphasized that having a substantial membership is important if the association is to accomplish its goals and be a successful advocate. He recalled that, when the local had far fewer members, a district trustee didn't pay much attention to him when he spoke at board meetings. But as membership grew, that board member started listening carefully to Salinas.

Salinas, who works as an attendance and payroll clerk at Donna's Saucedo Middle School, regularly speaks at school board meetings and frequently meets with the district's top administrators. He works to offer solutions to issues so they can be resolved without animosity or delay. He also speaks out as forcefully as needed when members have grievances.

Salinas advocates not only for Donna TSTA/NEA members, but also for the district's students. When he worked as the medical clerk for Donna's special education department, he navigated the complex regulations and paperwork for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to expand coverage for eligible students.

"If we don't have resources to keep kids healthy, what's going to happen?" Salinas asked.

"I wish there was a plan, state or national, where every kid had some type of insurance coverage."

Without insurance, parents aren't able to take sick kids to the doctor, he explained. So they won't recover as quickly and will miss more school because they're sick longer. Healthy kids, Salinas emphasized, are more productive and successful in school.

With Salinas as president, the Donna Lions Club helps fund eye exams for needy students. As the organizer of a youth baseball and softball league, he lobbied the city of Donna to build more parks for young athletes.

To ensure that the Donna local retains its membership and its clout when he steps down, Salinas is mentoring association leaders, much as he was mentored when he joined TSTA. He identifies people who participate in the local's activities, then offers them greater involvement and training. That is vital to the local's future, he said.

Salinas offered some suggestions for Texas' new commissioner of education, Robert Scott.

He urged the commissioner to advocate for a statewide pay scale for all school employees. Some districts are losing good employees because of insufficient pay. "We need to take care of our profession," Salinas said.

Next, Scott should push for a cap on administrator pay, which Salinas believes is sometimes excessive when compared with what teachers and education support professionals earn.

Then, the commissioner should work on boosting retirement pay, which also is insufficient, Salinas said.

The Donna local president's final words of advice were for his fellow TSTA advocates, based on his own successful work as an advocate: "We really need to stress the importance of TSTA to everybody—who we are, what we do. Project a positive image. Educate leaders to educate members."

"We need to stress the importance of TSTA to everybody: who we are, what we do. Project a positive image. Educate leaders to educate members."



Paul Cain with his students at Ysleta High School in El Paso.

SIGN UP
for TSTA's Newsletter
for New Teachers at
www.tsta.org

New to Teaching? Worried?

Texas Teacher of the Year Paul Cain knows just how you feel.

After one year in the classroom, Texas Teacher of the Year Paul Cain quit and went to work in a cafeteria. It was a combination of things: new teachers were provided no mentoring; they were assigned to all the lowest level classes with the least motivated students; and the paperwork was unbelievable. "I had no clue what reports and paperwork had to be done. I was always behind," Cain said.

He knew teaching teenagers in a public school would be different from his previous job of teaching adults in the U.S. Army Field Artillery School, but he didn't realize how different.

Mr. Cain dedicates a lot of time to students. He's here at 7:30 a.m., and he doesn't leave until late. He's created a family here. When I was a freshman, other kids said if you ever need help, Mr. Cain is the person to come to. Even though he didn't know who I was and I wasn't his student, he still helped me.

Amanda Guzman, senior class president

He goes out of his way to make sure everyone understands. He makes physics easy. A lot of teachers just focus on grades; he praises effort. He doesn't add on extra pressure. He makes it a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. He'll work with you after school or in the morning. He'll work with your schedule.

Patricia Pena, National Honor Society president

I've been teaching next door to Paul for 29 years. He has made a significant difference in my development as a teacher. He has a lot of insight. He knows what kind of teacher you are and how effective you are with the students.

He helps kids find their true interest and strength. He has so many former students who come back and keep in touch with him. He knows when they've been promoted or done something wonderful, because they let him know. It's a joy to see that. One of the amazing things about Paul Cain is his ability to fit so much into his world.

Ruth Hansen, fellow teacher who nominated him for Teacher of the Year

“Find someone you feel you can trust, who is good at their job, and follow them around. Do what they do.”

“If a student isn’t doing well in your military class and you outrank them, you own them. You can get them to come in for tutoring or whatever they need,” Cain said. “Besides, it’s for their job, so they want to get better at it.”

But at Ysleta High School, “I was spending too much time getting too little accomplished,” he said.

“Public school was an eye opener. I think it’s true for all new teachers,” Cain said. “You come in with a preconceived notion of what the classroom is going to be like. It’s rarely what you expect.”

He doesn’t blame the administration. “Math is one of those subject areas like science; the average administrator usually doesn’t come from those fields. And I was older than the average new teacher—I was in my early 30s—and I think they expected me to just do it. I got kind of dropped through the cracks.”

He decided he wasn’t cut out to be a teacher, and he went off to find something else to do, quickly landing a manager trainee position at Wyatt’s Cafeteria.

Fortunately, his assistant principal, Mr. Caldwell, was a frequent customer of the cafeteria. He talked Cain into giving teaching at the Ysleta ISD (El Paso) school another shot.

That was three decades ago. Cain is still there today, teaching Advanced Placement (AP) statistics, AP physics, pre-AP physics, and regular physics, and working with the National Honor Society, University Interscholastic League, Academic Decathlon, and Quiz Bowl.

This year, he was named Texas’ Teacher of the Year and he will compete in the spring for National Teacher of the Year.

Because of his own first-year experience, when Cain served as math department

chair at one point in his career, new teachers were his top priority.

He asked everyone in the department which classes they’d be most interested in teaching, and he made sure they got some of them. “For years classes had been assigned based on seniority,” he said. “I believe everyone should have something to look forward to during the day.”

But he also assigned everyone, regardless of seniority, to at least one lower level class because he wanted the input and involvement of his most experienced teachers at that level. “If we don’t do a good job in our lower classes, the advanced classes don’t exist,” he explained.

Another piece of his plan for new teachers was to make sure they shared a conference period with their mentors.

“Many of our experienced teachers have things to do after school: they coach, they sponsor extracurricular activities, they work with students. We wanted them to have time to encourage, help, push, whatever it took, to make our newest teachers feel comfortable,” Cain said. “Over the 18 years I was department chair, we rarely had a teacher leave. We became a really solid group.”

His advice for new teachers? “Find someone you feel you can trust, who is good at their job, and follow them around. Do what they do,” Cain said.

“And don’t plan to change the world in your first year of teaching; it can be crushing when you find out it isn’t going to happen,” he said. “You can make some significant contributions to the students and the school, and you’re going to be successful, but it’s going to take more than 15 minutes for it to happen. Be patient.”



WHAT’S CHANGED ABOUT TEACHING?

Teaching is a more demanding and difficult job now than it was 10 or 15 years ago, when a student’s world centered on his or her high school.

When I started teaching, kids didn’t always want to be in your class but they wanted to be on campus, because that’s where they all hung out. That’s where all the groups were. It was the place to be to meet friends and socialize as well as learn.

We now must compete for the students’ attention, and this is not easy. With the introduction of technology, they can communicate classroom to classroom, city to city. They don’t need to be in the same physical location. We’ve lost that edge. We need to find another edge to get them to come to school and be interested in being there.

WHAT NEVER CHANGES?

People say students don’t listen. I think students pay very close attention to what is said about them. I think they’re looking for the bright spots. It is much more likely that a teacher, parent, church person will tell you what’s wrong with your performance rather than what’s right.

I think it’s imperative to start with the positive. We all strive for success. We all go back to where we’re successful. Everyone likes a little praise.

I was taught in school that there is success in trying, not necessarily winning. It teaches perseverance, it teaches life skills. We have so many kids who say, “It looks hard, I don’t think I’ll even try.” Every kid has talents. If I have a physics student who’s a tremendous artist, I’m going to help him be a success at passing the physics class, then I’m going to point him toward the art teacher and say, “You’ve got a real talent.”

WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN STUDENTS?

Quiz Bowl. It’s college bowl at the high school level. Four against four, ring the buzzer, answer the question. The changes it can make in a student are amazing. They have to know basically a little about everything: science, history, math, current events.

If you’ve seen the change in a student through sports—they grow in self confidence, ability, and teamwork—this does that for academic skills. They learn to depend on one another because not everyone on the team can know everything. It’s learning life skills.

We now run six tournaments a year here for the city. We’ve gone border to border and coast to coast with our team. They earn varsity letters just like the football players. They’re as much a hero on this campus as the varsity quarterback.

Great Teachers

A Personal Investigation

BY DR. PAUL HENLEY, TSTA TEACHING AND LEARNING SPECIALIST

What makes a great teacher, anyway? Does it involve classroom management? Does it have anything at all to do with test scores? Does it have anything to do with the Professional Development Appraisal System?

These are hard questions. They are also subjective questions. Even student evaluations and PDAS scores are subjective measures, though numbers are attached to them.

A recent survey of college professors found that 94% of them considered themselves above-average teachers. There seems to be little evidence on how teachers view themselves, but there are ways to listen to those outside the profession and those new to teaching. But through all of the uncertainty, there are some patterns. In my investigation, I tried a number of groups. Their thoughts may surprise you.

The first attempt to get opinions was to survey the world through a tool called Yahoo! Answers (answers.yahoo.com). I asked a simple question: "What makes a great teacher?" I received nine responses. The first response was, "the ones who let you sleep in class." After that, responses became more serious. A sense of respect was mentioned, as well as an individualized approach, one which recognizes the differences of all students.

AT THE CROSSROADS

The next step dealt with student teachers. Student teachers are very new to our profession, and they are at halfway across a bridge from student to teacher. After they had seen the profession directly for nine weeks, I polled them using postcard-sized pieces of paper with the title, "What Makes a Great Teacher? What Is Great Teaching?" They had five minutes to respond.

Some responses came in lists. Others came in sentences. There were patterns, responses that appeared regularly. The word "caring" appeared most of all. The second most common response was a love of teaching ("Great teaching is PASSION!"). Classroom environment came in third. Student teachers see several qualities in a great teacher's classroom environment. That environment is emotionally safe, positive, motivational, student-focused and respectful of all learning styles. The ideal environment includes



high expectations of students, as well. Content knowledge, classroom management, and planning were mentioned, but not nearly as often.

ONE STUDENT RESPONSE SUMMED UP MOST OF THIS

"I think a great teacher is someone who cares for his/her students. A great teacher is someone who believes in his/her students, is someone who tries to find the way to motivate, and also lets his/her students know that there is someone who... expects a lot from them. A great teacher is someone who has patience and love for this profession."

A GOOD TEACHER DOESN'T...

I spoke with a few of my Teaching and Learning colleagues at a meeting in

Phoenix. The key way they identified good teachers was first thinking of really bad teachers. The good teachers were the ones who didn't do what the bad ones did. This reaction was present in every group, though not as often.

ONE OTHER SURVEY

On Microsoft Encarta, Tamim Ansary also polled a mix of people, asking them, "What makes a good teacher?"

From their answers, he was able to distill a list of the top ten traits. Great teachers:

- make you feel special.
- teach you how to learn.
- inspire you with their passion.

- engage your whole being.
- keep you focused.
- open you up to new experiences.
- have no agenda.
- make the complicated simple.
- give clear explanations.
- show you how everything ties together.

When reading the press releases for Texas Teachers of the Year and Milken Award winners, the same patterns appear: these teachers care about their students, they approach their profession with creativity, and they demonstrate a love of teaching: three things that make a great teacher from any perspective.

Your Dreams

You have an idea to boost student achievement. The NEA Foundation can make it possible.



Consider the following projects:

In a Houston school still struggling to serve the influx of evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a third grade teacher implements a program to provide the enrichment necessary for gifted students to succeed beyond grade level expectations. Students work as a team to solve a problem and present their solution to a real world audience at a regional competition. Expanding their problem solving skills, students engage in an independent research study, create a professional level product around a topic of their choosing, and submit their advanced product to be scored by trained appraisers.

Through "Show Me the Money," a sixth grade social studies teacher uses numismatics to introduce science and social studies students to both the ancient and modern worlds. Students at the McAllen school clean, classify, and create a timeline for bronze coinage of ancient Imperial Rome and explore the modern world of the past century through the coinage of dozens of countries on six continents. In addition to gathering, organizing, and displaying data, students produce written compositions and create a board game specific to a coin type from a country of their choice.

These teachers applied for \$5,000 Student Achievement Grants from the NEA Foundation and were notified this summer that they won.

The purpose of the grants is to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging them in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection.

Do you have a dream? The next application deadline is February 1, 2008. See www.neafoundation.org for details.

BUS DRIVER WINS GRANT

Another grant NEA offers is the Learning & Leadership Grant, which pro-

vides "opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development and lead their colleagues in professional growth."

Deborah Hays, a Klein ISD school bus driver, used her grant to participate in leadership training that prepared her for the role of driver trainer within her department.

Other Learning & Leadership Grants awarded this year, in Texas alone, allowed:

- a Garland middle school band director to develop teaching strategies for band and orchestra through participation in the Midwest International Band Clinic.
- a teacher and English department chair at an Austin area school to complete a course required to earn National Board Certification.
- a San Antonio campus instructional technologist to attend the Texas Distance Learning Conference in preparation for offering training and development workshops to help teachers develop online instruction in support of modifications to curricular requirements.

Grants are \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study. The next application deadline is February 1, 2008. Visit the NEA Foundation at www.neafoundation.org for more information.

SOCORRO WINS LEAVE FOR ESPS

Last year, Socorro Education Association discovered that Socorro ISD was not giving part-time education support professionals state leave days. They also were not receiving matching local days, as Socorro ISD policy requires. Local President Glenda Hawthorne and TSTA Organizational Development Specialist Gonzalo Becerra-Weir had been trying to get it resolved, but they weren't seeing any clear response from the district, so

SEA decided it was time to file a grievance. As a result, SISD has agreed to credit part-time ESPs with state and local leave, retroactively to 2002-2003. Some employees have gained as much as 60 leave days (five state, five local per year).

TSTA STUDENT PROGRAM

Congratulations to Nawase Sherman of Lamar University, Oraleyda Cantu of the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and Krystal Walker-Herron of Sam Houston State University for being voted by the 2007-08 Executive Committee to attend the NEA-Student Program Connections Conference in Kentucky this November. They will be representing our organization, along with Tawna Pitts, District III President, and Erika Mendez-Gutierrez, TSTA-SP Communications & Instructional Advocacy Committee Representative, at this year's conference. We know they will have a wonderful experience and we are looking forward to seeing how much they grow as TSTA-SP future leaders.

Another big congratulations goes out to our District III President, Tawna Pitts, on her appointment to the NEA-SP Advisory Committee. Tawna will be representing Texas and all of the Student Program members on the committee for the 07/08 year. This is the first time in many years that Texas has had one of our members serve on the committee, and it is a great honor. We are all thrilled that she is willing to give her time and expertise to work with the NEA.

I have great news to share with everyone! The NEA approved both of our grant requests, so that means we will be able to move forward with our community outreach project for the State Convention. Our SP Coordinator, Ann Heuberger, will be working diligently to find a school for us to work with on Friday afternoon, March 7. I hope all of you will be able to arrive in Austin Thursday evening or early Friday morning so you can join us in this exciting first time endeavor! I would

love to hear your thoughts or ideas about this event, and the upcoming convention in general, so email me. Leighanne21@gmail.com—*Leigh Anne Meeks, TSTA-Student Program president*

TSTA-RETIRED

The TSTA-Retired Board of Directors met in September with an interesting agenda. One of the items was to create a Vision and Mission Statement. In the past, we have referred to TSTA's Statement. Now, we have our own. It can be found on our web page at www.tsta.org/inside/retired/missionstatement.shtml.

TSTA staff member Nina Armstrong retired this past year after many years of service to TSTA and TSTA-Retired. She has gone that extra mile for us so many times and continues to be active in our organization. We wanted to do something very special. TSTA-Retired presented our first Associate Membership to her at a Retired Region 4C October meeting in Fort Worth.

Another first for TSTA-Retired is that the Board has endorsed a candidate for the President of TSTA. The election will be conducted at the TSTA House of Delegates in April.

Calendar of Events:

- Ballots for TSTA-Retired Secretary and Treasurer, Retired delegates for the TSTA State Convention and the NEA Representative Assembly will be mailed in February. Ballots must be received at TSTA-Retired by March 20, 2008.
- The NEA-Retired Western Regional Conference will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on April 22-24. Watch for more information in This Active Life, NEA's magazine for retired members. All reservations must be made online. If you have trouble, please contact Kara Knorpp, TSTA-Retired, 512-476-5355 or 800-324-5355.
- The TSTA-Retired State Convention and Retreat will be June 16-18, 2008.



At the October TSTA-Retired 4C meeting in Fort Worth, retired TSTA staff member Nina Armstrong was presented with an associate membership. Shown are Johnetta Williams, Bobby Southwood, Pauline Dixon, Nina Armstrong, Letha Grace McCoy, and Jerry Watkins.

Activities will be at the Holiday Inn Select in Salado. All members of TSTA-Retired/NEA-Retired are delegates and invited to attend. This will be an informative and fun time. Please make an effort to join us. Retired issues will be addressed. Watch for more information. —*Letha Grace McCoy, TSTA-Retired President*

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www.nea.org/members/wrlc.html



Austin to Host NEA Conference

NEA annually hosts regional conferences throughout the United States that are designed to educate members about NEA programs and activities, encourage more active involvement in NEA, develop personal leadership skills, and provide opportunities to attend hearings on NEA's budget, legislative program, and resolutions.

The Western Regional Leadership Conference is January 18-20, and the Minority Leadership Training Seminar immediately precedes it on January 17-18. Both will be at the Hyatt Regency Austin on Lady Bird Lake (Town Lake).

This year's conference theme is "Great Schools—Great Locals—Great Leaders." It will focus on community outreach and communications, building strong affiliates, and current educational issues. The agenda includes state and special interest caucus meetings, educational workshops, and open hearings. The \$150 registration fee covers group meals, breaks, and conference materials. Only online reservations will be accepted. For details on the conference and to register, visit www.nea.org/members/wrlc.html.

Austin is the site of NEA's Western Regional Leadership Conference this January

NEA ESP CONFERENCE TO MEET IN BALTIMORE

The 2008 NEA Education Support Professionals Conference is March 7-9, in Baltimore, Maryland. Preconference workshops will be held March 5-7. This conference is a great opportunity to develop new skills and learn more about relevant, important issues facing education support staff.

The registration deadline will be late January 2008. Only online reservations will be accepted. For details, visit the NEA ESP website at: www.nea.org/esphome/members/espsconf08.html.

2008 AMBASSADOR ACADEMY

It's been said that leadership is the capacity and the will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence.

Are you interested in becoming a leader? Do you want to know more about TSTA and NEA? Would you like to discover more about yourself as an individual? Are you interested in learning problem-solving skills? Would you be willing to utilize those skills in your local association?

The potential for leadership resides in all of us. TSTA's Ambassador Academy provides an opportunity for you to develop and expand leadership skills as well as gain knowledge about the association. If you are interested in discovering more about yourself, learning problem-solving skills, and then utilizing those skills in your local association, consider applying for the TSTA Ambassador Academy.

The requirements for the 2008 Ambassador Academy, which will be held in Austin June 18-22, have expanded to provide greater opportunities for emerging leaders from across the profession to benefit from this dynamic training. The goal of this

year's Academy is to include emerging leaders across TSTA regardless of years of experience in education. To be eligible for participation, you must have never held an office in a local association above the level of Association Representative.

The impetus of the training focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills to facilitate your capacity as a leader. The Ambassador Academy will also give the participants an opportunity to experience the inner-workings of their state Association, a chance to meet the staff at TSTA Headquarters, and an opportunity to develop skills in relational organizing, issue organizing and establishing connections with potential members

You will also develop a plan of action, which will enable you to use your skills in your local. This provides an oppor-

tunity to build relationships as a TSTA/NEA Ambassador by networking with members and leaders in your local and with Ambassadors from across the state. Ultimately, you will be expected to become an active leader in your local association and implement the goals you developed during the Academy.

If you are interested in applying to the Ambassador Academy, you can download the application as a word document by going to www.tsta.org. If you would like the application mailed to you, call TSTA and ask for Kara Knorpp. Please email, fax or mail the completed application, including letters of recommendation, to the TSTA office by April 30, 2008. That address is: Texas State Teachers Association, ATTN: Ambassador Academy, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. You may also fax it to (512) 486-7043 or email to karak@tsta.org.

TSTA/NEA EVENT DATES

JANUARY

- 11-13 TSTA's Educational Issues Conference, Austin
- 17-18 NEA Western Region Minority Leadership Training Seminar, Austin
- 18-20 NEA Western Regional Leadership Conference, Austin
- 31 TSTA-Retired Board of Directors Meeting, Austin
- 31 TSTA School Bell Award Nomination Deadline

FEBRUARY

- 1 TSTA Professional, Human and Civil Rights Awards Nominations Due
- 1 Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award Nominations Due
- 1 TSTA Advisory Committee Meeting, TSTA Headquarters
- 2-3 TSTA Board of Directors Meeting, TSTA Headquarters
- 8-9 Texas Future Teachers of America State Convention, Austin

MARCH

- 1 TSTA Pride in Communications Award Nominations Due
- 3 NEA Read Across America Day
- 7-9 NEA ESP National Conference, Baltimore, MD

129th Annual TSTA Convention



The annual TSTA Convention will be in Plano on April 18-19, 2008. All convention events will take place at the Marriott Dallas/Plano at Legacy Town Center, a beautiful hotel nestled among unique shops and award-winning restaurants.

WANT TO BE A DELEGATE?

The TSTA House of Delegates (HoD) serves a vital role in the governance of TSTA and helps to shape the future of our organization. The HoD may establish goals for TSTA, amend its bylaws, and act on recommendations from the TSTA officers, board, or committees. Elections for TSTA officers and for NEA director and alternates are held at the HoD annual meeting.

If you are interested in being a delegate, please contact your local president for details on how delegates are elected in your local. If you do not have a local or your local does not hold delegate elections, please contact your regional president. Allocation of delegates is based on membership totals as of January 15. Local delegate election results must be reported to TSTA by March 15.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the convention begins at 7:00 am on Friday, April 18, and continues through Saturday, April 19. All TSTA members and guests are welcome to attend the HoD and convention, but only delegates with proper delegate badges are allowed in the designated delegate section and voting area. Non-delegates/alternates and guests are encouraged to register.

CONVENTION EVENTS

Open hearings will be held Friday morning on the proposed '08-'09 TSTA budget and any proposed bylaws amendments or NEA Resolutions. Additional topics may be added. Professional development workshops eligible for continuing education credit will be offered Friday morning and afternoon.

The House of Delegates will begin Friday afternoon and continue throughout Saturday. Voting will take place Saturday

morning. We are planning a Local Presidents Summit for Sunday morning. Look for more information and convention updates on the TSTA website.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

The Marriott Dallas/Plano at Legacy Town Center is holding a room block for TSTA convention attendees. Make your reservation with the hotel by **March 26, 2008**, to ensure your room at the group rate of \$129 plus tax (currently \$145.77). This rate applies to single/double/triple/quad occupancy. Complimentary self parking is available to TSTA hotel guests. Non-hotel guests may self park for \$8 or valet park for \$12 daily.

Reservations can be made with Marriott online at <http://cwp.marriott.com/dalpt/tstaconvention/> or by calling 800-228-9290 or 972-473-6444. You may also fax the lodging form provided below to 972-473-6440. Please note: A first night room deposit secured with a major credit card is required for all reservations. This deposit is refundable for cancellations if notice is given to the hotel before 6:00 pm on the day of your scheduled arrival. Please use our Group Code: TSTTSTA.

The hotel is approximately 17 miles (30 minutes) from both D/FW International airport and Dallas Love Field airport. You must make your own arrangements for transportation between the airport and hotel. Transportation costs average \$55 for taxi service or \$25 for shuttle service—please feel free to take advantage of the Super Shuttle discount coupon for this event, which can be downloaded from the Marriott reservation page.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Members who do not have a roommate but would like to share accommodations should contact TSTA's Center for Executive and Governance (CEG) at 800-324-5355, ext. 1543, 1510 or 1514, before making your hotel reservation. We will try to match members who want to share expenses, though we cannot guarantee a roommate for everyone.

Persons who are physically challenged or have special needs should contact the CEG no later than April 11, 2008, to arrange assistance during the convention. Payment for special needs requests such as wheelchairs or transportation is the responsibility of the member or delegate, but TSTA will help arrange for services.

TSTA HOST COMMITTEE

TSTA would like to thank this year's host committee, appointed by President Donna New Haschke, for their efforts to ensure a warm welcome and pleasant stay while we are in Plano.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 17

8:15 a.m. Advisory Committee Meeting
1:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
6:00 p.m. Candidates Meeting

Friday, April 18

7:00 a.m. Registration
8:00 a.m. Special Interest Exhibits
8:00 a.m. Open Hearings
9:15 a.m. Professional Development Workshops (CPE Credit)
11:00 a.m. Press Conference
11:00 a.m. Professional Development Workshops (CPE Credit)
12:30 p.m. School Bell Awards Ceremony

1:00 p.m. Parliamentary Procedures Workshop
1:45 p.m. Caucus Meetings
2:30 p.m. House of Delegates Opening Ceremony and Meeting

Saturday, April 19

6:30 a.m. Registration
7:00 a.m. Regional—TSTA SP—TSTA R Meetings
8:00 a.m. Special Interest Exhibits
8:30 a.m. Voting/Elections
10:00 a.m. House of Delegates Meeting
12:30 p.m. Lunch and Caucus Meetings
2:00 p.m. House of Delegates Meeting

Sunday, April 20

9:00 a.m. Local Presidents Summit Meeting

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

TSTA 129th Annual State Convention

Marriott Dallas/Plano at Legacy Town Center • Plano, Texas • April 17-20, 2008

COMPLETE AND RETURN TO HOTEL BY MARCH 26, 2008.

Check-in time for the hotel is 3:00 p.m. and check-out time is 12:00 noon

MARRIOTT DALLAS/PLANO AT LEGACY TOWN CENTER

(TSTA Headquarters Hotel)

7120 Dallas Parkway, Plano TX 75024

Telephone: 972-473-6444 • Fax: 972-473-6440 • Group Code: TSTTSTA

ROOM TYPE, RATE AND SPECIAL REQUESTS—MARK ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED

☐ Double/Double ☐ King ☐ Handicapped Room ☐ Refrigerator (as available)

Cut-off date for ALL rooms and room rates is March 26, 2008. All rooms are subject to a 13% room tax.

I will arrive April _____, 2008 at _____ (a.m./p.m.) and will depart April _____, 2008.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

LIST ALL INDIVIDUALS PER ROOM (ONE NAME PER LINE):

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

A deposit equal to the first night's room rate per room is due at the time reservations are submitted. Room deposits should be made with a major credit card to assure your reservation. Should cancellation be necessary, you must advise the hotel before 6:00 p.m. on your arrival date. If the hotel is not advised, you will be responsible to pay for space held.

Approved major credit card: _____ Credit card #: _____

Exp. date: _____ Name in which credit card is issued: _____



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