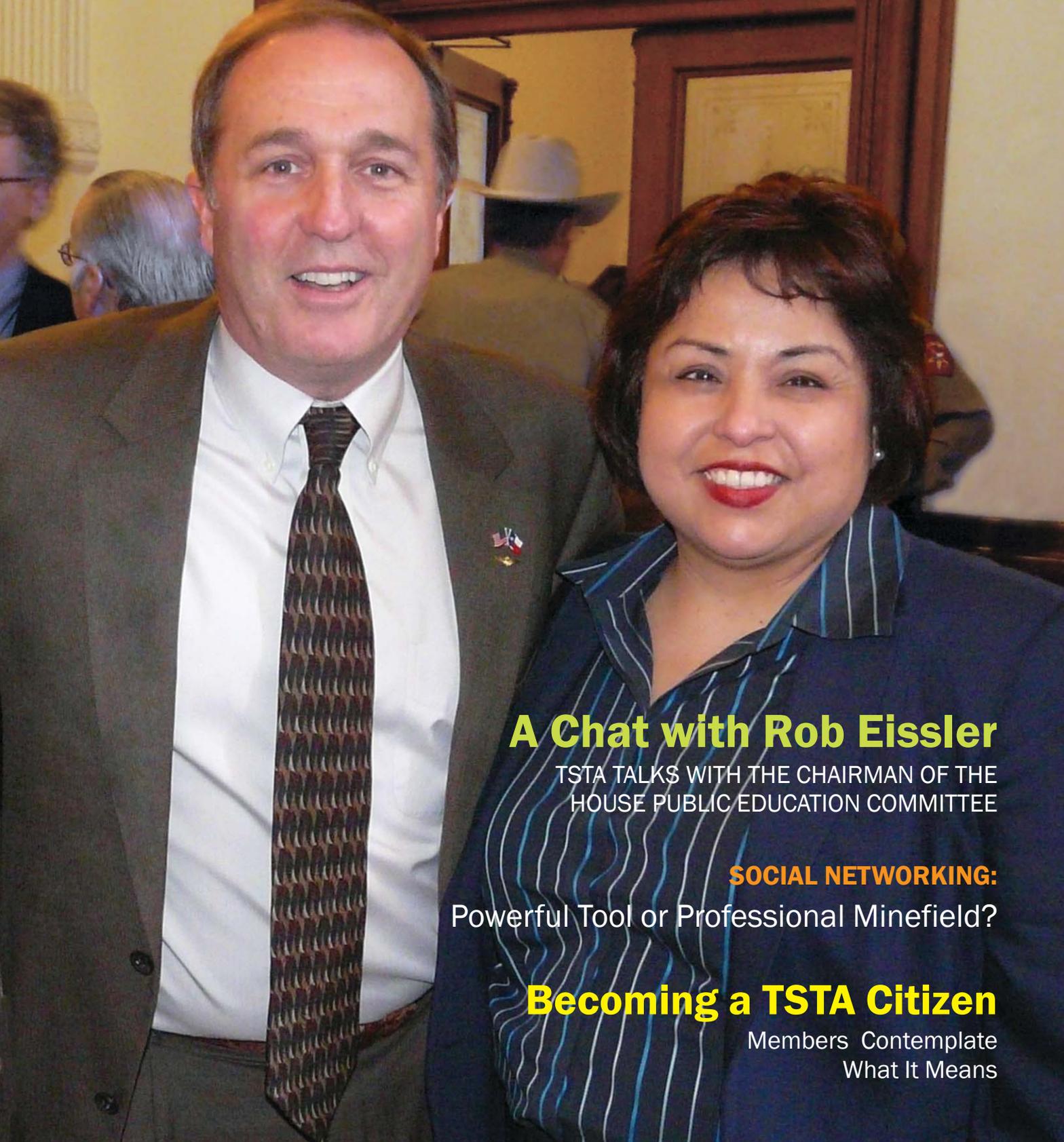


TIPS FOR LIVING ON LESS • DELEGATE ELECTIONS • H1N1 FLU AGAIN?

Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

FALL 2009



A Chat with Rob Eissler

TSTA TALKS WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SOCIAL NETWORKING:

Powerful Tool or Professional Minefield?

Becoming a TSTA Citizen

Members Contemplate
What It Means

Building the TSTA Team, One Member, One Citizen at a Time



During the summer break, we in TSTA experienced the collective power of our locals and leaders in growing our association. Preliminary reports show a boost in both new and overall membership. That is the basis for what we do, but it is only the beginning, not the end.

As we embark on this 2009-10 school year, we must remember that we as TSTA advocates are committed to our mission of ensuring great public schools for every young Texan.

As educators, we know how important it is for our communities to invest in our schools. That is how we make our schools better.

Despite the ongoing economic downturn affecting our state and the 81st Texas Legislature's failure to systemically reform public school finance this year, many of our locals succeeded in winning pay raises for members. Many locals also succeeded in winning improvements in working conditions for teachers and for ESPs.

The decision-makers in those districts understand the importance of investing in our schools. They know that we will not have great public schools without paying and treating school employees as the professionals they are.

As TSTA leaders, we engage every day in critical conversations and actions at the district level to ensure that our students' educational needs are met and our members are being heard. Our voices must be a key part of the decision-making process in our school districts on everything from pay and working conditions to addressing our students' academic growth as the new state accountability standards the Legislature adopted this year begin to take effect.

We must set our priorities in choosing which education issues our TSTA locals will organize around this year. We have to use our time and our resources wisely, where they will do the most good. This is critical to making the gains that we must continue to see in our students' academic success.

As activists, we must be fully engaged in the political process to elect officials from school board members to state legislators to a governor who will not only take our issues seriously, but also will meaningfully support our public schools and the employees who work in them.

Individually, each TSTA member does important work each day in our public schools. Collectively, we need to do even more for our schools as we multiply our power in members as citizens of TSTA. Working together to ensure great public schools for every child in Texas, we will do what none of us individually can fully achieve by ourselves.

—TSTA President Rita Haecker



TSTA LOCAL PRESIDENTS meet during the TSTA Leadership Academy in Austin in July.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 4 EDUCATION NEWS**
TSTA Leadership and Ambassador Academies energize members for the new school year; TSTA Board of Directors meets; two Texas Teacher of the Year nominees are TSTA members; planning for lodging for the state and national conventions; Texans elected to NEA posts; H1N1 flu; Associate Executive Director Roger Montgomery retires.
- 10 A CONVERSATION WITH CHAIRMAN ROB EISSLER**
The chair of the Texas House Public Education Committee talks with TSTA about the legislature and education.
- 14 SOCIAL NETWORKING 101**
Social networking is a powerful tool for connecting with others; just be smart about how you use it.
- 16 USING FACEBOOK AND TWITTER**
Now that you know how to use social networking safely, how can you use Facebook and Twitter as tools for learning?
- 18 ACTING LOCALLY**
News from TSTA's local associations in San Antonio, Socorro, Laredo, Dallas, Alief, Arlington, Ysleta, Tyler, Birdville, Lewisville and Cypress-Fairbanks.
- 22 STUDENT AND RETIRED NEWS**
While in San Diego for the national student conference and the NEA Representative Assembly, TSTA-Student Program members helped to transform a local school and participated in Read Across America. TSTA-Retired has new officers, and elections and meetings are coming up.
- 24 HONORING EXCELLENCE WITH TSTA AWARDS**
TSTA offers several opportunities to recognize outstanding educators, education support professionals, regional and local associations and other individuals and organizations that support public education.
- 26 NATIONAL DELEGATE ELECTIONS**
The NEA Representative Assembly will be in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 3-6, 2010. Preconvention meetings and workshops begin June 25.
- 28 TSTA STATE CONVENTION DELEGATE ELECTIONS**
TSTA's state convention will be April 16-17, 2010 in San Marcos.
- 30 LIVING SMART, LIVING ON LESS**
Former New York Times personal finance columnist Mary Rowland offers suggestions for personal finance in these trying times.

Advocate

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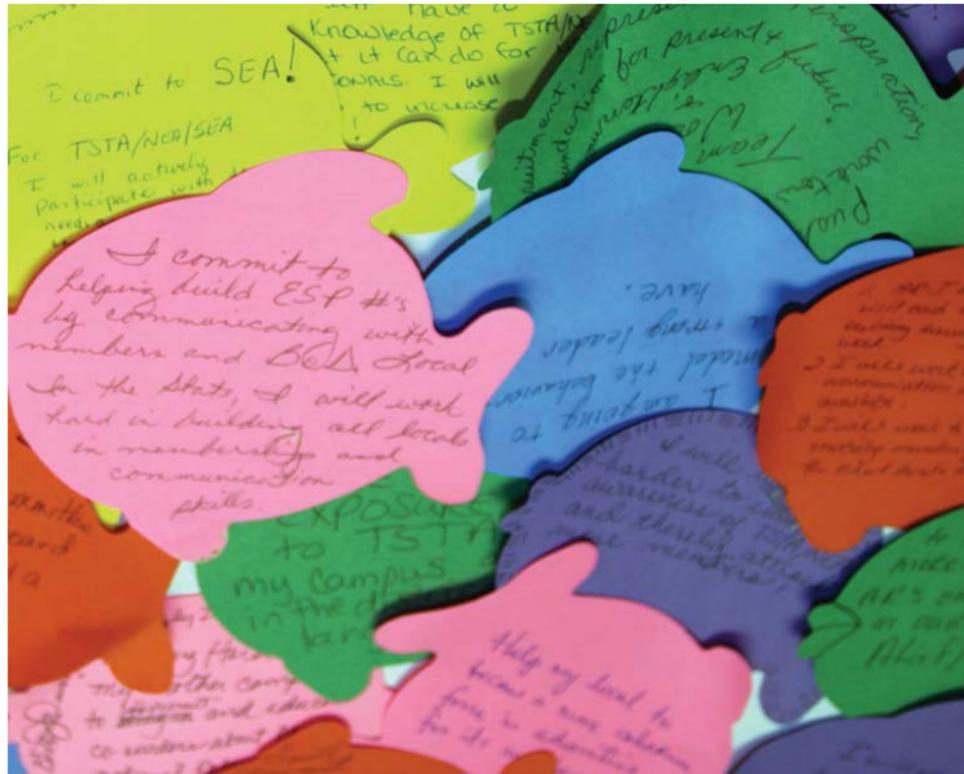
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Traveling the Path to Citizenship



In the photos: Leadership Academy participants contemplate what it means to be a "citizen" of TSTA, and 2009 Ambassador Academy graduates pose for a group shot at TSTA Headquarters (bottom photo, right page).

For some, this summer's TSTA Leadership Academy was a shift in thinking. A commitment to work toward the greater good. An understanding that to be a true "citizen" of this association, one must embrace the TSTA Mission and Vision Statement: "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." That common vision is, after all, what sets us apart from other organizations, whose "vision" seldom extends beyond cheap liability insurance.

TSTA local associations send teams of four to six people to the Leadership Academy in Austin each summer because they return

reenergized, with the tools, knowledge and mindset needed to build a "full capacity" local association.

One activity at this year's academy illustrated the significance and importance of collective action while providing an opportunity for members to share their specific plans. Each member wrote his or her pledge on a small paper fish, then placed them on the wall, one by one, to form one giant fish. It illustrated the point President Rita Haecker makes in her editorial: "Working together to ensure great public schools for every child in Texas, we will do what none of us individually can fully achieve by ourselves."

See more photos of the event at www.tsta.org/inside/about/photoalbum.shtml.



AMBASSADOR ACADEMY ROCKS

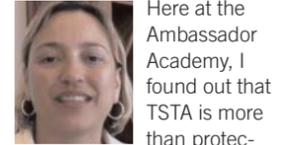
For one intense week in July, 22 energetic emerging leaders assessed their own leadership skills and personality type; networked with members from all over the state; met TSTA leaders and staff; and learned more about the association. This year, for the first time in the Ambassador Academy's nine year history, candidates also participated with current leaders in three hands-on general sessions of the 2009 Leadership Academy, working together to plan the association's future.

By the end of the week in Austin—when each candidate was called to the front of the room, congratulated and awarded a certificate by TSTA President Rita Haecker

and Vice-President Jason Hillman—they had earned the title of TSTA Ambassador. They went home ready to make a difference.

A team from TSTA's Organizing Center for Affiliate and Leadership Development pulled the week together: Antonio Galindo and Bryan Weatherford, co-coordinators; Brenda Pike, assistant executive director for Field Operations; Diana Wilkerson, administrative manager; Bianca Prado-Espinoza, secretary; and Susan Salinas and Jason Wylie, trainers.

Visit www.tsta.org/inside/calendar/ambassador.shtml for more information on the academy, and check out the photos at www.tsta.org/inside/about/photoalbum.shtml.



Here at the Ambassador Academy, I found out that TSTA is more than protection. There are a lot of other things that TSTA and NEA offer to members, and we as the ambassadors are the voice to spread the word of what is really TSTA/NEA and what it can do for you. We had a lot of fun here at the Ambassador Academy, and I met a lot of people. I'm ready to go back to the local and start working!

Glorimar Yace, Cypress-Fairbanks



TSTA has been such a wonderful experience, especially this year's Leadership Academy and Ambassador Academy. It's just been great. I've met some awesome people in leadership and just individuals who are doing things that we normally wouldn't have a chance to talk about. Hopefully we can continue the relationships that we started at this year's Ambassador Academy.

Dennis Thomas, Grand Prairie



I'm a 2009 Ambassador Academy graduate. (TSTA/NEA) offers us protection but not only that, it has a common goal to improve public education and to improve the lives of our students. You build camaraderie, you build leadership abilities and you can really make a difference, not only in your community but in the world around you.

Susan Seaton, San Marcos



TSTA's Board of Directors met at Austin Headquarters in September.

TSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS STARTS A NEW YEAR

TSTA members elect regional representatives on the Board of Directors. The Board also includes the TSTA officers, education support professional and supervisory representatives, the NEA Directors for Texas and the presidents of the TSTA-Student Program, TSTA-Retired and Texas Faculty Association. For names and contact information go to www.tsta.org/inside/about/bod.shtml.

TWO MEMBERS NAMED TEXAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Of the six teachers named as Texas Teacher of the Year finalists, two are TSTA members: Virginia Solis-Cera, a fifth-grade language arts and social studies teacher at J.L. Sambrano Elementary in San Elizario ISD, and David Bolster, a seventh-grade science teacher at Bernard Harris Jr. Middle School in North East ISD in San Antonio.

In her application, Solis-Cera wrote that educators have a responsibility to set high standards and goals for their students. "To expect anything less than what the students can achieve if they try and work hard, is a

failure on the part of the educator. To accept mediocrity from the students when we know they are capable of more is mediocrity on the part of the educator. This is why it is extremely important for educators to always remain cognizant of this and give their best every single day."

"There is no greater accomplishment than helping a child," Bolster said in his application. "That is why I teach. Knowing that I am sending young people out into the world with a heightened sense of their role as citizens, consumers and learners makes me feel good about what I do. I know I am making a difference with them, and that's what I get out of bed each morning to do."

The Texas Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year will be announced at a luncheon and ceremony Oct. 30 at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center in Austin. All 39 regional winners will be honored, and each will receive a \$500 check and a trophy. The top two teachers will receive a \$5,000 cash prize, a technology package valued at more than \$15,000, a trophy and other mementos. <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/edex/awards/toy.html>



WHAT DID YOU DO ON YOUR SUMMER VACATION?

Cornelius Anderson of Denton played drums with award-winning artist Aaron Nigel Smith of the television show "Between the Lions." The photo above was taken at San Diego's PETCO Park during a Read Across America event preceding the NEA Representative Assembly.

Ellen Upton of Elgin shot photos for a multimedia project to educate students on the science behind wind energy. A group from the Central Texas Regional Collaborative toured the world's largest wind farm near Abilene in June.

POCKETBOOK PLANNING FOR STATE, NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Planning to be a delegate to TSTA's 2010 State House of Delegates or the 2010 NEA Representative Assembly? If so, you may want to start planning now for the travel expenses for these events. Detailed lodging and delegate information will appear in the

winter and spring issues of the Advocate, but here is a preview of what to expect.

State House of Delegates, April 16-17, 2010, San Marcos: The Embassy Suites Hotel is the official convention hotel for TSTA's House of Delegates. The nightly room rate for this all-suite property is a flat \$154 plus tax, currently 15 percent. The hotel provides complimentary breakfast and evening manager's reception. Daily self-parking is free. The hotel provides shuttle service to the San Marcos Outlet stores and restaurants. The hotel is located 38 miles from the Austin airport and 41 miles from the San Antonio airport.

NEA Representative Assembly, July 3-6, 2010, New Orleans, LA: The first Texas Caucus meeting is scheduled for July 1 at the Texas delegation hotel, the Doubletree New Orleans. The nightly room rate is \$149 single occupancy or \$169 double occupancy, plus taxes and fees, currently 13 percent. If more than two people share a room, a \$20 fee per each additional person will apply. Limited valet parking is available at the hotel on a first-come basis for \$35/day. Daily self-parking is available across the street in the Canal Place Mall for \$15/day, which includes overnight parking but no in-out privileges. The hotel is conveniently located to a variety of shopping and dining venues. The hotel is approximately 16 miles from the New Orleans airport.



TEXANS ELECTED TO NEA POSTS

At NEA's annual convention, the Texas Caucus re-elected Gordon Gauthier of Deer Park and elected Barbara Davis-Staley of Tyler and George Cordova of El Paso (Socorro) to the NEA Resolutions Committee, which prepares and presents to the Representative Assembly resolutions that are proposed for adoption.



WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE FLU

As the Advocate went to press, the nation was anticipating another bout with H1N1 influenza. The advice was the same as with seasonal flu: wash your hands often (for 15-20 seconds or about the time it takes to sing the happy birthday song twice), cover coughs and sneezes, keep your hands away from your face and if you do get sick, stay home.

The Centers for Disease Control have issued a fact sheet for teachers:

Educate and encourage students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.

Remind students to practice good hand hygiene and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.

Be a good role model by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

Keep an eye out for sick students and send them to the school health office for further evaluation. Sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact, such as desks, door knobs, keyboards or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.

Teachers should also stay home when sick. Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu, you should speak with your doctor as soon as possible if you develop symptoms of flu-like illness. People at high risk of flu complications

who develop flu can benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.

If you have children, plan ahead for child care if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.

Be prepared in case the flu becomes more severe:

- Develop options for how school work can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or your students are home because someone in their household is sick.
- Be prepared for sick students or staff to stay home for at least seven days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after seven days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- Allow high-risk students to stay home. These students should make this decision in consultation with their physician or other health professional.
- Find ways to increase social distances (the space between people) in your classroom. For example, you might rearrange desks so that there is more space between students, consider cancelling classes that bring students together from different rooms or postpone class trips.

Stay up to date on the latest news and recommendations about the flu at the following websites:

- Texas Education Agency www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=5477
- Texas Department of State Health Services www.dshs.state.tx.us/txflu
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services www.flu.gov
- The Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu



ROGER MONTGOMERY RETIRES

It was a sad day at TSTA Headquarters when Deputy Executive Director Roger Montgomery announced his plans to retire at the end of August.

“All of us who work for TSTA, and all of the TSTA members, owe a debt of gratitude to Roger for the extraordinary effort he has made for the last nine plus years,” TSTA Executive Director E.C. Walker said. “His competence, professionalism, knowledge and patience were key ingredients in getting TSTA finances on track – indeed, in getting TSTA turned around.”

After leaving a position in public accounting with Price Waterhouse, Montgomery invested almost 40 years working for NEA and its affiliates. He began in the accounting and financial area at NEA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., in 1969, later moving to Florida (1976-82), Georgia (1982 -87), New Mexico (1987-2000) and Texas (2000-09).

“I am pleased to have had the great fortune to work with such extraordinary people in so many and varied organizational and professional successes, opportunities and challenges during my NEA career. Each of those opportunities was both professionally rewarding and personally gratifying,” Montgomery said. “I’m proud of the things we’ve been able to accomplish to advance organizational and member interests. Thank you to the leaders, members and staff of TSTA for the opportunity to be a part of the TSTA story. I wish you all the very best as the journey continues.”

His wife Amy, an administrative manager in the TSTA Membership Division, retired at the same time; Adriana Montoya from TSTA Public Affairs has taken her place. Babs Didner assumed the role of Chief Financial Officer and director of the Organizing Center for Business and Technology.

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A Conversation with Chairman Rob Eissler

“I didn’t get everything I wanted on House Bill 3, but then I don’t know if anybody did.”

Rob Eissler earned a degree in architecture from Princeton University. He was a carrier-based Navy attack pilot during the Vietnam War, where, he’s happy to say, he “had the same number of takeoffs as landings.” He loves his Kindle and iPhone. And he compares children to popcorn. How does that relate to his role as chair of the Texas House Public Education Committee? Read on.

Eissler, a Republican who has lived in The Woodlands for 25 years, is president of Eissler and Associates, an executive recruiting firm, but his avocation is public education. He says education is in his blood.

TEACHING: MAYBE IT’S IN THE GENES

“A lot of my forefathers were teachers. In fact, my grandfather was an English teacher. He quit Harvard Law to go into the Marines to fight in World War I and never went back. And he became a teacher,” Eissler

said. “My aunts were high school principals in Philadelphia. So it’s funny how you kind of gravitate. Maybe it’s in the genes.”

He spent 18 years on the Conroe ISD Board of Trustees with two terms as president. “Eighteen years on a school board gave me a little bit of insight. In fact, I would say one of the biggest lessons I learned on the school board is top-down decision making doesn’t work. It only works for a very short time, like for a week,” he said, “so you better get the people that have to implement something involved, for a couple of reasons: so you know what the challenges are and they have buy-in. As long as they know they have the opportunity to be heard, they’ll participate.”

HB 3: TRYING TO FIND A BALANCE

Eissler was elected to the House of Representatives in November 2002; he was ap-

pointed to chair the House Public Education Committee in 2007 and 2009; and he made Texas Monthly’s list of “Top 10 Legislators” in 2009.

When asked what the 2009 Legislature accomplished for schools, teachers and students, Eissler cited the switch in graduation requirements from one high-stakes TAKS test to a series of end-of-course tests. “Our plan was to change the accountability system, make it more up to date, have it focus less on one test and listen to the stakeholders,” he said, recalling that the committee sought stakeholder input right up to the night before they presented the bill on the House floor. The idea, he said, was, “Rather than say, ‘You missed by one point, you’re going to repeat the whole year,’ why don’t we treat the weakness, why don’t we determine the weakness and strengthen it?”

Is he happy with the results? “I didn’t get everything I wanted on House Bill 3, but then I don’t know if anybody did. But look what the vote on it was. That was, hey, we all had our say,” he said of the unanimous vote. “With House Bill 3, we had so many different groups, it was more of a circle, and the dot was in the circle, so you could move subtly but not greatly in other directions because we were trying to find a balance.”

MAKING SCHOOLS RELEVANT TO POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

While changing the accountability system, the Legislature also addressed the school dropout problem. “You have to do more than just grade schools on what their percentages are,” Eissler said. “We put a stronger emphasis on career and technical, because there are kids that will see that as relevant. When you really study where the dropouts are, you get kids that say, ‘Hey,

I’ve got to earn money for (my) family; I can’t continue this school stuff.’ No matter what we tell them, that’s their thought, because that’s where the pressure is. But if you say, ‘Hey, if you’re taking this welding course or this computer design, you’ll get a much higher-paying job if you just wait a couple of years,’ maybe they’ll hang tough and won’t drop out. Because I think not being able to do the work is about the fifth-ranked reason for dropping out. It’s not because the kids can’t do the work. I think it’s they can’t see the relevance in school.”

This is a concept Eissler says he personally understands. “The reason I like the career and technical aspects of House Bill 3 is when I was in school I wanted to learn how to do something, so in college, that’s why I went for architecture. I thought I could learn a skill,” he said. “When I saw that military service was in my future, with a draft number of 10, I wanted to learn how to fly. That way I could acquire a skill.”

HOW MANY CHANCES DO KIDS GET?

Among the upcoming public education challenges for the Legislature are finding the most effective sanction for a school that’s not performing and finding either measures or indicators for the earliest signs of imminent failure, Eissler said.

“How many chances do kids get to go through school? Every year is important. Every year builds on a previous one,” he said. “When you try something new, how long does it take you to find out if it’s effective?”

It takes time to catch up and get back on the right track, and that’s why House Bill 3 includes a growth measure (measuring how much progress the individual student makes over the course of the year), Eissler said. We can’t assume “every child will start out in August-September and learn the



same, at the same rate, the same amount by May or June. That doesn't happen."

He loves the analogy a teacher gave him, that teaching is like popcorn. "You'll hear a couple of pops early, then you'll hear most of them...and then if you leave it on the fire...you'll get a few late ones," Eissler said. "That's almost the same way kids will learn a concept in class. You get a few that get it early, but most of them get it at one time. And then, he didn't say this, but thinking about it, about those late poppers, if you leave it on the heat too long, you'll start burning the ones that have already popped. So where's that balance?"

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011

Will we see changes to House Bill 3 language? "I'm sure we will, because somebody didn't get their amendment or, gee, you dropped it from the conference committee and I really wanted that. We'll talk about it again, and I'm sure something else will come up," he said. "Maybe there'll be some technology that needs to be addressed."

Technology is one of his favorite topics. "I'm captivated by it," he said, pointing to the Kindle and iPhone on his desk. "I've seen the Promethean ActivBoard, which I think is a great deal. They are really neat, because anything you can put on a laptop, you can put on a whiteboard."

Eissler wants to do more to bring technology to teachers, to help them increase their effectiveness. "That's where House Bill 3—at least when we look at efficiencies and resource allocation—we can start to hopefully shift more in a coordinated fashion of what's best for kids, of what makes teachers' jobs easier and more effective," he said; he cited the McKinsey Report (www.mckinsey.com) which he said "says our most important factor in our public education system is effective teachers."

What else will the 2011 session bring?

"We'll look at trying to update the formulas. We'll look at campus leadership. We'll look at middle schools...because that's a key transition," Eissler said. "I think the good news, as I get to go to some conferences around the country, is I find that Texas has a good model. Texas legislators work with their constituents and their stakeholders, and we don't have as many problems as other states because we work together."

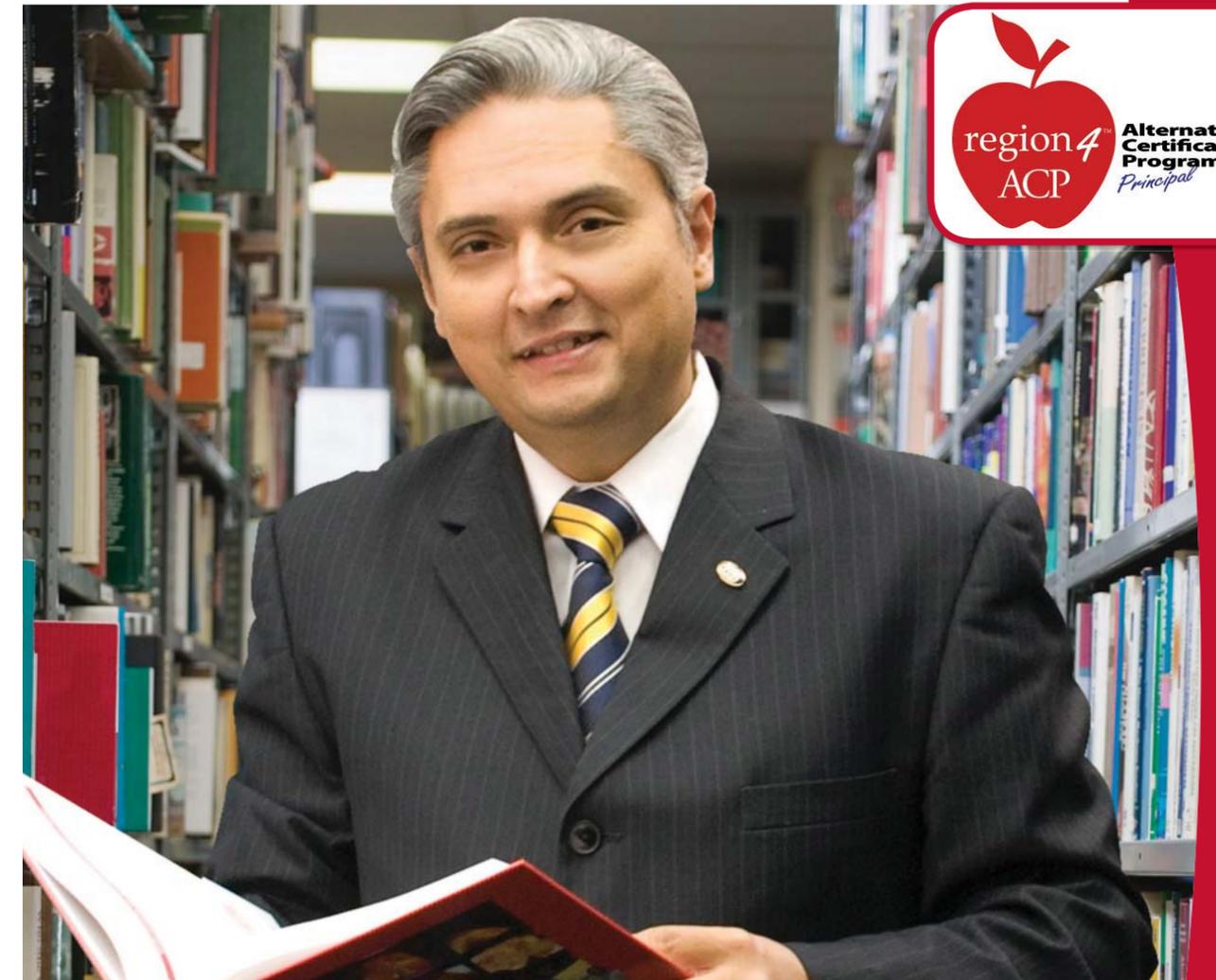
TELL POLITICIANS WHAT YOU NEED

"TSTA does a good job of letting us know how teachers feel," Eissler said. Nonetheless, he urges educators to contact their legislators personally because "the better you know who represents you, the better they know you and what you need, what you want. If they understand your needs, they'll respond to them a lot better."

In his spare time—when he's not announcing high school football games on the local radio station or working with the YMCA, Rotary Club or Chamber of Commerce—Eissler loves reading books on his Kindle. Even then, he's usually reading books that relate to the Legislature or education. Two recent reads: "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference" by Malcolm Gladwell and "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" by Carol Dweck.

Eissler says when you are a member of the Legislature, it's always on your mind. "There's always something to fix, and there's always something to improve. I enjoy it, I do, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here. That hasn't left me yet. It's still a thrill to come in here. In the mornings, I try to go get some exercise and then drive up Congress. You can see the Capitol, and it's a most impressive building," he said. "It still hasn't worn off on me that I've got business to do in that place, and it's full of people trying to do what's best for Texas. So it is exciting. It is exciting to represent my district, as well as hopefully do some good for public education."

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To view excerpts of Representative Eissler's interview, go to www.tsta.org.

Social Networking 101

Go to www.tsta.org to link to TSTA on Twitter and Facebook.

As technology rapidly advances, your use of technology at work and at home will have a significant effect on your profession. Whether inside or outside of the school building, your use of email, text messaging, instant messaging, blogging, and social networking can affect you and your job.

Be smart with how you use social networking. It's a powerful tool for connecting with other TSTA/NEA members, with your community, those who share your interests, and friends (both old and new) and family.

WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORKING?

Each day, on the news, in your classrooms and in conversations with your friends and colleagues, you hear references to terms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn—all of which are part of a growing world referred to as “social networking.”

Social networks are web-based services that focus on building online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests

and activities of others. Social networking sites allow you to share your personal information, interests, educational and professional information, photos and other information. These sites allow you to connect with colleagues, former classmates and friends by becoming “friends” or “contacts” through social networks.

Social networking sites are powerful tools that can help you to stay in contact with your friends and colleagues. When used appropriately, these sites can allow you to share ideas, news and resources, help you to understand the websites your students are actively using and allow you to stay ahead of the technology curve.

Now that you know what social networking is, be sure to protect yourself.

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

Protecting the privacy of your information is an essential part of safe social networking. Most social networking sites have privacy settings to allow you to control who can see your profile. Make sure you are familiar with the privacy settings provided by the site that you're using.

Often, privacy settings are used to limit profile access to the individuals on your list of “friends.” Even if your information is “private,” make sure everything you post is professional and appropriate.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST

Each time you post a photograph or other information on a social networking site, make sure you would feel comfortable if the following people were to see it: your mother, your students, your superintendent, or the editor of The New York Times.

Even though the First Amendment protects your speech as a private citizen on matters of public concern, such speech may fall outside of First Amendment protection if it impedes your employer's

effectiveness or efficiency, or otherwise disrupts the workplace.

Avoid posting anything on your profile page about your colleagues, administrators or students, as well as using inappropriate or profane messages or graphics, or anything that would reflect negatively on your workplace. Be aware that social networking applications, quizzes, games and other related features also can result in content appearing on your profile page. Make sure that anything posted on your page is appropriate.

Keep in mind that information posted to your profile page is often searchable. When interviewing for a job, would you want your potential employers to know: Your relationship status? Your political views? Your religion? Your sexual orientation? Whether you have children? Is there something on your profile that is inconsistent with what is on your resume?

PICTURE PERFECT

Be sure not to post any photographs of yourself or others that could be considered unprofessional or inappropriate, or link to any material that could be considered unprofessional or profane. If a friend tags you in a photo or other content that could be considered unprofessional or profane, remove that tag and ask your friend to remove the content.

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS

When accepting “friend requests” or adding individuals to your friend list, keep in mind that these individuals will have access to most information you post. Be sure not to accept a friend request from anyone you do not know. Do not accept friend requests from your students or their parents. If a student or parent of a student messages you through a social networking site, do not respond.

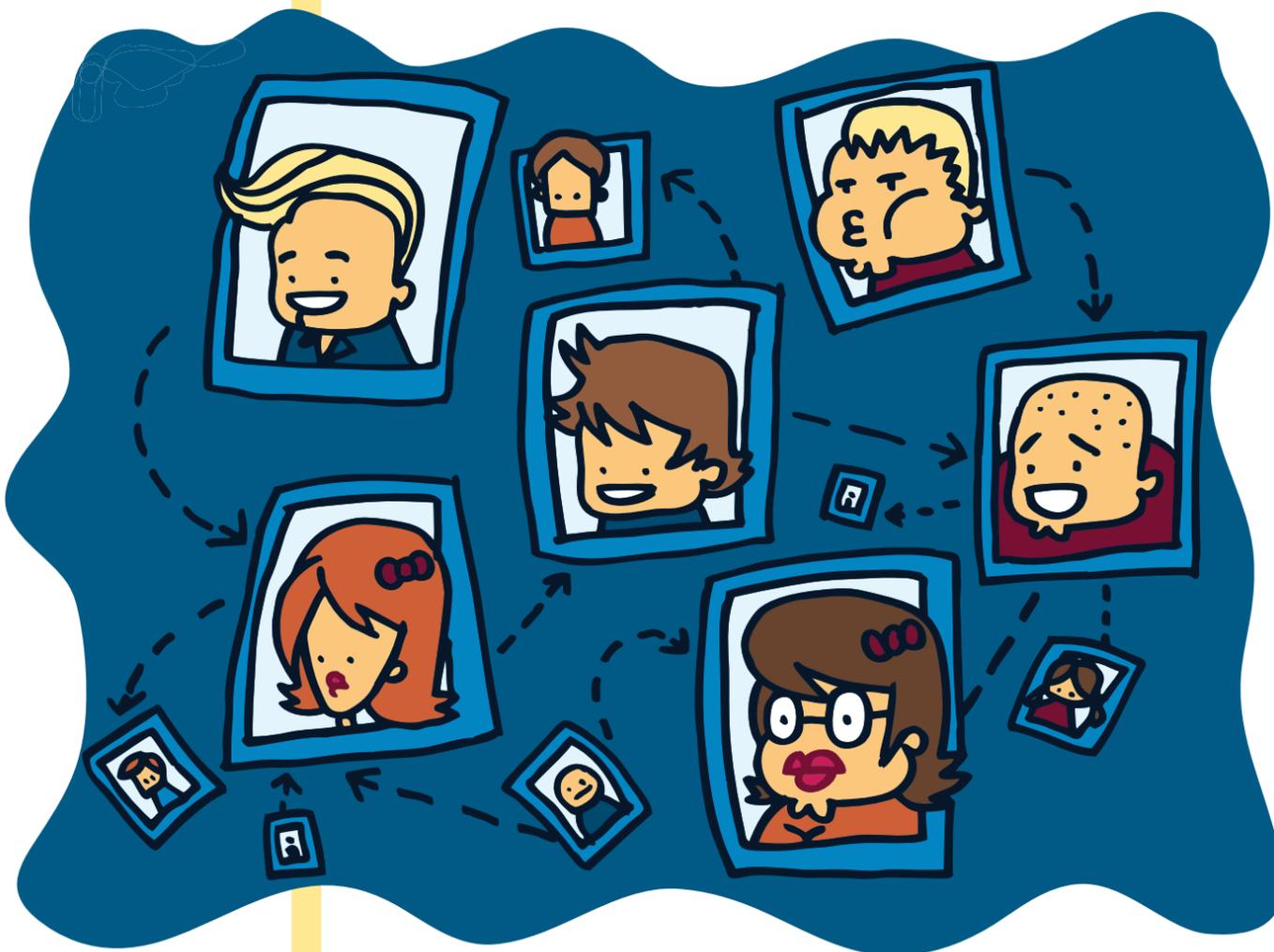
—Thanks to the Pennsylvania State Education Association and Georgia Association of Educators

THREE TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

 **Profile:** Your profile represents YOU. Profiles you create on social networking sites display information you post about yourself and messages people post for you, on your page. If you create a social networking profile, make sure all of the material posted on your page is information you would be comfortable sharing with almost anyone.

 **Friends:** Your “friends” in the social networking world are individuals and organizations who you connect to your profile. You control your list of “friends.” Friend is often used as a verb in this context.

 **Tagging:** When social networking users post photographs, videos and other content onto their profiles, they can “tag” other individuals on their list of friends, to identify them or reference them in some way. Be aware of who tags you in photos and other content. Social networking users have the option to remove “tags” of themselves if they choose to do so.



Using Facebook and Twitter to Keep Your Students in the Loop

BY DR. PAUL HENLEY, TSTA TEACHING AND LEARNING SPECIALIST



“The number one technology request of today’s students is to have email and instant messaging always available and part of school. They not only need things faster than their teachers are used to providing them, they also have many other new learning needs as well.”

Marc Prensky, author of “Don’t Bother Me Mom, I’m Learning”

In 2007, TSTA introduced its members to Web 2.0, a new type of internet interface that was created by the same people that were reading and watching the content. Two sites have become very prominent over the past two years, and both hold promise for classroom teachers as tools for learning. These two are called Facebook and Twitter. While Twitter currently has about 23 million users, Facebook now boasts over 123 million.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is a social networking website, much like MySpace. Users can add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Additionally, users can join networks organized around their city, workplace, school and region. The website’s name stems from the colloquial name of books given at the start of the academic year by university administrations with the intention of helping students get to know each other better.

Many teachers are already using Facebook.

This seems to be especially true of younger teachers. If you already use Facebook recreationally, this article may give you some ideas on how to use it professionally.

In almost every case, you will want to create a separate profile, “Mrs. Thompson” as opposed to “Marilyn Thompson.” The new professional page tangibly separates your personal life from your private life. This may keep you from some legal troubles (see the article on page 14), but it also serves to focus a particular Facebook page on your career and allows you to give your students a more specific set of information. When it comes to the Facebook format, it’s very easy to create such a din of information that you miss the most important content.

Facebook allows you to create your own “wall,” where you can show off the very best student work from your classroom. You have the opportunity to praise students, encourage parents and make announcements. Facebook also allows you to “poke” other users to let them know you’re online.

You can post outside information that you might find relevant; some teachers post articles or short videos that relate to the class, even if they are not required reading or viewing. Using Facebook to supplement your current instruction helps students learn more about your course topic, electively.

Facebook also offers a feature called “Notes” where a secondary teacher can post distinct material for each unique subject that he teaches. Students will see Notes that are labeled for their specific course, which allows a teacher to differentiate between multiple subjects when necessary. Facebook’s settings allow you to send an email to each student when you post notes.

Finally, Facebook is a world-wide phenomenon. You can find long-lost high school friends and connect with current ones, but you can also find ways to meet people from around the globe. Facebook may well be the best example of what we mean when we call it the World Wide Web. Without creating intricate web pages or spending many hours finding the right colleague, Facebook allows you to find other teachers quickly. You can show your students how English is being taught in Germany. You can have web interviews with Russian scientists working in the Arctic or an expatriate journalist in Hungary.

Some teachers maintain web pages for their classrooms. For those teachers, there is no immediate need to create a full and separate Facebook site to relay information. In this case, Twitter can become a natural extension of the current web page. Students can check the site and immediately know what has been added or adjusted on the web page. Even if you do not have an internet presence, Twitter gives you the opportunity to hold real-time conversations with your students.

TWITTER

Like Facebook, Twitter is a free social networking site that has introduced the world to a new concept—microblogging.

Twitter enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text posts of up to 140 characters displayed on

the author’s profile page and delivered to the author’s subscribers who are known as followers.

Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, text messaging or external applications found on many hand-held devices. Although Facebook runs in real time, Twitter focuses almost completely on its immediacy. You announce on Facebook; you speak directly on Twitter.

You have 140 characters to say exactly what you want to say. It hits recipients immediately. Twitter is a powerful way to send quick messages to students and parents. Quick statements will always work best. Twitter helps students SHORTEN their work. Instead of a long, run-on sentence or too-long description, it makes students cut it to 140 characters. Succinct. (If you include a link, there are sites where you can shorten it; try <http://bit.ly>, <http://tinyurl.com> or www.su.pr.)

You can communicate with experts using Twitter. For example, NASA has many Twitter streams. Many NASA Fellows have separate streams, as well. By following them, you can learn about what science experts are doing. Right now, Twitter’s “right-now” approach to communication lends itself well to research journals. Your students can follow the journal of an astronaut and learn to create their own.

If you are an elementary teacher, your tweets and “pokes” will be directed generally to parents. These tools can work well for keeping parents abreast of upcoming school events, assignments that are coming due and redundancy to notices that have been sent home. For those with older students, content posted to your professional pages will become more directed at the students, themselves.

Neither of these formats can compete with the crucial, one-on-one conversations that take place between teachers, students and parents. That will always be true. Still, Facebook and Twitter offer you the opportunity to teach students in their world. You just have to make it your world.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

Some students have an almost constant access to internet technology while other students do not. Backup means of communications will be crucial to your classroom, no matter what new teaching and learning format arises.

Still, teachers need to seize any opportunity to help all students learn. This often takes a leap of faith on the part of the teacher and perhaps some technology mentoring on the part of students. Switching student-teacher roles can build relationships that lead to learning.

Jump Start

San Antonio Local Welcomes New Hires



Jump Start is an event held annually during new employee orientation week, sponsored by the San Antonio Alliance and coordinated by Sylvia Lovelace, the Alliance's professional development specialist. At Jump Start, new employees discover that, in the Alliance, they have a group of colleagues they can talk to when they have questions, need help or are searching for resources to help them move from novice to expert in their profession. Eighty teachers attended Jump Start this year at the historic Alliance house, and 48 became members that day. By the end of the week, the Alliance had 85 new members.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP: At right, Alliance staff and leaders answer questions, give away door prizes and provide snacks and fellowship. Above, new teachers sort through gently used items donated by retired teachers and vendors.

SOCORRO SUPPORTS CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

Socorro Education Association was recognized recently with an award for its support of the 5A State Baseball Championship team, the Socorro High School Bulldogs. SEA contributed \$2000 so each senior player on the team could receive a championship ring.

LAREDO TSTA/NEA WINS PAY RAISE

Thanks to Laredo TSTA/NEA, all employees in Laredo ISD are getting a pay raise. During the regular session of the Texas Legislature last spring, Laredo TSTA/NEA members contacted state legislators and urged them to pass HB 3646 as part of a statewide effort organized by TSTA/NEA. In this bill, the Legislature committed the state to an across-the-board \$800 pay raise for teachers, counselors, nurses and speech pathologists.

But Laredo TSTA/NEA didn't stop there. The local spearheaded the pay raise campaign that influenced Laredo ISD board members to give all teachers a \$1,500 pay raise, ESPs a four percent pay raise and administrators a two percent pay raise.

Laredo TSTA/NEA also helped defeat an initiative to eliminate the LISD police and security guards in favor of a private security company.



DISTRICT THANKS SOCORRO: (Clockwise from top) TSTA President Rita Haecker with the Socorro High mascot; TSTA staff member Gonzalo Becerra, Socorro ISD Superintendent Dr. Xavier De La Torre and SEA President Glenda Hawthorne; State Rep. Chente Quintanilla, Glenda Hawthorne, Gonzalo Becerra, George Cordova and Jan Deragisch.

TYLER

TSTA President Rita Haecker (center) joins Sharon Williams, Barbara Davis-Staley, André Williams and Patricia Hill at the membership table in Tyler.



DALLAS

Sandra Hudson, TSTA organizational development specialist for NEA-Dallas, and Barbara Thomas, a part-time employee of TSTA, welcome new employees.



BIRDVILLE

Birdville Local Association President Alicia Washington, Secretary Anne Hale and Assistant President Richard Griffin wear "I am a TSTA member, are you?" buttons.



ALIEF

TSTA Ambassadors Pam Belcher, Ovidia Molina and Keith Dauphiney, all from Alief, with NEA President Dennis Van Roeckel (left) and NEA Director Ginny Evans of Lewisville (right) at a Read Across America event in San Diego.



LEWISVILLE

Amy Chamberlain signs up new members for Lewisville Education Association at the new educator orientation.



ARLINGTON

Arlington TSTA/NEA members line up to greet new employees in August.



CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS

Husband and wife Henry and Anna Salomon, both teachers at Arnold Middle School in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, sign up with TSTA/NEA.



YSLETA

Ysleta Teachers Association attends the NEA Representative Assembly. Front: Gilbert De La Rosa, Robert Fierro, Noel Candelaria, Ysrael Valencia and Shelley Lincoln; back: Arlinda Valencia, Twila Dickenson, Gloria Campos, Lee Terrazas and Christa Madera.



Busy Summer for TSTA-Student Program



The award-winning "Outreach to Teach" is celebrating its 14th year of community service. Each year, a high-need public school located in the host city of the NEA Annual Meeting is selected to receive a free makeover, thanks to hundreds of NEA volunteers.

When NEA brings its annual meeting to town, the host city benefits not only from the money spent by nearly 10,000 delegates and their families but also by the transformation of a local school.

Balboa Elementary in San Diego was selected by Outreach to Teach, which is sponsored by NEA's Student and Retired Programs, for the 2009 project. Four hundred volunteers, including several TSTA-Student Program members, Balboa staff, higher education faculty, education support professionals and 30 volunteers from Target spent a full day working at the school. Target sponsored a complete refurbishing of the school library, and Evette Rios, a design expert known for her work on the Rachael Ray show, volunteered for her fourth Outreach.

By the day's end, Balboa had 1,000 new library books, new carpet, new couches and chairs, fresh paint, outdoor landscaping including plants and mulch, outdoor cafeteria tables and new soccer goals.

While in San Diego, TSTA-Student Program also helped with a Read Across America event at PETCO Park, reading to local elementary children alongside San Diego Padres players, NEA leaders, The Cat in the Hat, Thing One and Thing Two. A highlight of this year's annual meeting was NEA Night at the Ballpark, where NEA President Dennis Van Roekel threw out the first pitch and Cat in the Hat hats were distributed to the first 10,000 fans.



A MESSAGE FROM TSTA-RETIRED

Officers: TSTA-Retired officers for 2009-10 are Johnetta Williams, Dallas, president; Jay Ann Rucker, El Paso, vice president; Bobbie Duncan, Odessa, secretary; JoAnn Peschel, Houston, treasurer; and Letha Grace McCoy, Burleson, past president.



Meetings: The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in San Diego, California, June 26-28, featured a variety of workshops, speakers and elections. Tom Curan was elected NEA-Retired president, and Fran Valenzuela of Houston ran an unsuccessful bid for a position as the NEA-Retired representative on the Resolutions Committee. TSTA-Retired members attending were Letha Grace McCoy, Connie DeLuna, Fran Valenzuela, Frank Colbert, Jr. and Jerry Watkins.

From June 30 to July 6, the NEA Representative Assembly met. Letha Grace McCoy, Connie DeLuna and Fran Valenzuela were TSTA-Retired delegates. Members elected as at-large delegates were Bobbie Duncan and Jerry Watkins. Highlights of the RA included the annual 4th of July Celebration featuring retired member Eugene Ohler of Ft. Worth singing with the all-member holiday choir. Delegates also attended an open forum with the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Web page: You can find us at www.tsta.org/inside/retired and www.nea.org/retired.

You will find information to keep you updated about retired issues. Check out www.neamb.com (NEA Member Benefits), where there is always a giveaway going on.

Nominations: Nominations are currently in order for the following positions: TSTA-Retired secretary; TSTA-Retired treasurer; Retired at-large delegates to the TSTA House of Delegates; and TSTA-Retired delegates to the NEA-RA (see pages 26-28 for delegate information). All elections take place in March 2010 by mailed ballots. Members may self nominate or other members may nominate. You may make additional copies of the form to nominate for more than one position. Remember, you must obtain written permission to nominate someone other than yourself. Candidates must be Retired Active Members to nominate and serve as a delegate or alternate. All forms must be completed and returned by Jan. 15, 2010, to TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Additional information:

- The secretary and treasurer positions are for a two-year term, July 15, 2010 to 2012.
- TSTA State House of Delegates will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Marcos.
- The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA RA will be in New Orleans.

Calendar: Go to www.tsta.org/inside/retired for a complete TSTA-Retired calendar of events.

—Johnetta Williams, TSTA-Retired president

DID YOU KNOW...

- active members can continue their membership and support of TSTA by joining TSTA Pre-Retired?
- you can join if you are eligible to receive a pension and were employed by a school district for at least five years?
- if you only belong to TSTA-Retired, we invite you to join NEA-Retired and become a unified member?
- if you only belong to NEA-Retired, we invite you to join TSTA-Retired and become a unified member?
- you can call TSTA-Retired for more information at (512) 476-5355 or toll free at (877) ASK-TSTA?

Honoring Excellence

The start of the new school year inevitably includes lots of planning. As you put together your annual calendar, don't forget to plan on recognizing your peers and other friends of education in your community. TSTA offers several opportunities to recognize outstanding educators, education support professionals, regional and local associations, media representatives, businesses, and other individuals or organizations that support public education.

For TSTA's
2009-10 Calendar:
www.tsta.org

RONNIE RAY ESP ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nomination Deadline: September 30

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

Recognizes a TSTA education support professional (ESP) member whose activities reflect the contributions of education support professionals to public education, particularly in one or more of the following areas: (1) innovations to support the day-to-day educational process; (2) professional achievements in his/her classification; (3) involvement in promoting public education in the community; (4) involvement in TSTA at the local, state or national level; and (5) enhancement of the ESP image in their association, work site or community. Nominees must have been an ESP member of TSTA for three years as of January 15.

INSTRUCTIONAL AWARDS

Plan Deadline: November 1 / Documentation Deadline: March 15

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs

Recognizes local associations for planned activities and accomplishments that incorporate certain strands of the NEA Priority Schools Initiative into local planning. Detailed information about the criteria can be found at: www.tsta.org/teaching/current/instructional_awards.shtml.

FRIEND OF EDUCATION AWARD

Nomination Deadline: December 1

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

Recognizes either (1) an individual, who is not a professional educator, who has made a significant contribution to the cause of public education or (2) an organization/company outside the field of education that has made an outstanding contribution in the field of education.

Any TSTA member, local association, region or other recognized group—e.g. TSTA committee or caucus—may submit a nominating letter or memo accompanied by supporting evidence detailing why the nominee is worthy of the award.

FRANK J. TEJEDA AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Nomination Deadline: December 1

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

Recognizes an individual for service at the state or national political/legislative level on behalf of Texas public school children or educa-

tional employees. Nominees must be elected or appointed officials who are not currently employed full time by a school district. Any TSTA member or group of members or the award committee may submit a letter of nomination and supporting evidence of accomplishments related to the award.

SCHOOL BELL AWARDS

Nomination Deadline: January 31

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs

Recognizes outstanding media coverage of education issues and events. There are several categories of awards for different forms of media and various populations. The instruction book and nomination form are available on TSTA's website.

PROFESSIONAL, HUMAN, AND CIVIL RIGHTS AWARDS

Nomination Deadline: February 1

Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

Individual Award—recognizes an educator who has made outstanding contributions to professional and human rights (nominee must be a TSTA member and be nominated by the local PHCR and executive committees).

Special Award—recognizes an individual or organization inside or outside the area of education for outstanding contributions to professional and human rights (recipient does not have to be a member of TSTA unless eligible but must be nominated by a TSTA affiliated association).

Mickey Leland Memorial Award—recognizes individuals or organizations that have initiated/participated in activities establishing an ongoing program or institution having a widespread social, educational, economic, or political impact, especially those projects that help the needy.

Willie Velasquez Memorial Award—recognizes individuals or organizations that have initiated/participated in activ-

TSTA/NEA EVENT DATES

OCTOBER

- 10 TSTA/NEA ESP Conference, El Paso
- 24 TSTA Legislative and Political Advocacy and Constitution, Bylaws and Elections Committee Meetings, TSTA Headquarters, Austin

NOVEMBER

- 1 Submission Deadline: Instructional Award Plan
- 6-7 NEA All-Committee Weekend, Washington, DC
- 7 TSTA Community and Instructional Advocacy Committee Meeting, TSTA Headquarters, Austin
- 7 or 14 (TBD) TSTA/NEA ESP Conference, Austin
- 9-10 NEA Executive Committee Meeting, Washington, DC
- 15-21 American Education Week
- 18 National ESP Day
- 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday (TSTA Offices Closed)

DECEMBER

- 1 Submission Deadline: Friend of Education Award and Frank J. Tejada Award for Public Service

ities to eradicate inequities based on race, gender, or ethnicity and to improve inter-group relations and understanding, especially those projects that help the politically disenfranchised become more involved in the political process.

NEA Awards—TSTA also encourages regional and local affiliates or individuals to nominate an individual, organization and/or a region or local affiliate for an NEA Human and Civil Rights Award. For NEA forms and information visit: www.nea.org/grants/17859.htm. NEA Award nominations must be postmarked by December 10, 2009.

ERMALEE BOICE INSTRUCTIONAL ADVOCACY AWARD

Nomination Deadline: February 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

Open to all TSTA members, this award recognizes and promotes teaching excellence based on the following criteria: professional practice, advocacy for the profession, community engagement, leadership in professional devel-

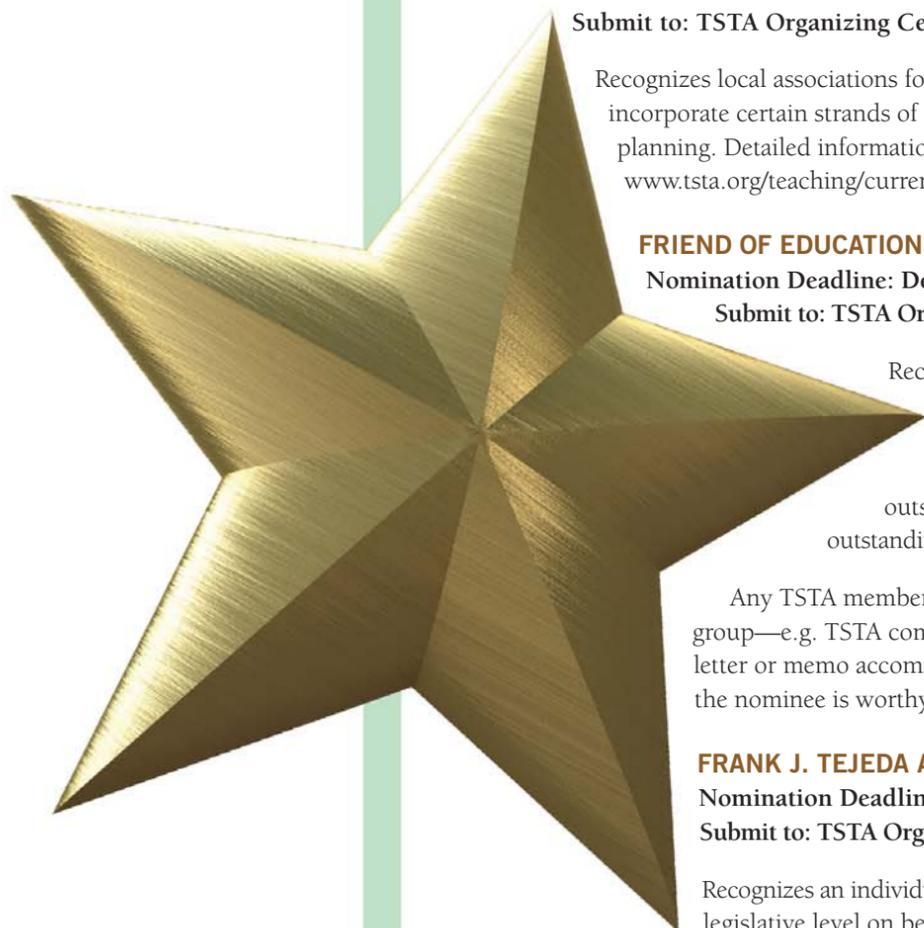
opment and attention to diversity. The recipient of this award will be submitted as TSTA's nominee for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, so nominees for the Boice award should comply with the guidelines provided for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence (www.neafoundation.org).

PRIDE IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

Nomination Deadline: March 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs

Recognizes regional association newsletters and web sites. Entries are judged on the extent to which the local and/or regional association programs are identified and explained.

Detailed information, instructions and nomination forms are available on TSTA's website at www.tsta.org/news/current/awards.shtml. You may also call the Center for Executive and Governance or the Center for Public Affairs at (877) ASK-TSTA for more information.



National Delegate Elections



We're headed to New Orleans, Louisiana for the 2010 NEA Representative Assembly (RA) July 3-6. Pre-RA meetings and workshops begin on June 25. The first Texas Caucus meeting will be on July 1.

The exact number of delegates from Texas will be determined by our TSTA/NEA membership as of January 15, 2010. TSTA will be allocated one state delegate for every 1,000 Active (Professional or ESP) and Active Life Active NEA members, and locals will be allocated one local delegate for every 150 members, or major fraction thereof.

NEA has established a policy of encouraging ethnic-minority representation reflective of the ethnic make-up of the state's population. The goal for TSTA is to elect at least 48% of our total delegation from among our ethnic-minority members. We cannot accomplish this goal unless all of our leaders and caucuses help recruit ethnic-minority candidates to run for delegate positions at both the state and local levels, and it is most important that the elected delegates attend the RA.

TSTA does not fund state delegates to the NEA-RA, though they may receive a small stipend budget permitting. Some regions and a few locals provide some funding for state delegates.

Below you will find some of the specific requirements and timelines for election of state and local association delegates. Anyone with questions about the elections, or needing other information about the process, should contact Sandra Solimine at TSTA, 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514 or email sandras@tsta.org.

Please note that we cannot determine until after January 15 exactly how many state delegates we will elect or exactly how we will elect them. At least one state delegate will be elected on a statewide ballot. The remaining state delegates will be allocated to individual regions or to clusters of regions or, possibly, statewide. They will be allocated in a manner to comply with NEA rules on one-person, one-vote, and in accordance with TSTA policy.

STATE DELEGATES

The Advocate containing ballots for the election of state delegates should be received by members by late March 2010. Deadline for return receipt of ballots at TSTA is April 23, 2010, by 5 p.m.

NEA requires that all elections for state and local delegates must be conducted by open nominations and secret ballots. At the end of this article you will find a nomination form to seek election as a state delegate to the 2010 NEA RA. If you would like to run for a delegate position, please complete the form (or a copy of it) and return it to TSTA.

The form must be received by the Center for Executive and Governance at TSTA no later than January 8, 2010, in order for your name to appear on the printed ballot.

Each candidate for state delegate is entitled to have his or her name published in the *Advocate*, along with a biographical sketch of 25 words or less, which may include ethnic status.

NEA also requires proportional representation for supervisory and non-supervisory members. In order to insure this is not violated, supervisory members are not eligible to run for state delegate as outlined above. Instead, all supervisory members are eligible to run in a separate election for Category 2 State At-Large Delegate (which also includes NEA Active Life Retired members).

In addition, supervisory members who also are members of a local may run in the statewide supervisory cluster election unless their local is not a part of that cluster. Locals are removed from this cluster only if their inclusion would cost the local a non-supervisory delegate. Locals will be notified in February if they have been removed from the cluster.

Supervisory members desiring to seek election as a delegate should complete and return the nomination form (marking the appropriate box to run for a Category 2 delegate) along with the 25-word statement. Those supervisory members that return the form and who are eligible to run in the supervisory cluster will automatically be included on the ballot for that election as well.

Again, if you have questions please call Sandra Solimine at 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514, or email sandras@tsta.org.

LOCAL DELEGATES

Since local associations are allocated one delegate for each 150 NEA members or major fraction thereof, a local must have at least 76 members (Active and Life) to qualify for a delegate. Locals with fewer than 76 members may cluster together for the purpose of electing local delegates. If you are a member in one of these smaller locals and would like to be a delegate, please contact Sandra Solimine as described above.

NEA will notify locals in mid-February of the number of delegates allocated for each local. Locals will be provided official NEA forms for reporting data about local delegates and alternates ("successor delegates").

Those completed forms must be received by TSTA no later than April 10, 2010, in order to insure proper credentials at the NEA RA. Locals must conduct an election that provides for open nominations and secret ballots. That can be done either by delivering a nomination form to each member (using a local newsletter is permissible), then insuring each member gets a ballot with the names of those returning the form, or by holding an all-member meeting, with proper notice to each member, and accepting nominations at the meeting, then voting by secret ballot.

RETIRED DELEGATES

TSTA-Retired/NEA-Retired members may run as either retired delegates or state delegates. The two elections have different eligibility re-

quirements. (1) The Retired Delegate Nomination Form is for a TSTA-R/NEA-R member who seeks election as a TSTA-R/NEA-R delegate. The deadline for submitting a nomination form (and an optional biographical sketch of 25 words or less) is January 15, 2010. For this election, one delegate is allocated for the first 50 TSTA-R/NEA-R members and an additional delegate for each additional 1,000 TSTA-R/NEA-R members. (2) A retired member who was an NEA Active Life member while teaching may seek election as a Category 2 State At-Large delegate by completing and returning the state delegate Nomination Form and checking the Category 2 box. Those who are eligible to run in both elections must choose; they may file in only one election.

RETIRED DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY TSTA/NEA-RETIRED DELEGATE POSITIONS—JULY 1-6, 2010
Deadline for receipt at TSTA Headquarters is January 15, 2010, 5:00 p.m. (This form is also available online at www.tsta.org)

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Day Phone _____

Email _____ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. _____

ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)

American Indian/Alaska Native Asian Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Multi-ethnic

Black Hispanic Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) Other _____

Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed

Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less which will be sent with the ballot. (Note: If your statement exceeds 25 words, it will be cut at 25 words.)

Check here if you will be a first-time delegate

Send by U.S. Mail or FAX (512-486-7043) to: TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701

Signature of Nominee _____

STATE DELEGATE NOMINATION FORM

2010 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY STATE DELEGATES
Deadline for receipt at TSTA Headquarters is January 8, 2010. (This form is also available online at www.tsta.org)

NOMINEE FOR: (Check one)

State At-Large Delegate: Category 1—Teacher, ESP or other Non-Supervisor

State At-Large Delegate: Category 2—Administrator or NEA Active Life Retired*

Statewide Supervisory Cluster—Supervisors who are members of a local association**

*NEA Active Life Retired—NEA Active Life member while teaching and now retired

**Supervisory members whose local chooses not to participate in the cluster are not eligible to run in this election.

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. _____

Local Association _____ TSTA Region _____ Work Site _____

Position (Teacher, Principal, ESP, etc.) _____ Supervisory Non-Supervisory

ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)

American Indian/Alaska Native Asian Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Multi-ethnic

Black Hispanic Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) Other _____

Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed

Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less which will be published in the spring *Advocate*. (Note: If your statement exceeds 25 words, it will be cut at 25 words.)

Check here if you will be a first-time delegate

Send to: Sandra Solimine, TSTA, Organizing Center for Executive and Governance, 316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701; or email to sandras@tsta.org or fax to 512-486-7053

Signature of Nominee _____

TSTA State Convention Delegate Elections



State delegate allocations for local associations (including Texas Faculty Association) to the April 16-17, 2010, TSTA House of Delegates will be sent to local presidents on January 25. Delegates are allocated to locals in a ratio of one delegate for every 50 members or major fraction based on the local's Active Professional, Active ESP and Active Life membership on January 15, 2010. The policy regarding election of delegates, forms and timelines will accompany the allocation.

If a local wishes to conduct its election for delegates prior to January 15, it may do so and keep a list of delegates in the order of votes received. When the local delegate allocation is received by the local, then the top vote getters who are delegates are listed as delegates and the remaining vote getters are listed as alternates.

Contact Sandra Solimine in the Center for Executive and Governance at 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514, or sandras@tsta.org with questions regarding the elections.

ATTENTION, RETIRED MEMBERS:

According to the TSTA Bylaws, retired at-large delegates for the state House of Delegates are allocated to TSTA-Retired/NEA-Retired members. The number of at-large TSTA-R delegates will be based on TSTA-Retired membership as of January 15, 2010. In order to run for a TSTA-R at-large delegate position, a candidate must be a member of TSTA-R and NEA-R.

These at-large retired delegates are allocated in the ratio of one delegate for every 75 members or major fraction thereof. Nomination forms must be received by January 15, 2010. Ballots for the election will be sent to members in early February 2010. The deadline for returning ballots to TSTA Headquarters is March 4, 2010.

Any retired member who is a TSTA-R/NEA-R member may nominate himself/herself or another qualified member for a retired delegate position.

NOMINATION FORM

RETIRED AT-LARGE DELEGATE POSITIONS—TSTA HOUSE OF DELEGATES—APRIL 16-17, 2010

The deadline for receipt of this nomination form at TSTA's Headquarters is January 15, 2010. (This form is also available online at www.tsta.org.)

(Circle One: Mr. Ms.) Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Day Phone _____

Email _____ Last 4 Digits Soc. Sec. No. _____

ETHNIC GROUP: (Check all that apply)

American Indian/Alaska Native Asian Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Multi-ethnic

Black Hispanic Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin) Other _____

Check here if you do not want your ethnicity printed

Enclosed is my biographical sketch of 25 words or less which will be sent with the ballot. (Note: If your statement exceeds 25 words, it will be cut at 25 words.)

Check here if you will be a first-time delegate

Send by U.S. Mail or FAX (512-486-7043) to: TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701

Signature of Nominee _____

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For the latest news, go to www.tsta.org.

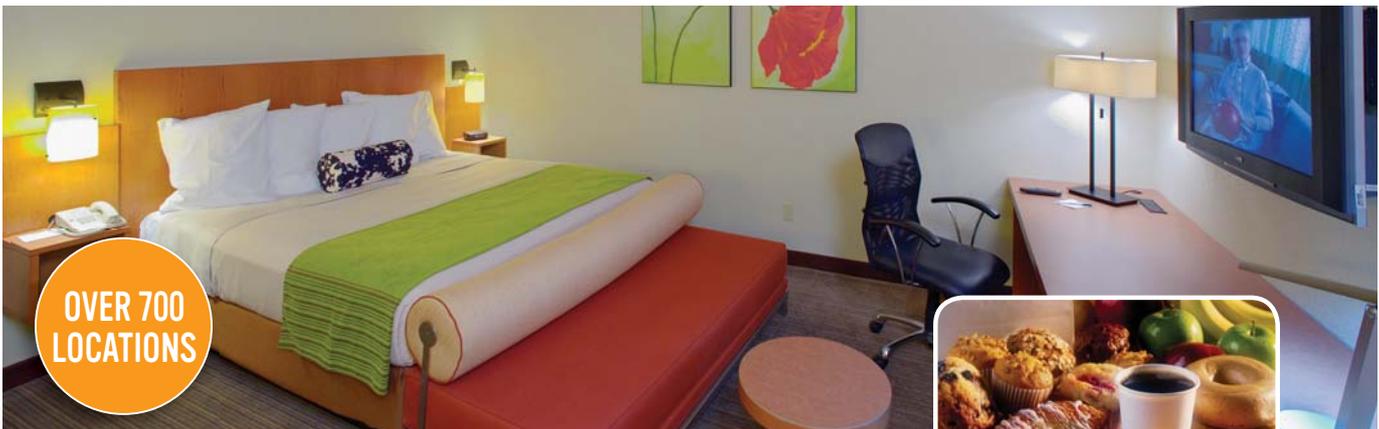
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Living Smart, Living on Less



BY MARY ROWLAND

Isn't everyone today focused on the global economic crisis? President Obama tells us that we must be prepared to sacrifice, to tighten our belts, to help America turn around and achieve its promise.

But perhaps you are one of the lucky ones. Maybe the economic crisis has not yet touched your family income. Still, you're probably waiting for the other shoe to drop. What's the best thing to do? How should you sacrifice?

Well, clearly, if you are flush and debt free, this is a great time to make a major purchase such as a home or an automobile, because America is on sale. But if you don't have cash for a down payment, hold off on that. Even those who still hold good jobs should make some preparations for tougher times. So why not take a challenge and live as though you have only one family income?

What's the downside? If both of you hang on to your jobs through the recession, you'll have a nice nest egg when the economy turns around. Make plans for what you will do then. You'll be able to be one of the rebuilders. And if one of you loses a job, your family will have a growing rainy day fund.

Call a family meeting to announce your plans. The first goal? Ask each family member to stop spending money. Make it a game to see who can go longest without opening a wallet or pocketbook. Everyone takes a bag lunch. Make up a grocery list to be sure you have healthy ingredients for breakfast, dinner and bag lunches. No espresso, dinners out, even movies, for one week. Of course, there will be some small unexpected expenses. Keep track of every check you write, every credit card purchase and how you spend cash from the ATM.

Next, get a handle on your cash flow by collecting a couple of recent paychecks to see how much of your income goes to taxes, 403(b) and 401(k) retirement plans, medical benefits and so forth that are deducted straight from your pay. Then write down how much you and your partner bring home each month.

A rule of thumb in budgeting is that your "essentials" spending should account for about 60% of your gross, or pretax, income. That includes mortgage payment or rent, insurance, food, utilities, child care, transportation, debt repayment, every dollar you spend that is not negotiable. The other 40% should ideally be available for retirement savings, emergency savings, unexpected expenses and discretionary spending. Clearly, this portion of your budget offers a good deal of flexibility, provided you are able to keep the essentials at 60%. Go through your checkbook and credit card bills and receipts from the ATM. Make notes on what you spend the cash for.

Your goal should be to reduce monthly expenses as much as possible so that one paycheck could cover them. That means paying down debt and analyzing all discretionary spending including magazine subscriptions, meals out, cell phone bills, cable TV, family entertainment, and dance or tennis lessons. If one partner is laid off, the family will save money on work-related expenses such as child care, transportation, dry cleaning and business clothes. Figure what that might total.

Which items on the discretionary list can you give up? Of course, you could drop everything. But that's not fair to the family right now because you do have enough money to cover some of these items. Each family member should decide what one thing is so important to him that he wants to hang onto it even if it means getting extra work to pay for it. Calculate how much you would save by eliminating the other discretionary items.

Depending on your stage of life, the decisions you make about the 40% of your income that is discretionary may be quite different.

FOR YOUNGER MEMBERS STARTING OUT

If you are in your twenties, you probably use more than 60% of your gross salary for necessities. For people just starting out, especially in a large city, housing alone eats up a huge chunk of income. And you may have some

debt as well. Aim to trim the portion of your budget that goes for essentials. Meanwhile, most of the other 40% of your income might go for paying down credit card debt and student loans. As you get debts under control, earmark more money for savings.

FOR MIDCAREER MEMBERS

Suppose you are in your thirties or forties. You, too, should pay down debt. Also work to get your "essentials" spending down to 50% of total income. That would leave you able to squeak by if one of the partners lost his job. The other 40% should go into retirement savings, college savings and rainy day savings. You'll be saving while you can; if necessary, you could drop the savings plans if one of you is out of work.

FOR PRERETIRED AND RETIRED

If you are retired or about to retire and

your nest egg has taken a big hit in the market decline, you need to make some choices. Do you need to save more? Do you need to work longer? If you can, see a financial planner to figure out where you can cut costs and increase earned income—or unearned income. Or, if you are computer literate, use financial planning software to work out your own budget.

Whatever your age, do not drop medical or life insurance or homeowner's and auto liability coverage. Failure to carry insurance could wipe you out in the event of a serious accident.

Try negotiating with credit card issuers before you miss a payment. Ask to get the interest rate on your loan reduced. Find out if you can renegotiate your mortgage.

Although you don't want to run up debt, it's not a bad idea to apply for a home equity loan. Don't touch the

credit line. When we climb out of the recession, you will be ready to move forward.

NEA Member Benefits has teamed with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling to provide both free and very affordable financial tools and services to NEA members and their families. For help with budgeting, managing debt or other financial issues, call the dedicated NEA member line toll-free at (866)479-NEA2 (6322) or visit www.neamb.com/home/1199_880.htm.

Mary Rowland is a nationally known business and finance writer. A former personal finance columnist for *The New York Times* and former co-host of a nationally syndicated radio show, she is the author of several investment books and speaks regularly to consumers and financial planners about investing and personal finance.



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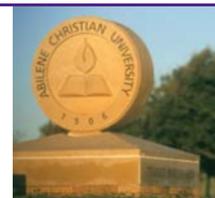
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