

Advocate

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

SPRING 2009

Fund our
schools!

New Bipartisan Poll

Thumbs up: investing in schools
Thumbs down: incentive pay,
high stakes tests

HOMELESS KIDS

How to identify them
and respond

VOTE
BALLOT
INSIDE

Change Could Lead to Growth



The first month of this new year showed just how perceptive the writer and motivational speaker Karen Kaiser Clark was when she said, “Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.”

January brought two significant changes and two opportunities for growth, if we choose wisely.

The first change, early in the month, came when a bipartisan majority in the Texas House of Representatives blocked the re-election of state Rep. Tom Craddick, R-Midland, to serve another term as that chamber’s speaker.

Craddick had not been a friend of our public schools and their students and employees. Indeed, throughout his three terms as speaker, he allied with supporters of private school vouchers and standardized testing, and he opposed sufficiently funding public schools.

A growing number of Craddick’s fellow Republicans, along with the overwhelming majority of Democrats, in the Texas House rallied behind state Rep. Joe Straus, R-San Antonio, and elected him to be the new House speaker. Many of those who backed him for speaker also support our public schools.

Not long after that, I witnessed change on the national stage firsthand when my husband, our son and I traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the inauguration of the 44th president of the United States. Despite the cold weather, the inaugural festivities were impressive and uplifting.

With his unique background—his father from Kenya, his mother from Kansas with distant roots in Ireland, a childhood spent growing up in Indonesia and Hawaii—President Obama embodies welcome change in our increasingly multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural nation. So many of our students who might once have felt they could never grow up to be president now believe that they can.

The president knows just how important investing in our public schools is, particularly as the nation works to overcome the serious economic downturn. The economic stimulus package the president’s allies in the U.S. House of Representatives passed contains an important example of his commitment. The measure includes \$150 billion for public schools.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity, and if we want to become a strong economy again, the best thing we can do is have an educated work force,” new U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said.

Please wisely choose to take advantage of the opportunities for growth that change is creating. Our lawmakers in both Washington and Austin need to hear regularly from our members, not just from NEA’s and TSTA’s government relations professionals. They need to hear from teachers and education support professionals who work in our public schools day in and day out. The more they hear from you across Texas, the more likely members of Congress and state legislators are to listen to what our professional advocates tell them.

Please regularly contact your lawmakers in the Texas Legislature and in Congress to ask them to support the TSTA/NEA goal of great public schools for every child.

“They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself,” pop artist Andy Warhol said. We cannot afford to miss out on the new opportunities for public education that change in Washington and Austin offers us. But, as Warhol’s words remind us, we will unless we take full advantage of those opportunities.

—TSTA President Rita Haecker

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Advocate

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SPRING 2009 3



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Just a few of the reasons you might want to visit www.tsta.org and www.nea.org.



Texas voters to legislators:

Fix Our Broken School Funding System

A bipartisan majority supports more state funding for public schools, opposes incentive pay schemes, wants less emphasis on standardized tests, a new poll finds

“Despite a tight state budget, an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Texas voters believe that providing more state resources for public education is a solid investment that is necessary to secure our economic future. Simply put, Texans—Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike—know that in today’s global economy, education is a wise investment that will not crash in tough times,” TSTA President Rita Haecker announced to the Capitol press corps Feb. 11.

A statewide poll, commissioned by TSTA and conducted in January, indicates strong support for recent reports that the 81st Legislature may fix the broken school finance system.

The system has forced local school leaders to dip deeply into reserve funds and in some cases cut programs and personnel, Haecker told the media. The same day, local TSTA leaders released the poll findings in the Beaumont, Brownsville, Dallas, Ector County (Odessa), Laredo, Lubbock, San Antonio, Socorro, Waco and Ysleta (El Paso) school districts.

“Texans believe public education is state government’s top priority. More than twice as many respondents believe public education is a more important priority than property tax cuts,” she said, reminding reporters that when the Legislature passed a state tax increase three years ago, all the money went to pay for property tax cuts while per-pupil funding for schools was frozen at 2006 levels with no allowance for rising costs or increasing salaries.

Among the bipartisan respondents:

- 71 percent say the Legislature has more work to do on school funding
- 61 percent, when asked what factor makes for a good public school, identify teachers
- 66 percent say teacher pay falls short of what it should be
- 64 percent say the state puts too much emphasis on high-stakes testing
- 63 percent believe coursework should be as important as a state test in determining student success

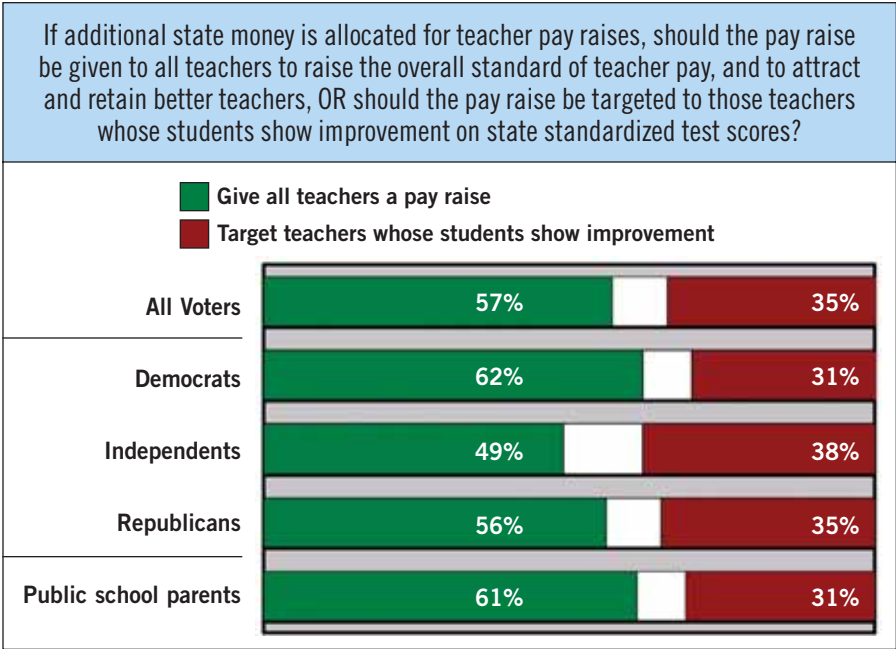
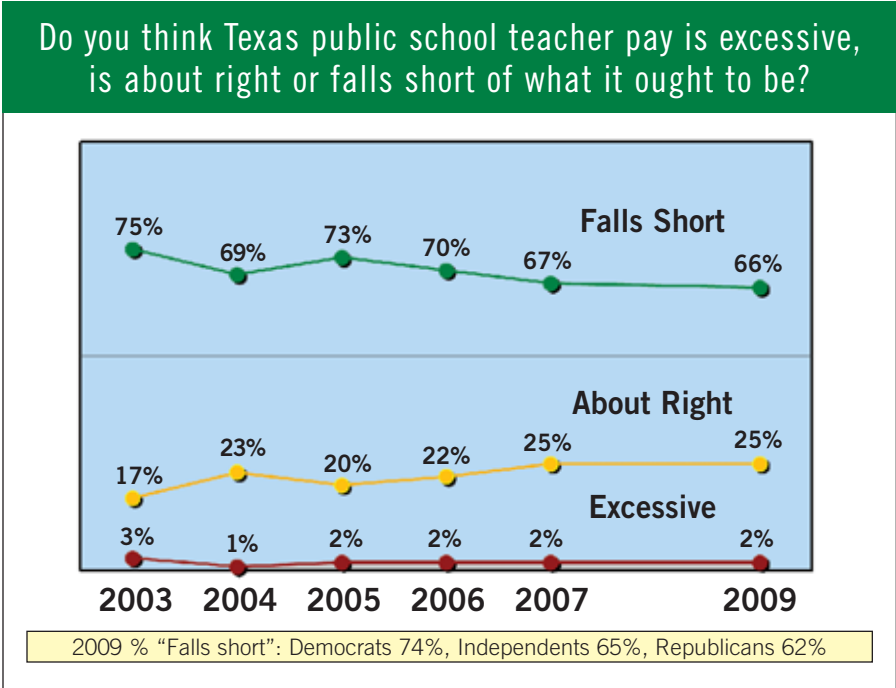
“At the same time, Texans know that changing the way the state measures academic results does nothing to fix a broken school funding system that shortchanges local schools, students and teachers,” Haecker said. “On all of these key issues, a majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents agree that we can and must do better.

We are encouraged that legislators are starting to hear that message. We hope they will develop a school funding solution worthy of our students, teachers and taxpayers.”

The TSTA-commissioned poll surveyed 815 Texas voters from across the state from Jan. 26-29. It was conducted by

Ed Goeas of The Tarrance Group, a national Republican polling firm, and Paul Harstad of Harstad Strategic Research Inc., a national Democratic polling firm.

Complete poll results can be found at www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/index.shtml.



View poll results in the Pressroom at www.tsta.org



State Reps. Rob Eissler, chair of the House Public Education Committee, Rene Oliviera and Eddie Lucio III join the Brownsville contingent outside the House chamber.

TEXAS LEGISLATURE RECOGNIZES BROWNSVILLE

TSTA President Rita Haecker and Association of Brownsville Educators leaders joined school board members and administrators from Texas' southernmost school district at the state Capitol in February for recognition of Brownsville ISD's winning the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education.

NEA PRESIDENT INVITED TO HISTORIC BILL SIGNING

Your NEA president, Dennis Van Roekel, was there at the historic bill signing ceremony for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), landmark legislation to help struggling families, public schools and states cope with the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression.

President Obama has pledged to make education a top priority in his administration, both in his historic inaugural address as well as in his February address to a joint session of Congress. With the help of NEA, he successfully urged Congress to make the largest investment of federal funds in the history of public education, aiming to transform and modernize public schools for the 21st century.

"Today, with the stroke of a pen, President Barack Obama took a bold and necessary step to return the nation to more solid economic footing, delivering on a promise to make education a national priority and, at the same time, affirming that the road to economic recovery runs through the nation's classrooms," Van Roekel said at the signing.

"I am proud to witness this historic legislative victory for the American people

and the future of the nation's children. The economic recovery legislation Obama signed into law is as bold as the challenges facing millions of Americans. In the short-run, the law will slow the economic slide, and in the long-run, strengthen our economy and invest in America's future.

"His action will put millions of Americans back at work, keep thousands of schools and libraries open, and help educators hold on to their jobs," the NEA president said. "It will also modernize schools and labs to provide students with 21st century learning environments, and school districts across the country will receive additional resources to help millions of children, especially low-income and children with special needs."

For additional information, please visit www.nea.org.



TSTA President Rita Haecker and Association of Brownsville Educators President Alberto Alegria chat at a luncheon TSTA hosted for the Brownsville ISD group before the district was honored by the Texas Senate and the Texas House of Representatives for winning the Broad Prize.

SCHIP: A MAJOR NEA WIN

Why is it important to belong to an organization with a national voice? If the results of NEA's work on the economic stimulus package aren't enough evidence, the long awaited signing of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) should be.

SCHIP is the federal government's insurance program for the nation's poorest children. NEA was successful in getting this legislation passed by both houses of Congress twice before only to see it vetoed by the president. One of President Obama's first actions was to sign the legislation, which expands the program from 7 million to 11 million participants, on Feb. 4.

"We fulfill one of the highest responsibilities that we have: to ensure the health and well-being of our nation's children," President Obama said when he signed the bill. "It's a responsibility that's only grown more urgent as our economic crisis deepens, with health care costs that have exploded, and millions of working families are unable to afford health insurance."

Key details of the SCHIP legislation:

- Expands coverage to another 4.1 million uninsured children.

- Provides \$100 million in grants for states, local governments, schools and others to enroll more eligible children.

- Requires states to offer a dental benefit and allows them to offer SCHIP dental coverage to children whose private medical insurance does not cover dentist visits.

- Allows states to extend SCHIP and Medicaid to newly arrived legal immigrant children and pregnant women.

- Allows states to use Social Security numbers to verify an applicant's citizenship, making it easier to prove eligibility and enroll in the program.

FINALLY, A MEANINGFUL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM?

It's looking like the 81st session might be remembered by educators as the one in which the accountability system began to make sense.

House Committee on Public Education Chair Rob Eissler reviewed for his committee the work of the Select Committee on School Accountability, which he co-chaired and which met between sessions. In hearings across

the state about the current accountability system, the select committee was told it overemphasizes student performance on one test on one day; fails to recognize or reward growth; is wrong for work force development; is too complex and fails to inform stakeholders in meaningful ways; and necessitates inefficient use of resources.

When the Advocate went to press, a bill for a new accountability system was expected shortly. The new system is intended to accomplish many important goals, including moving away from curricular limitations resulting from TAKS, focusing on student achievement and growth, providing diagnostic reporting that can be used to improve performance, offering more easily understandable reporting, vertically aligning standards across grade levels and meeting work force development needs.

Please check our website at www.tsta.org/legislative/update for the latest news on this and other issues to be addressed in the Texas legislature's 81st session.

VOLUNTEER FOR A TSTA COMMITTEE

TSTA relies on member volunteers to serve on its governing committees. There are three standing committees: Legislative and Political Advocacy; Community and Instructional Advocacy; and Credentials, Bylaws and Elections. In addition, there are numerous special committees and task forces that review and make recommendations on specific issues (past examples include dues, minority representation, and elections).

The TSTA President will begin the appointment process for 2009-2010 in late May. All members are eligible to serve. If you are interested in a committee appointment, please contact Carol McCord at carolm@tsta.org or call (877) ASK-TSTA. Be sure to indicate your particular area of interest.

REMEDY FOR INVALID APPRAISALS

The Commissioner does not have the authority to order the destruction of a public record. The Commissioner has also refused to change lower appraisal ratings to higher ratings. Consequently, the Commissioner's standard remedy for an appraisal violation is to declare the appraisal null and void. Many times, the Commissioner orders a copy of the Commissioner's Decision to be placed in the teacher's personnel file.

There are many procedural requirements for districts to follow when appraising teachers. Violations of these procedural requirements will likely result in the appraisal being declared null and void. The Commissioner has repeatedly ruled, however, that the Commissioner cannot and should not substitute the Commissioner's judgment for that of the appraiser. Further, most substantive appraisal decisions do not implicate a school law of the state. Thus, challenges to substantive issues on appraisals are likely to be dismissed.



Teacher Evaluations and Growth Plans: Can They Do That?

BY JOEY MOORE, TSTA GENERAL COUNSEL AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

The annual appraisal must include at least one 45-minute classroom observation by the appraiser. The observation may be conducted in shorter time segments by mutual consent of the appraiser and the teacher if the segments aggregate to at least 45 minutes. Additional walk-throughs and observations may be conducted at the appraiser's discretion.

Districts must maintain a written copy of the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. Teachers are entitled to receive a written copy of the evaluation upon completion. After receiving a written copy of the evaluation, a teacher is entitled to a second appraisal by a different appraiser or to submit a written rebuttal to the evaluation to be attached to the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. The evaluation and any rebuttal may be given to another school district at which the teacher has applied for employment at the request of that district.

Although the general rule is that teachers must be appraised at least once during each school year, the Legislature has given districts flexibility over the frequency of appraisals. If a teacher's most recent evaluation rated the teacher proficient (or the equivalent thereof) with no areas of deficiency, a teacher and the district may agree to appraise the teacher less than annually. The teacher must give written consent to the lengthened appraisal cycle. The school district has a right to issue policies as to whom this option will be offered and how and if this arrangement is rescinded. In any event, a teacher must be appraised at least once every five years.

While a teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of the appraisal, the Texas Education Code (TEC) explicitly states that such advance notice is not required.

Within the year that the teacher is being appraised, there are specific time periods when ap-

praisals and observations are prohibited. School districts are required to establish a calendar for the appraisal of teachers. The period for teacher observations to be conducted must be during the required days of student instruction. The appraisal calendar must exclude for teacher observations the three weeks following the day that PDAS orientation is provided. Observations may not occur on the last day of instruction before any official school holiday or "any other day deemed appropriate by the school district board of trustees."

Summative Conferences: The summative annual conference must occur no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The purpose of this requirement is to allow the teacher time to request a second appraisal. The teacher must receive a written summative annual report at least five working days before the summative annual conference, and no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The purpose of receiving the summative annual appraisal report five days before the conference is so that the teacher will have time to prepare for the conference. A teacher can, however, waive in writing the 15 workday deadline.

Cumulative Data: The annual teacher appraisal must include, among other things, cumulative data of written documentation collected regarding job-related teacher performance. Cumulative data is information that is collected beyond the formal classroom observation. Cumulative data can be observed by the appraiser or a third party. The appraiser is responsible for documenting all cumulative data that will affect a teacher's appraisal.

The Texas Administrative Code mandates, "Any third-party information from a source other than the teacher's supervisor that the appraiser wishes to include as cumulative data shall be verified and documented by the ap-

praiser." Any documentation that will affect the teacher's annual summative appraisal must be shared in writing with the teacher within 10 working days of the appraiser's knowledge of the incident. If the appraiser is not the teacher's principal, the principal must also be notified in writing.

When cumulative data is documented and shared with the teacher, the Commissioner's rules do not require that the documentation contain a warning that the incidents described may influence the teacher's appraisal. It is presumed that when the teacher receives a written reprimand, the teacher is placed on notice that a significant defect has been identified.

TINA and Intervention Plans: "Teacher in Need of Assistance," or TINA, is a designation for a teacher who receives a "below expectations" rating in at least two domains, or an "unsatisfactory" rating in one domain. When a teacher is designated as a TINA, the appraiser and/or the teacher's supervisor shall develop (in consultation with the teacher) an intervention plan. Thus, an intervention plan for a teacher who is designated as a TINA is mandatory and not within the appraiser's discretion.

An intervention plan that is developed for a TINA must include, among other things: directives or recommendations for professional improvement activities; evidence that is used to determine successful completion of professional improvement activities and a specific timeline for successful completion.

Intervention plans are not limited to teachers who are declared TINAs. An intervention plan may also be implemented at any time at the discretion of the appraiser when the appraiser has documentation that would potentially produce an evaluation rating of "below expectations" or "unsatisfactory." Because an intervention plan may be implemented for reasons other than low appraisal scores (being declared a

TINA), invalidation of an appraisal does not automatically invalidate an intervention plan.

TEACHERS' OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO BAD APPRAISALS

A teacher may submit a written response after receiving a written observation summary and/or after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report. A teacher may also submit a written response after receiving "any other written documentation associated with the teacher's appraisal." The written response must be filed within 10 working days of receiving the documentation. This deadline may be extended to 15 days at the appraiser's discretion.

A teacher may also request a second appraisal by a different appraiser after receiving the written observation summary, and/or receiving a written summative annual appraisal report. The second appraisal must be requested within 10 working days of receiving the written observation summary or written summative annual report. This deadline may be extended to 15 days at the appraiser's discretion. As with the first appraisal, the teacher may be given advance notice of the date and time of the second appraisal, but advance notice is not required.

Second appraisals are not governed by the same timelines as first appraisals. In so ruling, the Commissioner reasoned that if second appraisals must be held no later than 15 working-days before the last day of instruction, all initial appraisals would have to be held earlier than the deadline. The Commissioner further pointed out had that been the intention, the rules would have addressed it.

There is no guidance in the Commissioner's rules or the TEC as to what weight the second appraisal must be given. Some school districts average the scores of the two appraisals. Some replace the first appraisal with the second appraisal.

It's More Than the Loss of a House

Homelessness for a child is more than the loss of a house. It disrupts every aspect of life. It separates children from their belongings, beloved pets, reassuring routines, friends and community.



“The face of homelessness is not just adults on the street. The face of homelessness is also families with children,” Cathy Requejo of Austin ISD’s Project HELP said. “The needs are so different for every one of them. Some need access to a shelter, some are doubling up with family and friends. Some have an education, some can’t read. Some have family, some have no one.”

With emotion in her voice, she told their stories:

“We had a family, a father and mother and their three kids. All three were in diapers, between the ages of five months and three years. The father wanted to work, the mother wanted to work. They had food stamps, but what they needed was money for diapers and gas. How does a family like that use the bus?”

“I met this awesome young man who needed transportation to and from school. The shelter he was in — sometimes a bus pass doesn’t work. What struck me was how resilient and efficient he was. He was sitting in the office with me, and he started talking about the challenges. The complicated process he has to go through to get help. He says, ‘You know what I don’t understand is why do people have six houses? I think all we need is what we need.’ He’s 16, and he lives with his mom in a shelter.

“We had a student who was expecting. Not only was she expecting, but she couldn’t turn to her family. They were in high dysfunction, not because of her situation, but they were all trying to keep from drowning. This student was special needs. I couldn’t be-

10 INDICATORS OF HOMELESSNESS

- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Numerous or prolonged absences
- Many different schools in the past months
- Inadequate grooming or inadequate hygiene
- Parents difficult or impossible to reach
- Inability to pay fees
- Lack of paper and pencils
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to keep or return textbooks

—Region XIII ESC



lieve the street smarts she had. What I saw in her was a willingness to say, ‘I need help.’ We helped her enroll in a school with a day care and connected her with a social worker. The student’s delivery had to be by c-section. The social worker came by to visit, and the student asked, ‘Do you have to leave or can you stay awhile?’ She shared her fears but also her hopes. One of them was she wanted to be able to take care of her baby. You know why she was pregnant? She was having to do tricks to get money. She was 16 years old.”

In announcing his plan to end the housing crisis, President Obama showed that he understood its true implications: The American Dream, he said, is being tested by “a home mortgage crisis that threatens not

only the stability of our economy but also the stability of families and neighborhoods.”

First Focus, a bipartisan advocacy group working to make children and families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, estimates that between 2008 and 2010, “two million children will be directly impacted by the mortgage crisis as their families lose their homes due to foreclosures.”

Experts say homelessness has far reaching effects on children.

“Homelessness for a child is more than the loss of a house,” Ellen Bassuk, associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and president of the National Center on Family Homelessness, testified before a U.S. House subcommittee in late 2007.

“It disrupts every aspect of life. It separates children from their belongings, beloved pets, reassuring routines, friends and community. At a time when children should be developing a sense of safety and security, trust in their caregivers and freedom to explore the world, they are severely challenged and limited by unpredictability, dislocation and chaos.”

“It’s a very emotionally draining time,” Requejo said. “Little things become big things. If a student only has flip flops and she needs tennies to attend school...if he can’t play in the band anymore because he can’t pay the fees...if there’s a field trip and the school has raised half the money but the student has to come up with the other half, that’s not insignificant for these families.”

Students’ health, emotional development and educational progress often are affected. “They don’t get proper sleep, and they get behind in school because where they are staying may not be conducive for doing homework,” Requejo said. “They can’t take advantage of after school programs because there’s no transportation. They don’t always have the materials they need for school because obviously money is an issue. A full breakfast — they could get it at school, but they may not be able to get there in time.”

“Compared to their housed counterparts, homeless children have more acute and chronic medical problems; four times the rate of developmental delays; three times the rate of anxiety, depression and behavioral difficulties; and twice the rate of learning disabilities,” Bassuk testified. “By age eight years, approximately one in three homeless children has at least one major psychiatric disorder. It is not surprising that they struggle in school and have difficulty learning.”

According to a Family Housing Fund report entitled Homelessness and Its Effects on Children, “75 percent of homeless children perform below grade level in reading, 72 percent perform below grade level in spelling, and 54 percent perform below grade level in math.”

Caregivers are dealing with their own problems, Requejo said. “How do I get my child to the library to use the computer when I’m trying to get someplace to pick up food? When you’re in crisis, you’re balancing education against basic needs like food, shelter and safety.”

The teacher can help by being sensitive to the fact that homeless children may not be able to come early or stay

late to get help in school; they may not have a good place to do homework at night; they may not have money for school expenses; and they may come to school hungry and sleepy.

“We need to be able to meet their basic needs, so they can be safe and move forward,” Requejo said. “If we’re not there to help them through the crisis, their education is im-

pacted, and education can make or break a student’s lifelong journey.”

Students sometimes try to hide the fact that they are homeless because they don’t want other students to know or they are afraid they may be separated from their families. On page 11 is a list of indicators to watch for and below is a list of ways in which teachers can help homeless students.

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO TO HELP HOMELESS STUDENTS

- Make students feel welcome.
- Be aware of the common characteristics of children who are experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure the homeless child is enrolled in the free and reduced price meal program.
- Select a student to be their “buddy” on the first day of class.
- Refer to an on-site tutoring program for educational assistance, if needed and available.
- Provide an atmosphere that welcomes parents to participate in school activities.
- Coordinate an educational plan with the school counselor.
- Ensure that the homeless student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for before-school, in-school and after-school programs.
- Don’t bring special attention to the fact that they are homeless in front of others.
- Give homeless students a clipboard to take as a portable desk to work on.
- Offer tools to complete any required task. Supplies may not be readily available for the child.
- Try to give the child something that he/she can call his/her own – taking care of a certain plant, class pet, etc.
- Ensure that homeless children can participate in field trips, school wide activities and class projects even if they do not have the transportation or necessary fees.
- Don’t use a homeless child’s recess or PE time as a make up or detention period. They may not have the space in the shelter or motel to run, jump, play and be a kid.
- Communicate with parents about the student’s school performance.
- Hold the child accountable for what he/she can control (behavior, attitude, etc.), not for what is not in the child’s control (purchase of materials for art, etc.).
- Assist other students in being sensitive to stereotypes of homeless people.
- Keep a supply of nutritional snacks in your classroom.
- Have necessary toiletry items on hand to assure proper hygiene at school.

—from North Dakota Department of Public Instruction



Surprises in Japan

A teacher's notes on an incredible experience

By Kathryn Brothers

Imagine yourself on a train that goes so fast that a daily commute between Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston would be routine. Imagine separating the trash from your Happy Meal™ into five different receptacles. And imagine yourself standing on ground where samurai warriors on horseback battled over a thousand years ago.

In October 2008, that was not my imagination. It was my reality. As a 2008 Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Participant, I traveled to Japan with 157 other educators from around the U.S. for a 19-day educational and cultural study trip. It was without a doubt one of the best experiences of my life.

The JFMF Teacher program's purpose is to deepen cultural and educational understanding between the people of the United States and Japan. It began in 1997 in recognition of the Fulbright Program's success in allowing over 6,000 Japanese people to study in universities across the nation. The trip included seminars in Tokyo with Japanese government and education officials, visits to cultural and historical sites, and school visits in my host city of Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture.

I traveled to Minamisoma, Fukushima, with 15 other educators from all levels, including a superintendent of a small district in North Dakota, a high school Social Studies teacher from Maine, and an elementary principal from Washington, D.C. We toured the prefectural university, an elementary school, a junior high school and a high school. We met with administrators, teachers, students and parents.

I went to Japan with little knowledge of the culture but with a few preconceived notions re-

garding what I thought I would see in schools. I was very surprised to find some of them were myths.

Students are more boisterous and talkative in elementary school than I had imagined. I observed a third grade math lesson that seemed chaotic at first. The children were shouting answers and calling out, "Teacher! Teacher!" It startled me but I realized this was her method of gauging understanding, because as soon as she spoke a few words the students sat quietly and waited for her to speak again.

In the junior high, I saw students leading other students in choral groups with no adult supervision. At the high school I saw students using chemicals in the lab and knives in the home economics class with no safety goggles and no horseplay. Their independence and self-discipline were impressive. Students kept up with materials and lessons without much interaction between them and their teachers. They also had many breaks during the day without much supervision.

But perhaps the most surprising thing I saw was students and teachers cleaning the school every day at every level. They formed teams led by other students, and they had assigned cleaning areas. I saw them on their hands and knees cleaning floors and using bleach and scouring powders in the bathrooms. I was shocked to see no one using gloves. Even the principal of the elementary school cleaned.

Another practice I was not used to seeing happened at the elementary and middle schools. Lunch is delivered to each room in pots and bowls with all the utensils. The teacher and a few students served each one lunch, and everyone waited until everyone was served and then they ate together. After they were through eating, everyone, including the teacher, brushed their teeth. The high school students are expected to bring their own lunch, and I got to see a bento box lunch first-hand when I ate with some members of the high school student council.

Meeting with the parents gave me some insight into how they view their role in their children's education. They believe that school personnel are the experts in curriculum and instruction, and it is the parents' job to instill discipline. They do not volunteer in the classroom except as special guests who come to read aloud or teach a craft skill such as origami. The parents also spend time with their children by sponsoring the athletic teams or cultural activities outside of school hours. Almost half of the students in Minamisoma attend "cram" schools at night for English lessons or test preparation. Parents believe that hard work and extra effort will lead to success and that success will bring a better life for their children.

Japan is having national discussions about their education system similar to those we have here in the United States. Scores on standardized tests are trending downwards and some believe it is because students do not go to school six days a week as they have in the past. There are concerns about teacher preparedness programs, dropouts and bullying. Parents are also more worried now about school safety after several high profile incidents.

It became very clear that even though our educational systems are run very differently, the education of children is not so different. We all want children to grow up to be productive and responsible citizens. We all want children to have self discipline and to be motivated. We all want our children to succeed and be the best they can be.

I will never forget what I experienced in Japan. I met some incredible people and saw things I never expected. I am grateful to the Japanese government for the incredible opportunity they gave me. I hope that by sharing my experiences with others I will foster understanding of Japan and its wonderful people. I will always cherish my trip and I will never be the same.

Kathryn Brothers is an elementary technology applications teacher in Dallas. You can read more about her trip on her blog at: www.trimmingthebonsai.blogspot.com.



Kathryn Brothers posing outside a Japanese junior high school.



An elementary school Brothers visited in Minamisoma, Fukushima.



NEA Representative Assembly

July 1-6, 2009 • San Diego Convention Center • San Diego, CA

The 2009 NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly (RA) will be held during the first week of July at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, CA. The RA is NEA’s highest decision-making body. Delegates to the RA debate issues that impact American public education, elect top officers, and set association policy.

Delegates to the RA are elected both locally and statewide (see state ballot and voting information in this issue). Texas delegates attending the 2009 NEA-RA will receive an information packet in early May. Information and updates regarding the RA also will be posted on the TSTA website.

LODGING

The official hotel for the Texas Delegation is the fashionable Doubletree Hotel San Diego-Mission Valley. Located minutes from San Diego International Airport, the hotel is in the heart of area shops, dining, and entertainment venues. The San Diego trolley conveniently stops in front of the hotel and is only three short stops from historic Old Town.

The nightly room rate for single/double occupancy is \$170 plus taxes and fees (currently \$191.42 per night). If more than two people share a room, a \$20 fee per each additional person will apply.

Hotel check-in time is 3:00 p.m. Check-out time is

12:00 p.m. Daily overnight parking rates are \$14 for self-park and \$18 for valet. Room service is available from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The daily check cashing limit for personal checks is \$50. Persons intending to pay cash for their lodging expenses should be prepared to pay all room, tax, and, if applicable, parking fees at check in. The hotel has six smoking rooms available on a first-come basis. All other sleeping rooms and all public areas are non-smoking.

Reservations should be made through TSTA’s Center for Executive and Governance (CEG) rather than through the hotel in order for delegates to be included in the TSTA room block. The reservation form is included at the end of this article.

The deadline to submit your reservation to TSTA is May 22, 2009.

Completed reservation forms MUST include the first night’s deposit. Please either provide your credit card (not debit card) information on your reservation form or enclose with your form a check for the total cost of one room night made payable to: Doubletree Hotel. If an incomplete credit card number and/or no credit card or check is submitted, your reservation will not be made. Deposits are refundable for cancellations if notice is given to the hotel by 48 hours before your scheduled arrival.

All rooms will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. Delegates should submit their reservation forms as soon as possible to ensure space in the TSTA room block at our guaranteed rate. Delegates who do not have a roommate but would like to share lodging expenses may indicate this on the reservation form. Although a roommate cannot be guar-

anteed, TSTA will attempt to pair delegates who request such assistance.

TRANSPORTATION

From San Diego International Airport [SAN], the hotel provides complimentary transportation to the hotel between 6:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily. Upon arriving, attendees requesting complimentary airport shuttle service must call the hotel directly at (619) 297-5466. Return shuttle to the airport is \$10.00 per person, based on availability. Attendees must sign-up 24-hours prior to check-out with Guest Services to reserve seating on the shuttle.

For after-hours shuttle service or to make an independent reservation, call SuperShuttle San Diego (a.k.a. Cloud 9 Shuttle) at 1-800-BLUE VAN (258-3826). One-way cab fare from the airport to the hotel is about \$21.

Transportation to/from the hotel and convention center will be provided. Estimated travel time between the hotel and convention center, depending on traffic, is about 20-30 minutes.

TEXAS CAUCUS MEETINGS

All Texas Caucus meetings will be held at the Texas Delegation hotel. The first Texas Caucus meeting will be Wednesday, July 1, at 1:00 p.m. Thereafter, the Texas Caucus will meet at 7:00 a.m. daily. Morning meetings will include coffee service and/or a light breakfast. NOTE: Delegates must register both at the Texas Caucus meeting and with NEA. Registration at the first Texas Caucus meeting will begin 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. Please review the Tentative NEA Meeting Event Schedule for the NEA registration times.

CLUSTERING TO ELECT NEA DELEGATES

Delegate allocations are based on NEA membership as of January 15, 2009. NEA local affiliates are allocated delegates on a ratio of one (1) delegate for each 150 (or major fraction thereof) active, NEA life, and educational support members of NEA. Local associations with 75 or fewer NEA members must cluster to elect an NEA delegate. If your local has 75 or fewer NEA members and is interested in clustering to elect an NEA delegate, contact the TSTA CEG as soon as possible so that elections may be held.

Submit your written request to cluster by email to: sandras@tsta.org, by fax to: (512) 486-7053, or by mail to: TSTA Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

TEXAS TRADITION

Texas delegates capture the eyes of the entire nation at each NEA RA by dressing uniformly in Texas flag attire. All Texas delegates should wear a “Texas” vest or shirt—i.e. Texas flag design with a white star on the right front chest—and white or navy blue pants/skirt/shorts.

All Texas delegates are expected to wear the official “uniform” on the days the NEA RA is in session (July 3-6).

NEA-RA INFORMATION

Tentative Meeting Schedule . . . p.18
Hotel Reservation Form p.19
How to Vote p.20
Candidate Statements p.22

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

TENTATIVE NEA MEETING EVENT SCHEDULE

The schedule outlines all of the activities of the 2009 NEA Convention. Information packets will be mailed to all Texas delegates in early May. The first Texas delegation meeting is scheduled for July 1 at 1:00 p.m.

Pre-Convention Schedule

Friday, June 26
8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. NEA Student Leadership Conference

Saturday, June 27
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Ethnic Leaders Meetings
8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. NEA Student Leadership Conference
noon-5:00 p.m. NCUEA Meeting
2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 28
8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. NEA Student Leadership Conference
8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. NCUEA Meeting
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Joint Conference On Concerns of Minorities and Women
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Resolutions Editing Committee Meeting
4:15 p.m.-5:15 p.m. Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee Hearing
5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Women's Issues Hearing

Monday, June 29
8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. NEA Student Leadership Conference
8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Joint Conference on the Concerns of Minorities and Women
8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
9:00 a.m.-noon The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education Meeting
9:00 a.m.-noon National Education Employees Assistance Fund Annual Meeting
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. NCUEA Meeting
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Constitution, Bylaws and Rules Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Resolutions Editing Committee Meeting
1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. National Council of State Education Associations Meeting
4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Constitution, Bylaws and Rules Committee Meeting with Candidates for NEA Office

Tuesday, June 30
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Candidates Interview Day
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.. Read Across America
1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 1
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.. Open Hearing on Resolutions
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Exhibits; Campaigning
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Delegate, Successor Delegate, Non-Delegate Registration
10:00 a.m.-noon Parliamentary Procedure Training
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. **First Texas Caucus Meeting** (New delegate orientation 1:00-1:30 p.m.)
2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Sexual Orientation/Gender Identification Committee Open Hearing
4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. National Council for Higher Education Conference
4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. National Council for Education Support Professionals
7:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Special Guests' Dinner

TBD. Outreach to San Diego Service Projects

Thursday, July 2
7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.. State Delegation Meetings
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Delegate, Successor Delegate, Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Exhibits
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
10:00 a.m.-noon Open Hearing on Budget & Strategic Planning
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Resolutions Committee Meeting
noon-1:00 p.m. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Legislative Open Hearing
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Open Hearing on Constitution, Bylaws and Rules
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Elections Committee Meeting
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Parliamentary Procedure Training
5:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner
ALL DAY Campaigning
TBD. Outreach to San Diego Service Projects

Convention Schedule

Friday, July 3
7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.. State Delegation Meetings
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.. Exhibits
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Non-Delegate Registration
9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
ALL DAY Campaigning
Friendship Night

Saturday, July 4
7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.. State Delegation Meetings
8:30 a.m.-noon Voting for Officers
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Credentials Committee Meeting
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Non-Delegate Registration
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Non-Profit Fundraising Activities
9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.. Special Interest Caucus Meetings
10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Representative Assembly
LUNCH BREAK Special Interest Caucus Meetings

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

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

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM FOR NEA CONVENTION DELEGATES

July 1-6, 2009 • DoubleTree Hotel San Diego Mission Valley • San Diego, CA

Complete all requested information and return to TSTA by **May 22, 2009**. Check-in time 3:00 p.m.—Check-out time 12:00 p.m.

DO NOT CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY

(PLEASE PRINT)

DOUBLETREE HOTEL	ROOM RATE
(Texas Delegation Hotel)	_____ Single room (1 person—1 bed)\$170.00
7450 Hazard Center Drive	_____ Double room (2 people—2 beds)\$170.00
San Diego, CA 92108	_____ Triple room (3 people—2 beds).....\$190.00
Phone: (619) 297-5466	_____ Quad room (4 people—2 beds).....\$210.00
Fax: (619) 297-5499	

Cut-off date for ALL rooms and room rates is May 22, 2009. All rooms are subject to an additional 12.6% tax.
Rooms not booked through TSTA may be charged at the hotel rack rate.

I will arrive (June/July) _____, 2009 at _____ (a.m./p.m.) and I will depart July _____, 2009.

Name:_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Home email:_____ School email:_____

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

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

_____ I do not have a roommate but am interested in sharing accommodations with another delegate.

First night's room and tax is due upon receipt of reservation. Deposits can be made by major credit card or check.
Make check payable to **DoubleTree Hotel**. Should cancellation be necessary, you must advise the hotel 48 hours before your scheduled arrival date. If the hotel is not advised, you will be responsible to pay for space held.

Approved major credit card:_____ Exp. date:_____

Credit card #: _____ Name on card:_____

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

Voting for State Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly

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

TSTA has completed all calculations for allocating State Delegates for the NEA RA and has divided the state into Delegate Districts, based on TSTA Regions, in a manner that maximizes our opportunity to elect a full delegation while still complying with the NEA one-person, one-vote requirements.

As explained in The Delegate Story on the facing page, we will be electing three Category II delegates on a statewide basis, one other delegate on a statewide ballot, and 39 State Delegates from four Delegate Districts.

All members should mark the ballot for Category II delegates (supervisory and Active Life Active candidates). Every eligible member should mark the ballot for Statewide delegate; the TSTA Vice President is an automatic candidate for this slot.

The rest of the ballots are divided into Delegate Districts in a manner to

meet the NEA requirements for equal representation based on the one-person, one-vote principle. Members in Regions 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1E should mark the Delegate District 1 ballot. Members in Regions 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, and 2F mark the Delegate District 2 ballot. Members in Regions 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, and TFA mark the Delegate District 3 ballot. Members in Regions 2D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, and 4E mark the Delegate District 4 ballot. The ballot will list the Regions in each Delegate District.

There is a special insert in the magazine with a return envelope and the ballot. If you did not receive a ballot, call TSTA immediately, (877) ASK-TSTA, and ask for Sandra.

In the return address portion of the envelope most members will find printed “Del Dist” followed by some number up to 4; this indicates the Delegate District in which you should vote. Also printed is a

code designating your membership category.

If your envelope does not have a Del Dist designation, then you are eligible to vote only on the Category II ballot. Everyone else should mark three ballots: the Category II ballot, the Statewide ballot, and the appropriate Delegate District ballot.

If you believe your envelope is incorrect, call TSTA immediately, (877) ASK-TSTA, and ask for Sandra.

Check the return address portion of the envelope to determine which Delegate District ballot you should mark. First, mark the Category II ballot (vote for three). Next, mark the Statewide ballot (vote for one). Then, find the ballot for your Delegate District. The number of delegates for each Delegate District is determined on the basis of the one-person, one-vote principle. The ballot for your Delegate District will tell you how many votes you may cast.

On all three ballots, you may vote for the printed name(s), or you may write in a name and vote for the write-in. In order for write-in votes to be counted on the Delegate District ballot, the write-in candidate must be a member in a Region included in

that Delegate District. We do encourage write-in votes, as it provides an alternate pool in case plans change for those printed on the ballot.

Once you have marked your ballot, separate it from, and seal it in, the envelope provided. **The printed information on the envelope verifies for the Elections Committee your right to vote, so you MUST return your ballot in this envelope.**

In order to encourage more members to vote, some locals collect the sealed envelopes and mail a group of envelopes together. This is acceptable, but you still must seal your ballot in the special envelope before you turn it in.

Whether you mail it yourself or your local collects and mails envelopes, ballots must be RECEIVED at TSTA headquarters in Austin by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2009. If the ballot is not in the provided envelope, your vote will not be counted.

This issue of the Advocate includes brief statements from many of the candidates for State Delegate. TSTA policy provides for printing statements from those candidates who file such a statement before the established deadline. TSTA policy also permits any candidate to have an observer present when the Elections Committee canvasses the ballots on April 25 at the TSTA headquarters in Austin. Please contact Carol or Sandra at (877) ASK-TSTA if you are a candidate and want an observer.

THE DELEGATE STORY

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

Once NEA notifies us of the number of state delegates to be elected, TSTA Board policy controls how we will allocate those delegates. Because of the variance in the number of members across TSTA Regions, we can not allocate delegates only to individual Regions and still pass the one-person, one-vote tests applied by NEA. Instead, we have combined Regions into Delegate Districts in a way to maximize the likelihood of filling all delegate slots while still complying with the one-person, one-vote requirement. One delegate must be elected statewide in order to provide a method for the TSTA Vice President to seek election as a delegate.

TSTA is allocated 43 state delegates for the 2009 NEA RA. Based on proportional representation, three delegates must be elected as “Category II” delegates, representing supervisors and NEA Active Life Active members. After setting aside one delegate for the statewide ballot, we looked at different ways to combine Regions in order to meet the one-person, one-vote requirements while electing the remaining 39 state delegates. As the numbers worked out, we were able to stay with only one delegate on the statewide ballot, keep the three delegate positions for the Category II ballot, and divide the other 39 delegates among four Delegate Districts as shown on the ballot.

Local associations are allocated one delegate for each 150 active and educational support NEA members or major fraction thereof. Locals with fewer than 76 NEA members may cluster to form delegate units. Presidents of locals that have 76 or more members should receive from NEA in late February the number of delegates to be elected to the 2009 NEA RA with an accompanying form that is due at TSTA by April 10 and a copy of guidelines to assure proportional representation by educational position. Local presidents should send both the state and NEA copies of the local delegate report forms to TSTA as soon as possible after they conduct their local NEA delegate elections or by April 10. Members from locals of 75 or fewer members also may seek election as “cluster” delegates. If you are interested in this option, please contact Sandra Solimine at 1-877-ASK-TSTA or by email at sandras@tsta.org.

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

Each of the 43 elected State Delegates will be eligible to receive a \$250 stipend. Although this amount is only a small percentage of the total cost for a delegate, TSTA is pleased to be in a position to provide some financial assistance. TSTA Board Policy FP-12 sets out the caucus and RA attendance expectations delegates must meet in order to receive the stipend.

BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED AT TSTA HEADQUARTERS IN AUSTIN BY 5 P.M. ON FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2009.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Category II

- Jerry R. Watkins, Caucasian. Dedicated to advancing the TSTA agenda. TSTA-R Region 4C President. Fort Worth Education Assn., Past President. Past TSTA/NEA delegate.
- Ernest H. Singleton, Caucasian. I am Director of C&I in Benavides ISD. I ask for your vote for State Delegate to the R.A.
- Anita Granados Castano-Ramirez, Hispanic. 72 years, Math 12 years, Truant/Social Worker 23 years, College Math/Sociology 10 years, Life member—TCTA, TSTA-NEA, TRA—local & state, Retired 1995.
- Bobbie Duncan, Caucasian. My experiences as an active member and now as a retiree qualify me to represent you on active and retired issues. I appreciate your vote.
- Eddie Spence, Caucasian. My philosophy is to stay involved. Stay up-to-date on happenings in education and your professional organizations. You never know when you will be called upon.
- Juan J. Gonzales, Hispanic. Over 30 years of Law Enforcement; 10 years with school district police departments; 7 years as a TSTA member. I would greatly appreciate your vote!!
- Brenda Oliver, Black. I am the mother of three adults and granny to seven wonderful children. The love of my life, Frederick Oliver passed away in March.

- Ignacio Salinas, Jr., Hispanic. I am Benavides ISD Superintendent. It would be a privilege to serve as a State Delegate to the 2009 R.A. I ask for your vote.

Statewide

- Jason R. Hillman, Caucasian. As your Vice President, I am dedicated to our Core Values and will continue to work for the realization of our Strategic Goals. Vote Hillman!

Delegate District 1 (Regions 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E)

- Mario A. Zaragoza, Hispanic. Masters in Education. Instructional Specialist. Teacher. Coach. College Adjunct Instructor. TSTA Local/Regional Vice President. LULAC President.*
- Eliza M. Garcia, Hispanic. Am currently Vice-President of my local and a dedicated TSTA/NEA member for over twenty years. I would like to represent you at the NEA Conference.*
- Yolanda C. Molina, Hispanic. Being your voice at the NEA Convention this summer in San Diego would be an honor. Allow me to continue serving you and our students.*
- Linda L. Estrada, Hispanic. I am Linda Estrada asking for your support to represent you at the RA. It would be an honor and a privilege to represent you.*
- Nikki Taylor, Asian. I am a long time member and a first time ap-

plicant who has proudly enjoyed teaching students for ten years. I will appreciate your vote.

- Patrick V. Gabbert, Hispanic. 2003 Ambassador. As a Police Officer committed to "School Safety", I am aware of the critical issues and challenges that educators and students face daily.

Delegate District 2 (Regions 2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 2F)

- John Duncan, Caucasian. TSTA/NEA member 33 years-Currently on the TSTA Board, Region 2C President. I would appreciate your vote and consider it an honor to represent you.
- Glenda Hawthorne, Caucasian. Glenda Hawthorne is President of Socorro Education Association and immediate past President of TSTA Region 2A.
- Delia Camacho, Hispanic. TSTA/NEA has made a difference in my professional career. As NEA Women's Caucus chair, I know the value of participation. Your vote is appreciated.
- Robert C. Fierro, Hispanic. Previous NEA Delegate. Previous NEA Resolutions member. I need your vote to continue serving Texas at the NEA-RA.

Delegate District 3 (Regions 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, TFA)

- George Helm, Jr., Black. Awe: Converting an F student waiting to drop out into an A student planning for college. Block-walker,

serving on committees/boards; a vessel for change.*

- Sarah Simoneaux, Caucasian. Region 3A deserves to be represented at the NEA every year. I would be honored to serve as a delegate to this year's RA. Thanks.
- Israel Cortez, Jr., Hispanic. Board of Directors ESP At-Large 2005-2007. Co-Vice President DPEA 2004-2006. Ambassador Academy Training. Human & Civil Rights Leadership Skills. Western Region Leadership Conference.
- Reagan Hawkins, Hispanic. Reagan is a proud high school teacher, Vice-president of Region 3E, a graduate of the Ambassador Academy, and serves on the NEA Resolutions Committee.*
- Bettie J. Curtis, Black. I am a business education teacher at West Orange-Stark High School. TSTA Past Service: District V President and State Executive Board member.
- Claudette Thomas. 18 years working for Public Education. Positions: TSTA Board of Directors ESP At-Large, Local President, ESP Director, Minority Director. Continued Commitment To Public Education.
- Henry A. Adeoye, Black. I've represented our esteemed TSTA in various capacities. I am soliciting your vote to the next NEA-RA. Avail me the privilege to be your voice.*
- Michelle W. Lockwood, Black. Leadership and career accomplishments include: Lead Teacher, Site Based Committee Member, Representative for THSA, Wheatley

School Teacher of the Year, Elementary Teacher of the District.

- A. Diane Wilkerson, Caucasian. Active member of TSTA Conroe serving on its executive board and on the AOT 3D board. Held various offices and committee positions at all levels.*

Delegate District 4 (Regions 2D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E)

- Becky Cerliano, Caucasian. I want to put my 35 years of membership and experience and 16 years as regional secretary to work for YOU, TSTA. VOTE FOR ME!
- Peggy Schmidt, Caucasian. I currently am the Department Chair for reading at Frankford Middle School in Plano ISD, and I've been a TSTA member for 26 years.*
- Stephen Smallwood, American Indian-Alaska Native. As a leader who understands the procedure of the Representative Assembly I want to be of service to the greatest state education association, TSTA.
- Winifred Jackson, Black. Served in various leadership capacities from Building AR, local and regional president, TSTA Board of Directors, LPAC Committee, NEA Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee.
- Louise Watkins, Asian. NEA Board of Directors member. NEA Minority Affairs Committee, Co-Chair. Past TSTA Board of Directors member. Fort Worth Education Association, Past President.
- Dale D. Kaiser, Caucasian. As a firm believer in our member-driven

association, I would consider it a great honor to carry your concerns to the NEA RA.

- Mildred T. Savannah, Black. As a delegate to the NEA RA, my votes will be cast for new business items that are in the best interest of the association.*
- Doris Hill, American Indian-Alaska Native. I have been a TSTA member since 1997 and would be honored to represent Texas at the 2009 NEA-RA. Thanks so much.*
- Ronald L. Savannah, Black. As a delegate to the NEA RA, my votes will be cast in accordance with TSTA goals and objectives.*
- Sheila Daughtrey, Caucasian. As a Life-time member of TSTA (35 years teaching experience), I welcome the opportunity to make a positive impact on state, regional, and national issues.
- Eula Axe, Caucasian. Experienced leader from a large local. Have served in a variety of leadership positions locally and at the state level. Veteran delegate. Vote Eula Axe.
- Mary Deniece Smith, Black. I have been a member of TSTA for 14 years, and would love to represent my region at the NEA Convention this summer.*
- Lisa Dammert, Caucasian. I am a first time delegate, cancer survivor, and mother. I have worked as a Special Education teacher for the past five years.*

**Also Running on Statewide Ballot*

A Guide on the Side

Rather than giving students the answers, math specialist Barbara Kelley asks questions to teach them to generate their own questions.



GCISD PUBLIC INFORMATION

My favorite quote is: “Teaching children what to think limits them to our ideas. Teaching them how to think makes their ideas unlimited.” I love watching the students as they become confident in their ability to tackle any problem presented to them.

—Barbara Kelley, quoted in the Colleyville Courier

TSTA member Barbara Kelley is a finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). A third grade teacher at Cannon Elementary before becoming the district elementary math specialist this year, she has been with Grapevine-Colleyville ISD for 23 of her 29 years as a teacher.

Kelley said the application process took time and effort—20-something pages of writing, student work, a 30-minute video—but it was fun. “I learned a lot about myself through the process,” she said. “It’s a lot of research and a lot of reflective thinking that you don’t normally do.”

Following is an excerpt from her award entry that explains how she uses instructional methods

and strategies that are appropriate for the learning styles of the students in the classroom and that result in increased student achievement.

Jacob stares at the paper, twirling his pencil in his hand. The class has been given a problem. “There are nine ladybugs on a bush. How many ladybug legs are on the bush?” Many students attack the problem, some are drawing circles and putting six tally marks in each circle, others are creating a T-chart, some are skip counting, while others are adding $6 + 6$ over and over. But Jacob just stares. Seeing his struggle, I walk over to visit with him. I begin to question him about what he knows about the problem. I don’t tell him what he needs to do. I don’t give any suggestions. I just question, question, question. I start with



SUZANNE MARCHMAN, TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY



Left page: Playing a game with Cannon Elementary fourth graders helps them understand math concepts. Right page: Barbara Kelley’s family (above) and Principal Tim Sutton (below) were with her when she was recognized by Texas Education Agency in January.

the basics asking Jacob what the problem is about. He responds that there are ladybugs on a bush. I ask him what else he knows from the problem; he rereads the problem and says that there are nine ladybugs. He is still looking at me for help. When I ask, “What do you know about ladybugs?” he brightens. “They’re insects. We studied them in 2nd grade and I know that insects have six legs.” Suddenly his pencil hits the paper and I am quickly forgotten as he becomes immersed in his problem solving. Through my questioning, Jacob has found the “hidden” number in the problem, which was causing his struggle.

My students know that while I will not give them answers, I will not leave them stranded. I don’t see myself as a giver of in-

formation. Instead, I prefer to be a “guide on the side,” listening to my students’ thinking and stretching them to do more than they believe they can. I embrace a best practice known as Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). As the name implies, the focus is on understanding children’s thinking as they develop their cognitive understanding of math concepts. My role is to ask questions that guide them to discover their own understanding. Through my questions they learn to generate their own questions. As they discover the problem solving power of their own questions, they become more and more independent. Through their problem solving they construct their own meaning of mathematics.

Students in my classroom solve problems daily. The problems I bring to them are real-life problems, often involving something that has happened in the classroom. They are not about someone else, faceless people from math textbooks. They are about us. They are written strategically to

APPLYING FOR PAEMST

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching recognize science and mathematics teachers whose innovative methods bring teaching to life in the classroom.

A panel of scientists, mathematicians and educators recommends about 100 teachers to receive the award. The National Science Foundation, under the direction of the White House, approves the finalists. If chosen as a national winner, a state finalist receives \$10,000 and an all-expense paid trip for two to Washington, D.C., for ceremonies that include recognition from the president of the United States at the Capitol.

The nomination deadline for teachers of grades 7-12 is April 1, 2009, and the application deadline is May 1, 2009. Teachers of grades K-6 are eligible to apply in 2010. www.paemst.org

help students grapple with specific math concepts from the curriculum. They deal with everything from place value to division to fractions—anything children need to learn can be learned through problem solving.

Always, the students choose how they will solve the problem. Having this choice allows them to see themselves as problem solvers and to make sense of the math in their own unique way. Their choices inform me about their developmental levels and guide the decisions I need to make about where to start, how to make the problem more or less challenging, and when to nudge them to use more efficient strategies. Depending on the difficulty of the concept and the child's level of understanding I may vary the numbers to adjust the difficulty level. While I want all students working on the same basic problem, the process they need to use to solve the problem may be very different. For example, some of the number choices in a subtraction problem solving scenario may include numbers in which no regrouping is needed in order to solve the problem, while other number choices may require regrouping once or regrouping twice for a more accomplished student. By strategically choosing the numbers I assign, my students are engaged in different ways with different tasks even within the same problem. The problem solving processes I use make it easy to differentiate my instruction.

Always, talk surrounds our problem solving. Not just as the problem is introduced, but during and after their experience, too. Not just teacher-to-student talk but student-to-student talk. As soon as students begin tackling a problem, I use their conversations to assess their level of understanding. A student who solves a problem by direct modeling is still gaining understanding of the concept. I know this student needs to follow the action in the problem while using a physical representation of each quantity. I will need to give

him more experience with this type of problem before he is ready to transition to a more efficient and abstract strategy. His neighbor, on the other hand, may be solving the same problem by using a counting strategy. As she explains her use of skip counting, I see that she is ready to consider more efficient thinking. I ask her to discuss her strategy with a student across the room that has created a T-chart. I'm confident that their discussion will lead her to see how she can organize her thinking for future problems. This talk gives me critical information that I will use to focus class discussion and design my next lessons.

After students have solved their problem, talk becomes our reflection tool. I strategically choose a variety of students who represent a wide range of solution strategies, including some who struggled and were not able to solve the problem. Students learn it is smart to ask questions. They learn to value the thinking that comes from these probing questions. It pushes the student who is sharing to be clear in his explanation. It pushes the struggling problem solver towards a deeper understanding of the problem. It pushes all students to learn from each other as equal partners. These student-to-student discussions make the varied strategies more accessible so that each child's options for future problem solving are increased.

Beginning with the first problem of the year, every decision is designed to create a risk-free environment in my classroom—an environment in which students enjoy participating as respected members of the group. As students share, they learn that the focus is on the method and not on the person. The students in the classroom become a resource as individual students look for ways to improve their own methods. By observing both efficient and inefficient methods, both concrete and abstract methods, students deepen their understanding. Students learn to look

for ways to learn from every response. We become a true community of learners invested not only in cultivating our own knowledge but in strengthening each other's knowledge and understanding. We trust each other and find it stimulating to analyze new solutions and look for better ways of solving problems.

Each discussion opens a window into my students' thinking. Whole group and individual conferences become valuable assessment tools that drive my instruction. When I first began implementing CGI, I was only focused on giving students a daily problem to solve and providing time for them to share their strategies. Now I'm not only more deliberate in my choice of problems but also in how I use them to develop important concepts. What mathematical understanding do I want my students to develop through this problem? Can this problem be solved using many different strategies? Will the strategies that students are likely to use lead them to understand a traditional algorithm? My students develop a deeper understanding of concepts by learning them through real-life problems. They are allowed to work with math manipulatives, physically act out the problem, draw the problem, write on their desk with dry erase markers, and talk to a neighbor. After working the problem they discuss their strategies. By explaining their solutions and justifying their strategies, they become conscious of their thinking.

This type of responsive teaching is not something that I can write in my lesson plans for the week. While I always have a clear learning objective in mind, I have no idea where a particular lesson might lead. The direction in which I take my students is dependent on the levels of understanding they reveal through their discussions. While teaching this way requires me to be more strategic and analytical, the rewards in student achievement make it well worth the effort.

Spring...



Into Great Savings

Texas State Teachers Association members can save 10%-50% on admission to popular attractions including the Walt Disney World® Resort, Universal Studios® Orlando, and attractions in Texas, California, Las Vegas, New York and more.

Visit TicketsAtWork.com and create a new account using code: TSTA

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Southwest Pushes Parental Involvement at Parade

Southwest Educators Association members decorated a truck and dressed in costume for the eighth annual Blue Santa Parade in San Antonio in December. While children along the parade route received candy from the local association, adults were given TSTA's bilingual parental involvement booklets. The parade was the third community involvement activity for Southwest leaders this year, as they urge parents to get involved in their children's education and offer tips on how to do so.

Look under
"Issues" at
www.tsta.org



SOUTH TEXAS LEADERS MEET

AOT 1 held an officer's retreat in January in Port Aransas (photo above). Local officers and leaders from Donna, Edgewood, Harlandale, Harlingen, Laredo, North East, San Benito, Southside and Southwest school districts spent the weekend learning new skills, sharing their experiences, strategizing and developing region plans for the 2009-2010 school year.

DENTON CHILD CARE CENTER HONORS VIRGINIA GALLIAN

In January, Denton ISD's first child care center for employees' children opened, named for former school board member, retired teacher and TSTA activist Virginia Gallian. As a school board member, Gallian was one of the first to support the growing trend of school districts providing child care facilities for employees, because as a single mother and educator, she understood the need. Gallian was president of her TSTA local association and served on the TSTA Board of Directors from 1986-92.

NEWS FROM TSTA-RETIRED

TSTA-Retired Annual Meeting and TSTA State Convention: Our Annual All Members Meeting will be April 15-16, 2009 at the Drury Inn, 1615 West Loop South, in Houston. Information relating to Retired issues and FUN activities will be included. Please

call (800) 325-0720 to make your reservations for the hotel. Registration will begin on Wednesday, April 15 at 2:00 p.m. with the All Member meeting at 2:30 p.m. Dinner will be served to All Member attendees at 6:00 p.m. Several workshops will be presented on Thursday, April 16, with the meeting wrapping up at 11:15 a.m. To register, please call TSTA-Retired at (512) 476-5355 or (800) 324-5355. The TSTA State Convention will be held at the InterContinental Hotel in Houston on April 17-18, 2009.

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly: The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting will be in San Diego, California on June 27-29, 2009. This meeting will include workshops, speakers, national leaders, political information, networking and good fun for all. More information can be found at www.nea.org and in This Active Life magazine. The NEA RA will be held in San Diego on July 1-6, 2009.

Thank You: We want to give a very special thank you to Jack Kelly. Jack served TSTA many years as a Legislative Specialist. He has been there for us on so many Retired issues in Texas and Washington, D.C. We want to wish Jack the very best! We know that he will enjoy his retirement!

—Letha Grace McCoy, TSTA-Retired president

PORT ARTHUR WINS PAC LAPTOP

Port Arthur Teachers Association won the TSTA Political Action Committee Giveaway Project which ran from September 1 through October 31, 2008. The local won a laptop computer for bringing in 223 new political action committee contributors on payroll deduction.

REGION 1B HOSTS LEGISLATIVE BRUNCH

Region 1B and President Barbara Franklin held a legislative brunch in November. Legislators and aides attending were U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez; Minnie Sanchez, aide to Sen. Leticia Van de Putte; and Reps. Joaquin Castro, Joe Farias and Jose Menendez. Each addressed the group, then answered questions from the audience.

NEW PUSH FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, STUDENT PROGRAM

A new position has been created at TSTA: Leadership Development Specialist and Student Program Coordinator. Bryan Weatherford, a longtime AOT staff person in the metroplex area, transferred into the position at Austin headquarters effective March 2.

He will take the lead in coordinating the development of a new program called the "Leadership Pipeline" that will identify, recruit and develop local leaders for TSTA across the state. The concept for the leadership pipeline came from TSTA President Rita Haecker as a way to help improve the effectiveness of TSTA locals. In addition, Bryan will coordinate the activities of the TSTA-Student Program, working with the chapter advisers and TSTA-SP officers.

TSTA Vice President Jason Hillman will serve in the role of Governance Liaison to the TSTA-SP. Working with Weatherford, one of Hillman's main responsibilities in areas where there is a college of education will be to work with TSTA locals to identify a member of the local to serve as a local liaison to assist with the student chapter at that college. This should help strengthen the link between active teachers and teachers in training, and begin to demonstrate to the SP members the value of continued TSTA membership.

NEW TSTA-STUDENT PROGRAM PRESIDENT URGES INVOLVEMENT

Howdy, y'all! I would like to say that I am more than ecstatic to now be in the position of TSTA- Student Program State President. I would like to start out by saying that I am proud of all the Student Program members and hope that we can continue to grow our membership without compromising the quality of services that we provide to our members. I believe that the Student Program is a great way to help

you prepare yourself to enter the greatest profession in the world as a confident and competent professional.

At the beginning of the year, we set two goals for the Student Program. We wanted to increase our membership and start a chapter at University of Texas-Brownsville, and to increase political awareness and activeness. The Student Program was able to get a UTB chapter up and running this year, and we successfully sent out a political newsletter to all the chapters before the election.

I know that for me, political involvement is a large reason why I am so involved in NEA as well as TSTA. I am the NEA-Student Program Representative on the NEA Standing Committee on Legislation as well as the TSTA-Student Program Representative on the TSTA Legislative and Political Action Committee. I truly enjoy working with other professionals on how we can make public schools better for every child. I would like to take this opportunity to ask all of the Student Program members to become PAC Continuing Contributors. I believe that it is important to begin to contribute to the fund that elects education-friendly candidates to office. I know that some of you may feel like you don't have \$5 a month, and that's okay, but think about it this way: would you rather invest in your future career, or have three Cokes™ at the machine? The choice is yours!

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to become an involved member in NEA-SP and TSTA-SP. We have the upcoming TSTA-SP State Convention in Austin on March 27-29, 2009, and I hope to see each and every one of you there! We are planning on having some stellar workshops that will prepare you for your chosen career.

During the summer, there is also the NEA-SP Leadership Conference in San Diego where there will be professional workshops as well as Outreach to

Teach! I encourage you to go to www.tsta.org and www.nea.org for more information!

—Chelsea Updegraff, TSTA-Student Program president

STUDENT CHAPTERS COMMIT TO SERVICE PROJECTS

More than 70 NEA student chapters—four of them in Texas—committed to doing a service project in January, in honor of Martin Luther King Day and the Presidential Inauguration.

- **Texas A&M University** (College Station) held a canned food drive.
- **Prairie View A&M University** picked up at a community playground.
- **Lamar University** (Beaumont) sponsored a book drive for a Port Arthur elementary school that was destroyed by fire.
- **Sam Houston State University** (Huntsville) volunteered for a community project.

COLLEGE STATION ORGANIZES TO SAVE OPEN MIKE

“Open mike” or public comment time is a longstanding tradition at meetings of the College Station ISD Board of Trustees. Still—despite a recent attempt by one school board member to end the practice of letting district stakeholders make three-minute comments on matters of concern before the board takes up its regular agenda.

Good government advocates who believe that government belongs to the people have the College Station Education Association to thank for effectively standing up for this foundational principle.

Texas has Open Government and Public Meeting laws to ensure transparency and accountability in state and local government. Just as Texans have the right to know what their public servants are doing, they have the same right to communicate with those public servants, even if those public servants don't always want to hear



From top left: At Prairie View A&M University, Ashley Conley, Amirah Henderson, Aleah Miles and Chiara Bagley help clean up a local playground. At Lamar University, Megan Schneider presents one of the books from her chapter's book drive to Washington Elementary Principal Dr. Ella Williams. At Sam Houston State University, Mayra Lopez, Ashley Rutherford, Linday Latimer and Krystal Herron help clean up Eastham-Thomason Park in Huntsville. At Texas A&M University, Lauren Lastovica, Nicole Smith and Alyssa Kasprzak collect canned food.

what the owners of government have to say.

When CSEA received word that a trustee would seek to end public comment at school board meetings, the local quickly mobilized to oppose the move.

“We contacted board members, neighborhood association presidents, a local public school support group (Coalition Supporting Public Schools) and the local ACLU chapter to enlist their support in opposition,” said Bobby Slovak, the local's membership chair and immediate past president.

“This motion is apparently being considered because of a concern that mem-

bers of the community might bring up specific personnel matters during these comments. It is important to note, however, that within the past four years, no such comments were made during this portion,” Slovak explained.

Instead, the “open mike” has been used by CSEA and others to address general concerns and interests such as salaries and special events.

CSEA President Linda Bendiksen and former presidents Mary Howell, Judy Le Unes and Maggie Charleton joined other stakeholders in urging the board to keep the “open mike” policy.

This effort underscores the importance

of working with allies to achieve common goals. The more public support a local can build on any issue, the greater the likelihood it will convince the school board to do the right thing. And the good working relationship that a local forges with those allies often outlives the particular issue.

Organizing and working with allies paid off in College Station. “After some background discussion, the board heard our comments on the matter. The board members then each spoke to their feelings, and the author made the motion to eliminate the time. The motion died for lack of a second,” Slovak said.



130th Annual TSTA Convention Delegate Voting and Registration

Delegates attending the 2009 TSTA annual convention will elect two NEA Directors for Texas—NEA Director, Place 2 and NEA Director, Place 1 (fulfilling an unexpired term). Both races are contested. Delegates will also elect TSTA Board At-Large members and will vote on three proposed bylaws amendments regarding the submission of bylaws amendments and the establishment of Local and Regional financial standards.

Delegates are elected at the local level, except for certain supervisory delegates elected regionally and voting members of the TSTA board who are automatically delegates because of their position. All delegates must have their credentials and a picture ID with them in order to vote.

Registration is open Friday, April 17 from 7:00 a.m. through the close of the first General Session, and re-opens Saturday, April 18, at 6:30 a.m. Delegates planning to arrive on Saturday should allow plenty of time to register and vote. Voting begins Saturday at 8:30 a.m. Delegates must have completed registration and be in the voting line no later than 9:30 a.m. to be eligible to cast their ballot.

Information about lodging and the schedule of events (including the Delegates' Night Out ticket information) appeared in the Winter Advocate and is available on the TSTA website, www.tsta.org. Any updates to this information will be posted on the website. The convention hotel is holding a room block for TSTA attendees. Delegates are responsible for making their own hotel reservations. The housing deadline is March 25, 2009.

Election information begins on the next page.

The annual TSTA Convention will be in Houston April 17-18. All convention events will take place at the InterContinental Hotel, located just a block from the Galleria and minutes from the Museum District, the Theater District and historic Hermann Park.

NEA DIRECTOR PLACE 1



FRANCES ANNE SMITH

Professional Training: University of Iowa, BA, English with secondary education certification, 1969. University of Wyoming, MA, Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis on secondary reading, 1975. University of Houston, EdD, Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis on teacher education, 1991.

Professional Experience: Faxon (OK) School District, seventh/eighth grades, all subjects, 1969. U.S. Department of Defense/Army, GED-social studies/English classes (classes for GIs on base—Kitzingen, Germany), 1970-72. Laramie (WY) Public Schools, sophomore English, 1972-76. Ponca City (OK) Schools, seventh/eighth grade remedial reading, 1977-80. University of Houston, TA (taught senior level teaching strategies course, supervised student teachers) and Assistant Director of NASSP Principal's Assessment Center, 1981-89. Cypress Fairbanks ISD (Houston), sophomore, junior, and senior English at Cypress Falls HS and Cypress Ridge HS, 1992-present.

Professional Education Associations: Delta Kappa Gamma, TSTA

Offices Held: CyFair TSTA/NEA, vice president, 2000-02; president, 2002-present. TSTA Region 3B, president, 2006-present. TSTA, Board of Directors, 2006-present. NEA, Board of Directors, 2008 to present.

Campaign Statement: TSTA's vitality, strength, and effectiveness are best represented by its leaders who work to protect member rights, initiate legislation, and promote exemplary public education. I passionately defend public schools as the foundation of this country's democracy.

I am president of Cy Fair TSTA/NEA—doubling our membership in four years, Region 3B president, member of TSTA's Board of Directors, and interim Texas NEA Director, Place 1. I have the training and knowledge to represent you well in Washington D.C. For four years, I have met monthly with our superintendent in a collegial environment, spoken at Board meetings and represented my members.

I have been a public school teacher for 22 years in four states, the last 17 in Texas, and my degrees in education support my understanding of teachers and schools well. Hard work, professionalism, and an informed voice will be my hallmark as your NEA Director.



REAGAN HAWKINS

Professional Training: University of Texas, B.S. Communication, 1994-98. Lamar University, seeking Masters, 2006.

Professional Experience: Port Arthur ISD, classroom teacher, 2000-02. Nederland ISD, classroom teacher, 2002-present.

Professional Education Associations: Texas State Teachers Association/NEA, Texas Speech Communication Association, Texas Forensics Association/National Forensics League, National Foundation of State High School Associations

Offices Held: Nederland T.A., vice president, 2004-06; president, 2006-08. TSTA Region 3E, vice president, 2005-present. NEA, Resolutions Committee member, 2006-present.

Campaign Statement: Our nation is in a period of change. Our vocation is in a period of change. It is important, now more than ever, to be responsive to new ideas and a new approach to that task, that sacred task, that we have held in our charge for centuries – to enrich the lives of our students, our nation and ourselves.

Reagan is the candidate that will ensure our continued success and growth as an organization and increase our public standing at a time when the spotlight is sure to shine brightly upon our noble professions. Reagan is the candidate that will use his office to help others, to empower the membership.

Our success as a union will be when we have strong, functioning locals. Our success will be when we can look our children in the eye and know that we have done our best to enrich their future.

**EVELINA LOYA**

Professional Training: University of Texas at El Paso, B.S. Elementary Education—Reading, 1973. Sul Ross State University, M.Ed. All levels—Reading Specialist, 1992.

Professional Experience: Ysleta ISD, middle school: reading teacher, support teacher, computer lab teacher, department chair, and reading specialist (sponsored student council and yearbook, newspaper); high school: freshman initiative coordinator, Credit Recovery Lab, reading specialist and department chair, 1973-2005. Garland ISD, middle school: eighth grade reading specialist, 2006-present.

Professional Education Associations: National Education Association, Texas State Teachers Association, Garland Education Association, Pre-retired TSTA-R, International Reading Association and Delta Kappa Gamma

Offices Held: Garland Education Association, president, 2007-present; AR, 2006-08. Region 4E, vice president, 2007-present. Region 2B, president, 2003-05. Ysleta Teachers Association, president, 2001-03; vice president, 1999-2000 and 1996-1998; publications editor, 1993-95; AR, 1980-2005. TSTA, CIA Committee, 2008-09; LPAC, 1998-2008; LPAT, 2007.

Campaign Statement: Teachers and support professionals have earned the right to have a committed, responsible and experienced leader representing the membership in Washington. I am that Leader.

As a 35 year veteran teacher, I have always been active in TSTA/NEA. My experience as both a local and regional leader has afforded me the opportunity to make a difference for members, public education and our children. As a member of the NEA Women's Leadership Cadre, my voice is heard on issues affecting women in education. I have empowered teachers and support professionals throughout this country to be good leaders. I have supported locals making changes that would benefit their members.

You can count on me to be your voice and represent Texas with integrity. I will keep the lines of communication open. As a TEAM, anything is possible. I ask for your support. Vote for Evelina Loya, NEA Director for Texas Place 2.

**RHONDA SCHELL**

Professional Training: Lamar University, BS, Elementary Education; Certificate for Special Education – Generic, May 1989.

Professional Experience: Beaumont ISD, inclusion teacher, 1991-present. Tarkington ISD, sixth grade math teacher, 1990-91. Beaumont ISD, sixth through eighth grade reading teacher, 1989-90.

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

Offices Held: NEA Director for Texas, Place 2 (current); NEA-RA Board Steering Committee, 2008; Beaumont Teachers Association, president, current; vice president, treasurer, secretary, consultation committee chair, 2003 to present; association rep. TSTA Region 3E, president. TSTA BOD-Advisory, 2002-05. TSTA, RA chair, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education; TSTA Women's Caucus, chair, vice chair, treasurer. NEA Women's Caucus, membership secretary, current; Beaumont ISD, Citizen Advisory Bond Committee

Campaign Statement: During the past three years, as your NEA Director, I have worked collaboratively with NEA Directors from across the country, as well as state and NEA leaders, to bring TSTA's concerns to our senators and representatives. Just as our nation has recently undergone change—together we can successfully define and mold our own changes for our children, for education, and for NEA.

As we begin our efforts at the national level to restructure NCLB and IDEA, it is important to have a strong leader who understands and is willing to fight for everyone. I am passionate about what is best for our children and what is best for their education. I want to continue to be your voice.

I humbly ask for the opportunity to continue serving as your NEA Director. With your support, together we will continue to make Education the most important issue in Washington.

Proposed Bylaws Amendments

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

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

1 INTENT: To require all dues collected through payroll deduction to be transmitted by the employer directly to TSTA.

ARTICLE IV

Affiliate Structure

Section 1. Local Affiliates

C. Minimum Standards of Compliance for active local affiliates

An active local affiliate shall:

- Require all active members to maintain membership in the region, state and national associations where eligible and remit dues to the state and national associations **transmitted directly to TSTA when payroll deducted** and to the appropriate region if that region imposes dues;

Maker: Region 4A Board of Directors

Rationale: To minimize the exposure of local associations to the possibility of accusations of mishandling of funds by reducing the amount of funds they handle; to lift the management, responsibility and clerical burden from the shoulders of the local association officers to maintain accurate payroll deduction records based on up-to-date rosters and place that burden on the state association.

Vote Required: Three-fourths

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Oppose

Position Statement: For the reasons set forth below, the Committee opposes this Proposed Bylaw Amendment and believes the matter of local finances, of which this is a part, is better dealt with by Proposed Bylaw Amendment 2.

- Bylaw Amendment 2, which deals more broadly with issues around local finances, is preferable, as it will allow the TSTA Board to adopt a Board Policy that could allow more flexibility to deal with locals on a case by case basis as to what would work best for both the local and TSTA.
- Because dues collected through payroll deduction in merged locals must be split among several organizations, it would be impossible for those locals to comply with this, even if it became a bylaw.

3. For some locals, especially larger ones, this could present a difficult cash-flow problem if the School District is willing to cut only one check.

- Most TSTA Locals (all but about 20) already voluntarily have made arrangements for the district to send payroll deductions directly to TSTA. This works well for these locals, but for those who do not have such an arrangement, there may well be good and valid reasons for that decision. Bylaw Amendment 2 would allow this to be considered, while this proposed amendment would not.

5. It is not completely correct that having payroll deduction checks sent directly to TSTA removes all of the responsibility and clerical burden from the local association. The local still must ensure that the check and payroll list sent from the district to TSTA is an accurate reflection of the membership rolls, and to keep both the district and TSTA informed of any membership changes. That is the most important part of the process.

6. Under certain circumstances, the TSTA Board already has the authority to require a local to have the payroll check sent directly to TSTA. Rather than taking the “one size fits all” approach as taken in this proposed amendment, Bylaw Amendment 2 would require the TSTA Board to adopt a policy setting forth expectations regarding local finances and specifying under what additional circumstances such a requirement would be imposed.

2 INTENT: To authorize the Board of Directors to establish and enforce standards related to Local and Regional financial matters, and to require adherence to those standards.

ARTICLE IV

Affiliate Structure

Section 1. Local Affiliates

C. Minimum Standards of Compliance for active local affiliates

An active local affiliate shall:

8. **Establish and adhere to appropriate financial and operational standards consistent with the standards set forth in Board Policy, including ethical conduct, internal controls and conflict of interest policies to protect resources of the local.**

Conduct a yearly audit of financial transactions and transmit a copy of this audit to TSTA **by October 31 following the close of the prior** ~~[within sixty (60) days of the end of the]~~ fiscal year;

Section 2. Regional Affiliates

C. Minimum Standards of Compliance for regional affiliates:

Sub-section 1, For Regions with More Than One Local

The regional affiliate shall:

8. **Establish and adhere to appropriate financial and operational standards consistent with the standards set forth in Board Policy, including ethical conduct, internal controls and conflict of interest policies to protect resources of the region.**

Conduct a yearly audit of financial transactions and transmit a copy of this audit to TSTA by October 31, following the close of the prior fiscal year;

Sub-section 2, For Regions with Only One Local

The regional affiliate shall:

3. **Establish and adhere to appropriate financial and operational standards consistent with the standards set forth in Board Policy, including ethical conduct, internal controls and conflict of interest policies to protect resources of the region.**

Submit an annual audit as provided in I. below.

And, further:

ARTICLE VII

Board of Directors

Section 1. Board of Directors

C. Functions

In the areas below, the Board of Directors shall:

1. Policy Making

g. Have the authority to set a competitive dues structure for organizing purposes within the limits established by the House of Delegates

h. **Have the authority to establish policies and enforce standards required to maintain or restore financial integrity, security and democratic procedures for a local or state affiliate. Such policies may include different standards for the audits required for locals by Article IV. Section 1. C. 8. based on the size and/or dues revenue of the various locals.**

Maker: TSTA Advisory Committee

Rationale: TSTA has a responsibility to its members to ensure that all dues money, other revenues and expenses are properly accounted for and reported at all levels of the association. This authorizes the Board of Directors to put in writing the expected standards to be followed and to provide for enforcement of those standards.

Currently the standards are too vague and general, leading to practices that vary widely from local to local. The only enforcement tool currently available is to declare a trusteeship and take over the operation of a local. Trusteeship is a drastic and devastating option and should be a last resort,

not the first step. Further, the size, sophistication and amount of available money varies widely from local to local, which creates a need for different levels of sophistication required for local audits, ranging from the simplest of financial reports for the smallest locals up to requiring an outside audit by a CPA for the largest locals.

Vote Required: Two-thirds

Financial Impact: Most of what is in the proposed amendment can be accomplished by TSTA without incurring additional costs. Depending on the number of requests for assistance from staff by locals, it could require additional travel expenses in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000. While many larger locals already provide for an audit by an outside firm, those that do not and would be required to by the Board Policy adopted pursuant to this amendment would incur additional costs, perhaps as much as \$1,500 to \$3,000.

CB&E Recommends: Support

3 INTENT: To make the initial deadline for submitting proposed Amendments to these Bylaws two weeks later than it currently is.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendments

Section 1. Proposal of Amendments

A. Amendments may be proposed by a member, an affiliate, the Board of Directors, the state House of Delegates, or committees of the Association.

B. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be drafted by the proponent and submitted to the Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee no later than **October 1** ~~[September 15]~~, except as otherwise provided for in **this Article [XIII, Section 1, D and Section 2, C of the Bylaws]**.

C. The Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee shall communicate with the proponent of the proposal to clarify the intent and rationale, may make nonsubstantive changes with the permission of the proponent, shall group amendments according to topic, shall prepare amendments for printing, may make recommendations, and submit to the Board of Directors and state House of Delegates.

D. Proposed amendments to the Bylaws received by December 1 shall be printed in an all-member publication prior to the annual state House of Delegates and in the state House of Delegates agenda booklet. Proposed amendments not meeting this deadline may be resubmitted for action by the state House of Delegates in the succeeding association year.

Section 2. Adoption of Amendments

A. Proposed amendments written by the Credentials, Bylaws and Elections Committee at the direction of the previous year's state House of Delegates and published as prescribed in Section 1 shall be adopted by a majority vote of the state House of Delegates.

B. Proposed amendments submitted by **October 1** ~~[September 15]~~ shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the state House of Delegates.

C. Proposed amendments submitted after **October 1** ~~[September 15]~~ and which meet the December 1 deadline shall require a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the House of Delegates.

D. All voting on amendments shall be by secret ballot with the exception of editorial and extraneous lan-

guage changes which will be approved by majority voice vote of the state House of Delegates.

E. Amendments shall become effective sixty (60) days after adoption unless a proviso is adopted specifying a different effective date or a referendum is called.

Maker: CB&E

Rationale: In most years, this would set the deadline after (rather than before) the first full meeting of the TSTA Board of Directors giving an opportunity for the Board to consider and submit proposed Amendments prior to the deadline.

Vote Required: Two-thirds

Financial Impact: None

CB&E Recommends: Support

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www.nea.org/tools/28978.htm

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Scroll through a list of contests, awards, free lesson plans and teaching ideas. www.tsta.org/teaching/current/ideas.shtml

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KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS

So many meetings! And we report on all of them, from the Teacher Retirement System to the State Board of Education and State Board for Educator Certification, as well as national events. www.tsta.org/news/current/index.shtml

Flip through our magazine. www.tsta.org/news/current/advocate.shtml

Find out what other local associations are doing. www.tsta.org/inside/locals/index.shtml

Look at photo albums of local and state events. www.tsta.org/inside/about/photoalbum.shtml

Nominate someone for an award. www.tsta.org/news/current/awards.shtml

CONTACT OUR HELP CENTER

TSTA's Help Center is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT every school day (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer) to answer your questions, legal or otherwise. www.tstaweb.net/cgi-bin/wonderdesk/wonderdesk.cgi?do=hd_add_record



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Save the Dates!

TSTA Ambassador Academy July 21-26

The Ambassador Academy is for members who are interested in becoming leaders, want to know more about TSTA and NEA and would like to learn problem-solving skills that could be used in their local associations.

TSTA Leadership Academy July 24-26

Local associations send teams of four to six people to the Leadership Academy, where they will learn to create and build full-capacity local associations.

Both meetings will be in Austin at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark. Mark your calendar now, and watch our website, www.tsta.org, for updates.

