Bill White
On politics, class size, salaries and accountability by high-stakes test

Think education before you vote
Our recommendations for the November election
Editorial

Why TSTA gets involved in politics

The political process determines the quality of our schools, the size of your classes, the resources you have as an educator, your salary and benefits and the quality of the curriculum you are required to teach. By Rita Haecker, TSTA President

As you have noticed, this issue of the Advocate features a photo of Democratic gubernatorial nominee Bill White on the cover. TSTA is supporting White for governor because he—the son of two public school teachers and a former, successful mayor of Houston—is the best choice for the future of our public schools, educators and school kids.

Why, some of you may ask, does TSTA get involved in politics?

TSTA is involved in politics because the political process determines the quality of our schools, the size of your classes, the resources you have as an educator, your salary and benefits and the quality of the curriculum you are required to teach. All these decisions—from tax levels to textbook selection—are made by elected officials, including the governor, the Legislature, the State Board of Education and local school boards. And, it is imperative that educators be actively involved in their elections.

The very existence of TSTA is because of politics. Our organization was created in 1880 to convince the governor and the Legislature to establish a first-class, state-supported university. That first campaign was a success, resulting in the creation of the University of Texas at Austin.

TSTA has been involved in many political campaigns—and more than a few fights—since then. The strength of our numbers has been instrumental in winning legislative approval of pay raises and improved working conditions, in including your duty-free lunch. At the local level, we have succeeded in electing friends of education to school boards and have helped win passage of bond elections for construction of much-needed, new schools.

We are bipartisan. Our membership includes Democrats, Republicans and independents, and we support both Democratic and Republican candidates. In any race, we base our choice on a candidate’s commitment to public education and educators.

This year’s general election on Nov. 2 is the most critical for educators in many years. With the Legislature anticipating an $18 billion revenue shortfall in January and many school districts already struggling with budgetary problems—thanks to an under-funded school finance system—much is on the line, including educators’ working conditions and, in many cases, their jobs.

Already some legislators are talking about repealing the 22-1 class size limit for K-4, and the idea of tying teacher pay to a failed accountability system won’t go away.

TSTA believes Bill White, as governor, will put public education front and center, will aggressively attack Texas’ high dropout rate, craft a meaningful accountability system and strengthen the school finance system. And, he will listen to what educators have to say.

For a list of TSTA’s other endorsements, Democrats and Republicans alike, in critical State Board of Education, Texas House, Texas Senate and Congressional races, go to the Members Only section of our website, www.tsta.org, or turn to page 8 of this issue.

Support the candidates we have endorsed. Volunteer in their campaigns if you have time, and contribute to TSTA PAC. It takes money to run a political campaign, and many of our candidates will have opponents well-funded by voucher advocates and others who would weaken public education.

If you haven’t already registered to vote, please do so by Oct. 4, the registration deadline. And, please vote, either during the early voting period, Oct. 18-29, or on Election Day, Nov. 2.

Make a difference! You owe it to yourself and your profession.

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10 things you should know

1. **BILL WHITE IS OUR CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR**
   Read his thoughts on teacher salaries, class size, high-stakes testing and more on pages 10-13 of this issue. We think you’ll like the way the former Houston mayor thinks. Having two parents who were teachers—and a son who’s now teaching—probably didn’t hurt. Find out how you can help elect him at www.billwhitefortexas.com.

2. **BUT THAT’S JUST THE TOP OF THE LIST**
   “School districts are cutting budgets and educator jobs to compensate for inadequate state funding, and some legislators will try again next year to change the important 22:1 class size limit in grades K-4,” TSTA President Rita Haecker warned participants at the summer TSTA Leadership Institute. “The budget crisis will likely deepen in the face of a huge revenue shortfall anticipated for the 2011 legislative session. The attacks are increasing every day and unless significant changes are made on election day, they will get worse.”

TSTA-Political Action Committee has reviewed the positions and records of candidates for representative, senator, Congress and the State Board of Education. Find out who your friends are on page 8.

3. **SIGN TSTA’S CLASS SIZE PETITION**
   If some legislators have their way in the next legislative session, you may find yourself crowded out of your classroom. Turn the page to see TSTA’s plan for lowering class size in 2011, then print out and circulate the petition at www.tsta.org/news/current/classsize-petition.pdf.

4. **TEACHER MOONLIGHTING JUMPS FROM 28 TO 40 PERCENT**
   Four of 10 Texas teachers moonlight during the school year to make ends meet, according to a new survey by Sam Houston State University commissioned by TSTA. It’s the highest percentage since TSTA first started sponsoring the biennial survey, “Texas Teachers, Moonlighting and Morale,” 30 years ago, and a significant jump from 28 percent in 2008. And in the summer, 56 percent of teachers take extra jobs. www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/Moonlight_release_data.pdf

5. **ALL THREE OF NEA’S OFFICERS WERE IN TEXAS THIS SUMMER**
   And you can read what they had to say on pages 7 (President Dennis Van Roekel), 14 (Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle) and 16 (Vice President Lily Eskelsen).

6. **LEADERS IN ACTION**
   Energized by the Leadership Institute this summer, members have been asking their fellow employees to join TSTA/NEA and increase their ability to make improvements in education at every level. Check out the photos on pages 18-19.

7. **NEA SPEAKS UP FOR EDUCATION AND KIDS...**
   And wins! By the hundreds of thousands, NEA members, coalition partners, parents, activists and government called, emailed and lobbied Congress, demanding they do right by the nation’s students and save 161,000 educators’ jobs threatened by budget cuts.

Congress listened and authorized $10 billion in emergency funds for the Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act, legislation that rushed money to the states to keep teachers and support professionals working. Onward to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization. www.educationvotes.nea.org

8. **TIMES ARE TOUGH**
   Find out how NEA can help you save money, from dental and vision insurance, to credit cards and mortgages, to NEAs popular online discount program, Click & Save. www.neamb.com/home/moneyBenefits.htm

9. **FAMILIAR VOICE ON THE RADIO?**
   TSTA President Rita Haecker recorded two public service announcements while at the NEA Annual Meeting in New Orleans this summer.

10. **6 NOMINATE OR APPLY FOR A C.L.E.A.N. AWARD**
    Custodian members can apply or be nominated for a C.L.E.A.N. Award to recognize their contributions to public health in their schools, communities and profession. The deadline is Dec. 1. Winners get a cash award and an all-expense-paid trip to the National ESP Conference. Five awards (one top recipient and four runners-up) will be presented at the NEA National ESP Conference in Washington, D.C., March 11-13, 2011. www.neahin.org/cleanaward/apply2011

www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/Moonlight_release_data.pdf

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Is your classroom crowded?

Join TSTA’s campaign to lower class size in the 2011 legislative session.

We want 22-1 class size limits in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, 25-1 class size limits in grades 7-12, and 15-1 class size limits for all low-performing campuses and campuses in danger of becoming low performing.

We want the Legislature to reduce a district’s ability to secure class size waivers for all low-performing campuses and campuses in danger of becoming low performing.

We want the Legislature to reduce dropout rates.

We want the Legislature to increase graduation rates.

We want the Legislature to improve test scores.

We want the Legislature to increase learning conditions.

We want the Legislature to ensure low-income families.

We want the Legislature to improve teacher working conditions.

Your local association will be asking you to sign a petition; extra copies can be downloaded from www.tsta.org/news/current/classsize-petition.pdf.

**READING: IT’S NOT JUST ON MARCH 2**

What’s new with NEA’s Read Across America, the yearlong celebration of reading that culminates on March 2, Dr. Seuss’s birthday?

NEA has a new partnership with Scholastic this year, in addition to its ongoing partnerships with Sesame Enterprises and Random House around Read Across America Day. Watch for updates and new partnerships to be announced on the website, www.nea.org/readacross.

You can start to plan your event with the resources that are online now. Blogs and the enewsletter should be up and running shortly.

Two things you should know:

- If you read a book online at www.scholastic.com, the Pearson Foundation will automatically donate a book to NEA’s Books Across America.

- Another NEA partner is United Through Reading, www.unitedthroughreading.org, deployed parents read a book and it’s recorded on a DVD and sent to their child.

**BUDGET PLANNING FOR STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

TSTA local affiliates annually elect members to be delegates to the TSTA and the NEA conventions. Members interested in becoming a delegate to either convention should start planning now for the travel costs. Detailed information will appear in the winter and spring issues of the Advocate, but here is a preview of what to expect.

TSTA’s 2011 State House of Delegates will be April 15-16, 2011, in El Paso, Texas. The Camino Real is the official convention hotel. The nightly room rate for members in the TSTA room block is a flat $91, plus taxes (currently 15.5%) and added porterage fees. The hotel offers complimentary shuttle from the airport. Parking is $6/day based on space availability. The hotel is within blocks of the El Paso convention center, where the House of Delegates and TSTA elections will take place.

The NEA Representative Assembly will be July 2-5, 2011, in Chicago, Illinois. The first Texas Caucus meeting will be on June 30. The Texas delegation hotel will be the Embassy Suites Lakefront. The nightly room rate is $190 single/double occupancy; $230 triple occupancy, or $260 quadruple occupancy, plus taxes (currently 15.4%). Valet parking with in-out privileges is $49/day. Self parking is $41/day without in-out privileges. This all-suite property is conveniently located to a variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. Round-trip transportation between the airport and hotel averages $40-$50.

**NEA RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE RESULTS**

At NEA’s annual meeting in July, the Texas Caucus elected Winifred Jackson of Longview and reelected Gordon Gauthier of Deer Park and George Cordova of El Paso (Socorro) to the NEA Resolutions Committee, which prepares and presents to the Representative Assembly resolutions that are proposed for adoption.

**TEXAS WELCOMES NEA PRESIDENT**

In August, TSTA welcomed NEA President Dennis Van Roekel to Texas for a first-hand look at some of the accomplishments and challenges of Texas educators. His agenda included school visits in San Antonio and a town hall meeting with TSTA President Rita Haecker at Paredes Middle School in Austin. They were joined by Paredes Principal Raul Moreno, campus leader Trasel Underwood, local educators, parents and members of the Austin Interfaith community group.

Van Roekel discussed education funding, the recently enacted education jobs bill, teacher salaries and the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, whose current version is also known as the No Child Left Behind Act.

Van Roekel was on a week-long, back-to-school tour to energize school staff and spotlight public school innovation, service learning, partnerships, and teacher- and union-led school transformation efforts.

“Austin’s educators had a lot to say and their passion for their profession and their students was evident. They know each and every one of their students deserve a great public school,” Van Roekel said at the week’s end. “I’ve travelled to several states this week and talked to many educators and community members around the country, and they all have the same focus—their students. We need to provide the tools and resources that educators, parents, schools and communities need to ensure all students succeed.”

Van Roekel and Haecker also met with the Austin American Statesman’s editorial board and with a reporter from the Dallas Morning News.

**GET MORE**

Photos of Van Roekel’s tour: http://www.flickr.com/photos/neapr/sets/72157624632013893

THINK EDUCATION BEFORE YOU VOTE

In just a few short weeks, you can make a difference—but only if you go to the polls and vote. Who gets elected does make a difference for the public schools and for educators.

Here is a list of candidates, including Democratic nominee Bill White in the governor’s race, who TSTA believes have the best interests of school kids, their teachers and everyone else involved in their educational experience at heart.

If you still need to register to vote, please do so by the Oct. 4 deadline.

It costs lots of money to run successful political campaigns, and many of our candidates are facing opponents well-funded by voucher advocates and others who would undermine public schools. So, please consider contributing to TSTA PAC. Your money will be put to good use, fighting candidates who support voucher advocates and others well-funded by donors who would undermine our cause. TSTA is developing an online way to make PAC contributions using your credit card. Check www.tsta.org for updates.

If you can spare a couple of hours, volunteer to help our candidates. Put bumper stickers on your car, knock on doors, make phone calls, remind friends and neighbors how important this election is to you and them.

You can vote early Oct. 18-29 or wait and vote on Election Day, Nov. 2. But, please, vote.

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Bill White for Texas

Investing in people, not politics

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Bill White, in a recent interview with the Advocate, said that, if elected, he will make education funding a top priority next year as legislators wrestle with an anticipated $18 billion revenue shortfall. He also called the existing accountability system for the public schools a “joke” and said the State Board of Education’s interjection of politics into the school curriculum has hurt the Texas economy. White, the former mayor of Houston and son of two public school teachers, has been endorsed by TSTA. By Clay Robison

Q Both of your parents were public school teachers. Please tell us a little bit about them.

A They worked hard. My dad had to have an extra job, and my mom did for quite a bit, just to make ends meet and save money for college for their kids. You don’t go into public education to get rich, but a lot of people do want to have a better future for their kids.

Q Every two years, TSTA commissions a survey on teacher moonlighting and morale. This year’s survey indicated that about 40 percent of Texas’ teachers took extra jobs during the past school year to make ends meet. This was the highest percentage since TSTA started the survey 30 years ago.

A We do need to compensate people as professionals, where they can make teaching a career, and they can raise a family on it. I can’t tell you the first day that I’m in the job of governor I’m going to be able to solve all the problems. But I do know we need to make teaching something that can be a career. We may be at risk of losing that right now.

Q Texas faces a projected $18 billion revenue shortfall when the Legislature convenes in January. Writing a new state budget will be tough. Will education be a priority?

A I will try to give a priority to education and public safety. We can spell out what that means. It means that there are other parts of the social safety net that need to be mended, but they cannot be the first priority. We have to take those things that have the greatest long-range impact on the state. So, that means that we need to invest in people because ultimately, so long as we continue to lag behind the national average on per capita income, the average amount that Texans make, there will be less opportunity for everybody. There are (other) places we need to bring this state up, TVC, MHMR. A lot of improvements could be made (in those agencies) just by better management. But higher education, public education—that would be the top priority.

Q Maintaining the 22-1 student-teacher ratio in kindergarten through 4th grade is an important priority for TSTA members. Will you fight to keep that class size limit?

A Our goal should be to maintain or lower current student-teacher ratios. I will seek counsel from front-line educators, administrators,
We need to revive technical and vocational education, so a person doesn’t have to stay up to grade level. We need to bet on summer school to bring more people up to grade level. But by having after-school programs we can do something about the dropout rate, not by giving them money. We can do something about the dropout rate by giving them money. We can do something about the dropout rate by giving them money.

That’s a tough and painful process for a lot of people, but I think we need to do that in the state of Texas. What would you do about the revenue shortfall?

Q: What’s the one single most important thing, but it generally is having a higher priority for public education?

A: There’s not one single most important thing, but it generally is having a higher priority for public education among the citizens, state government and local government in our state. There’s nothing more important we can do to prepare for the future than prepare our citizens to compete for good jobs in a growing economy. There’s nothing more important, and yet we seem content to stand still and take some steps backward. We need to start early to compete with other countries. I wouldn’t have vetoed the early childhood education bill (that he [Gov Rick Perry] vetoed) (and) that was bipartisan in nature. We need to cut the dropout rate, not by giving speeches on cutting the dropout rate, but by having after-school programs and summer programs to help people up to grade level. We need to take the dropout rate, not by giving speeches on cutting the dropout rate, but by having after-school programs and summer programs to help people up to grade level.

The people at the top don’t want to hold themselves accountable. They want to hold the classroom teacher accountable, but they don’t want to hold themselves accountable, and it’s terrible. What would you put into an accountability system besides test scores?

Q: You ought to start with your goal. Your goal is to create people who are self-sufficient. What are people doing two years after they get out of high school? Are they continuing their education? Are they in an apprentice program? Do they have a job? If so, how much money do they make? I do believe there ought to be ways to measure student improvement. That’s nothing new. When I went to school, we had tests every week, and I had six-week exams and semester exams.

Q: So, there’s a role for tests in an accountability system, but not just strictly tests?

A: Not just one test, and certainly not a multiple-choice test.

Q: Obviously, the school finance system still is broken. How would you fix it?

A: First, we need to provide a minimum level of adequate funding so that somebody’s horizons aren’t limited by their zip code or which side of the school district line they happen to be located on. We want to allow some parents to have the freedom and flexibility by expending more effort to be able to supplement and enhance the education of their children through public schools. That does require some balance, and finding the right balance is something that is not always easy. But we’ll work with stakeholders to find what that right balance is and then correct those things that everybody agrees make no sense.

Q: You talk about a mix of state and local taxes. Do you have in mind how much that state base should be?

A: No, I don’t. But I do know that there are school districts right now, such as the one that my son has begun teaching in, North Forest School District in Houston, where extracurricular activities get shorted, where facilities don’t have funding to operate.

Q: Does your son plan to make teaching a career?

A: I don’t know how long he’ll be at it, but he’ll be in it for a while. He’s teaching middle-school science at a district charter school. I’m proud of him. He’s a brand new teacher, but he did tell me when he made the decision that he had heard me talk many times that it was the most important job at any place, at any time. He wanted to make a difference.

Q: What kind of person would you appoint to chair the State Board of Education?

A: I would appoint somebody as chair who could build consensus and focus on those things that are critical in preparing Texans to compete for good jobs. How can we have more open source materials, for example, as opposed to the highly expensive textbook system that we have now.

Q: Earlier this year, you asked the State Board of Education to delay a final vote on the new social studies curriculum standards. Did you disagree of the way the board conducted that process?

A: Yes. It hurts Texas. It disrespects educators. (It hurt) those of us who have worked hard to attract businesses to this state and have fought the image—which I have always considered an unfair stereotype—of Texas as a parochial place. It hurts us when people interject politics in this century into the public classrooms of our state. It hurts job growth, it hurts business development, it hurts our ability to attract new jobs. I don’t care what your ideology is. I mean, you can be anywhere from a Ron Paul or Goldwater Republican to a McGovern, liberal Democrat, it hurts Texans for Texas to be a state where you have elected officials debating the causes of the Civil War and taking a vote on it. It’s ridiculous.

Q: Even during a budget crunch, some people still would like to promote tax-paid vouchers for private school tuition. Should we be spending tax money for vouchers?

A: No. Right now, we need to strengthen the education that’s available to all the corners.

Q: What would you do about the rising cost of college tuition? Should we change the tuition deregulation law?

A: I think the cause of the spike (in tuition) was actually state support that was not increasing as fast as the cost of providing higher education. So the symptoms of that are higher tuition rates. But I don’t think we can afford another 92 percent increase in tuition for the four-year schools.

Q: Would you consider increasing the amount of student financial aid?

A: There’s an existing program, Texas Grants, which is not fully funded. I can’t tell you where we’re going to be able to fill that hole. I know of a social science teacher in the Cy Fair district. She and her husband both make in the low 40s. Her dad was a refinery worker in Pasadena. He was able to send her and her two sisters to Texas A&M University without bankrupting the family. Now, she makes a lot more money than her dad—and her husband. They have three kids. They’re good students. They could get into Texas A&M, but they can’t afford to send them there. They can’t afford to send only one, and they’ve got to choose which one. People are making more income than their parents because they were able to go to good schools that their parents weren’t able to go to, but now they can’t afford to send their kids to those same schools. Something is wrong with that picture. I’m not saying there’s one solution. But certainly tuition is no longer affordable for so many Texas families. It’s critical to higher education in Pasadena. He was able to send her and her two sisters to Texas A&M University without bankrupting the family. Now, she makes a lot more money than her dad—and her husband. They have three kids. They’re good students. They could get into Texas A&M, but they can’t afford to send them there. They can’t afford to send only one, and they’ve got to choose which one. People are making more income than their parents because they were able to go to good schools that their parents weren’t able to go to, but now they can’t afford to send their kids to those same schools. Something is wrong with that picture. I’m not saying there’s one solution. But certainly tuition is no longer affordable for so many Texas families. It’s critical to higher education. For the future of our state—that it be more affordable.

Q: Hispanics soon will make up a majority of Texas residents. What are your views on bilingual education?

A: More than ever, now more than ever, English is the language of the economy and international commerce. It’s the language of the Internet, and it is very important for young people from all backgrounds to get English language skills, as soon as they can. We ought to evaluate programs to make sure that they are successful at reaching a level of English language proficiency. I’ve always felt that, as somebody who’s learning Spanish as a second language, that it’s helped me when I’ve had people who did know some English who were teaching me. Others have said that’s true, that somebody who’s bilingual is a better teacher than somebody who’s only teaching in the language that somebody else is learning. But it’s important that people not be in perpetual bilingual programs where they do not have a mastery of English.

Q: Besides your parents, are there any special teachers you remember from your public school days?

A: I hate to pick one, but I would tell you that when I was in high school there were some teachers who let me explore. That knew that I liked to read—in history and English especially. They allowed me to read and then report back to the class on something that was not part of the standardized curriculum. I appreciated it. I was friends with teachers for whom there was no one-size-fits-all. But probably the biggest influence as a teacher was my mom. She sat down and diagrammed sentences with me, and still, to this day, I can diagram a sentence.
Summer school for leaders
Leadership is the intersection between opportunity and preparedness, NEA Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle says. If you attended TSTA’s July Leadership Institute, you have the second half covered.

In the intensive five-day program, July 21-25 at the Omni Southpark Austin Hotel, there were courses on every aspect of leadership and for every level of leader—emerging leaders and experienced leaders, new presidents and members still in college.

“We are a family,” TSTA President Rita Haecker said. “As a family we rejoice in each other’s successes and we honor where we’ve been and we look to where we’re going, and I can’t tell you how exciting it is to see so many people wanting to do what we’ve got to do to take care of our students and our teachers and our educational support professionals and all those people that work in our schools every day.”

“You have come here in the middle of a hot summer for one reason: because you have made a choice, a decision, to become activists for your association,” Becky Pringle, the keynote speaker, said.

“Those of you who are local leaders, you are the ones our members turn to when they need help, when they need inspiration, when they need guidance, when they need that powerful force behind them…they turn to you.

“Don’t allow political pundits or public school detractors or naysayers to sway you from your ultimate goal of ensuring all children—not some of them but all of them—have the quality education they deserve. Don’t allow them to take you from your path of association leadership, fighting for the rights of your members. You stand strong,” Pringle said.

GET MORE
• Video: http://bit.ly/aZCti
Congratulations!
To Beth Huckabee of Flour Bluff:
A biology teacher at Flour Bluff High School, she is a finalist in the Texas Teacher of the Year program. http://bit.ly/88ejww

To Lorene Wallace of Austin and Stephanie Weaver of Pearland:
They have been named finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Wallace is a first grade teacher at Bryker Woods Elementary School in Austin ISD and Weaver is a third grade teacher at Shadycrest Elementary School in Pearland ISD. http://bit.ly/cXuSWS

To Carolyn Jordan of Houston:
A sixth grade language arts teacher at Elmore Middle School in Houston, Jordan and her partner Charlotte Jolivet received a $5,000 student achievement grant from the NEA Foundation this summer. Sixth grade ESL students at the school will use the grant, which was awarded in partnership with Nickelodeon, to create a campus paper recycling program, collaborating with their peers to create PowerPoint presentations, design and produce poster advertisements, and decorate recycling bins. www.neafoundation.org

To Joyce Roberta “JR” Miller-Alper of Houston:
A Spring Branch high school teacher, Miller attended her third National Endowment for the Humanities seminar this summer, at Montpelier in Virginia, home of James Madison. Previously she studied George Washington at Mt. Vernon and Zora Neale Hurston in Eatonville, Florida. Only 80 people are chosen to attend the nationwide programs. www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/landmarks.html

Eskelsen urges educators to fight back

“No matter what we want to talk about—crime, the economy, the future, the space program—it all comes down to what we will do in our classrooms for someone else’s child. It is a foundation that I believe today is being shaken to its core,” she continued. “We have never seen public schools under attack by so many people, individuals who often don’t know what they’re talking about and I notice those are the ones with the biggest opinions.”

Eskelsen urged employees of the El Paso-area, year-round school district to fight back by sharing stories of the wonderful things that happen in public school classrooms every day, “miracles that are too big to fit on that standardized test.”

“Don’t ever believe that the most important thing your kids need from you is to hit a cut score. Our calling is to care about the whole child, and now it has to be to make the whole world care about the whole child,” she said.

Tell everybody you know how obnoxiously proud you are of something that’s going on in your classroom, so they start to see that our kids are not a test score, they are not a number.

Tell them, so they may begin to care about somebody else’s kid the way we do,” Eskelsen said.

Socorro Education Association had booths inside and outside the convocation auditorium. The TSTA local has 2,700 members.

GET MORE
• clips of Eskelsen’s speech: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9dYof6wvC
• photos of convocation activities and the reception: http://www.flickr.com/photos/tstapublicaffairs/sets/72157624618791502
Gearing up for a new school year

They went to the TSTA Leadership Institute this summer to plan; now TSTA local associations are putting their plans into action. Clockwise from the bottom of the left page:

**Waco TSTA/NEA**
executive committee built its “full capacity power plan.”

**North East Teachers Association**
provided lunch for new teachers and signed up 30 members.

**Harlandale Education Association**
held a lunch-eon for new teachers—and offered them two days of classroom assistance.

**Ysleta Teachers Association**
signed up 70 of 98 new teachers this year. At new teacher orientation, YTA had a prize wheel, black & gold balloons and a door prize raffle.

**Southwest Educators Association**
invited 52 new teachers to lunch; 32 joined.

**Klein TSTA/NEA**
had a busy table at their convocation and new teacher orientation, signing up 25 new members.
Paris teacher starts a movement for young educators

Thanks to the determination of a group of young education leaders headed by a Paris ISD teacher, NEA will use its communications network to help state and local teacher unions recruit, prepare and retain young educators for the public schools.

The Caucus of Young Educators, organized only a year ago, proposed and won passage of the necessary business item at NEA’s recent Representative Assembly in New Orleans.

“The quality of public education in Texas and our nation in the future will depend on young teachers, counselors and other support workers entering and staying in the profession today. Support and mentoring from other educators are critical to their success,” said Katharine Ashby, the caucus chair and founder.

So she started collecting email addresses from potential members—serious and not-so-serious—except younger educators.

Caucuses for just about every group or interest imaginable—ESPs (education support professionals), within the first five years of their professional careers.

What started with a simple observation turned into a movement today. Support and mentoring from other educators are critical to their success,” said Katharine Ashby, the caucus chair and founder. She is a sixth grade social studies and science teacher at Crockett Intermediate School in Paris ISD.

The Caucus of Young Educators, organized only a year ago, proposed and won passage of the necessary business item at NEA’s recent Representative Assembly in New Orleans.

The initiative commits NEA to “research and publish, using existing communications devices, information that would assist state and local affiliates in creating programs to educate, recruit and retain educators, including substitute teachers and ESPs (education support professionals), within the first five years of their professional careers.”

“What started with a simple observation turned into a movement,” Ashby said. She came up with the idea of creating the Caucus of Young Educators when she attended her first NEA convention in Washington in 2008. She noticed there were younger educators at the Representative Assembly in Chicago. The president and vice president positions are for a two-year term, July 15, 2011 to 2013.

TSTA-Retired

TSTA-Retired delegates and Watkins was an at-large retired delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly. Watkins was an at-large retired delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly in Chicago. The president and vice president positions are for a two-year term, July 15, 2011 to 2013.

All elections take place in March by mailed ballot. Members may nominate themselves or other members, as long as they have written permission from the person they are nominating. Candidates must be categorized as “Retired Active Members” to nominate and serve as delegates or alternates. You may make additional copies of the form you will be mailed if you want to nominate for more than one position. All forms must be completed and returned by Jan. 15, 2011, to TSTA-Retired, 316 W. 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

Current officers: TSTA-Retired officers for 2010-2011 are Johnnetta Williams, Dallas, president; Jay Ann Rucker, El Paso, vice president; Paul Haupt, El Paso, secretary; JoAnn Peschel, Houston, treasurer, and Leatha Grace McCoy, Burleson, past president.

Recent events: TSTA-Retired members Bobbie Duncan, Fran Valenzuela, Leatha Grace McCoy, Virginia Wong, Johnetta Williams and Jerry Watkins attended the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in New Orleans in June. Duncan and Williams were her new colleagues, organized the caucus at the Representative Assembly in San Diego last year.

Ashby and other caucus members planned to continue their work in New Orleans but, after arriving, noticed that many of their colleagues who had been in San Diego were missing because their jobs had been terminated since the 2009 convention.

So, they discussed their concerns about young educator jobs with NEA Executive Board Member Greg Johnson, a high school choir director from Oklahoma, then lobbied delegates for the NEA commitment.

TSTA-Retired delegates and Watkins was an at-large retired delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

Upcoming events: Sept. 16-17—Board of Directors meeting, TSTA Headquarters
Dec. 2-3—Board of Directors meeting, TSTA Headquarters
Jan. 15—Deadline for submitting nomination forms
Feb. 3-4—Board of Directors meeting, TSTA Headquarters
March 3—Ballots due by 5:00 p.m. to TSTA Headquarters in Austin
March 4—Ballots canvassed at TSTA Headquarters
April 13-14—TSTA-Retired Annual Meeting (all member meeting), El Paso
April 24-26—NEA-Retired East Region Conference, Pittsburgh
June 26-28—NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Chicago

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Thank you for your contribution.
A U-turn for student understanding

Many psychologists are fascinated with how people learn things; of those who study learning, there is a strong belief in a U-shaped pattern of learning. By Dr. Paul Henley

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss learning expert, said that learning works best when it proceeds from the things students already know to things they don’t know. Teachers know that, but they also know that learning doesn’t follow a perfect line upward over time. It can be frustrating, but there are reasons that happens.

Many years ago, one professor quipped, “We should have been plumbers or carpenters. I mean, when a plumber fixes something, he comes back the next day…and it’s still fixed. We’re teachers. We fix something one day, come back the next day and it’s broken again. So we fix it again. Then the next day, same thing. We’ve fixed it again, and it’s broken again.”

It helps a teacher to understand ways that students learn. The field of psychology has much to teach the education community (and vice-versa). Many psychologists are fascinated with how people learn things; of those who study learning, there is a strong belief in a U-shaped pattern of learning.

U-shaped growth concept scores initially are high and then decrease in a second phase, only to regain a high level of correctness in a third phase (learn-unlearn-learn). This has been documented in how children learn physical concepts, music mastery and language acquisition. U-shaped patterns have been seen in other behaviors, as well, such as addiction recovery, marriage satisfaction and economics.

Here are a few examples:

Students learn that the suffix “-ed” refers to something that happened in the past. At first, there are many consecutive correct answers, but there are exceptions in English. Students can go through a period where they overly-generalize these concepts (like using the made-up word, goed). After this second phase, students identify some exceptions to general patterns and these mistakes don’t happen as often.

A student trying to learn a second language sees her skill level drop and forgets words she has already learned. Just when she’s convinced she’ll never be able to learn the new language, she finds herself eavesdropping on conversations at the next restaurant table with no trouble.

Students are working in science, learning about animals. They have been taught all about birds, and they know birds fairly well. When the class moves on to furry animals, they are taught about the bat. Bats fly like birds, but they have fur instead of feathers. This leads to confusion, and at that point the students actually know less about birds than they did before studying bats.

These three examples have more than U-shaped learning in common. They also involve new concepts (often exceptions to rules) or too much unrelated information. The U-shaped pattern usually appears when these things happen.

Teachers can benefit from keeping aware of the U-shaped pattern that students use when learning new concepts. Here are some ideas:

1. When you see this pattern, focus on moving from the bottom of the “U” back to the top. In other words, consider approaching material as though students were learning it for the first time. That may slow the class at times, but it helps assure that students have had time to learn something, unlearn it and fully regain it.

2. Introduce new concepts very carefully and connect those new concepts to prior learning in as many ways as you can.

3. Make sure that you give students as much context as you can when you give them new information. If learning is not sequential, it won’t be as successful.

4. Cut yourself some slack. This model helps explain why class improvement can actually regress. Students learn at different paces, you already know that, but as you consider this new learning pattern, understand that learning does not happen in a straight line of increase. Expect disappointments, but always be aware that your students are simply learning the same way most people learn.

Remember, most students learn new concepts by building on previous knowledge. That is how we naturally expect learning to occur. At times, though, students must take a step backward before they can move forward.
Honoring excellence among educators

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

RONNIE RAY ESP ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD
Nomination Deadline: September 30
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance
Recognizes a TSTA education support professional (ESP) member whose activities reflect the contributions of education support professionals to public education, particularly in one or more of the following areas: (1) innovations to support the day-to-day educational process; (2) professional achievements in his/her classification; (3) involvement in promoting public education in the community; (4) involvement in TSTA at the local, state or national level; and (5) enhancement of the ESP image in their association, work site or community. Nominees must have been an ESP member of TSTA for three years as of January 15.

INSTRUCTIONAL AWARDS
Plan Deadline: November 1
Documentation Deadline: March 15
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs
Recognizes local associations for planned activities and accomplishments that incorporate certain strands of the NEA Priority Schools Initiative into local planning. Detailed information about the criteria can be found at: www.tsta.org/teaching/current/instructional_awards.shtml.

FRIEND OF EDUCATION AWARD
Nomination Deadline: December 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance
Recognizes either (1) an individual, who is not a professional educator, who has made a significant contribution to the cause of public education or (2) an organization/company outside the field of education that has made an outstanding contribution in the field of education.

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

FRANK J. TEJEDA AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE
Nomination Deadline: December 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance
Recognizes an individual for service at the state or national political/legislative level on behalf of Texas public school children or educational employees. Nominees must be elected or appointed officials who are not currently employed full time by a school district. Any TSTA member or group of members or the award committee may submit a letter of nomination and supporting evidence of accomplishments related to the award.

SCHOOL BELL AWARDS
Nomination Deadline: January 31
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs
Recognizes outstanding media coverage of education issues and events. There are several categories of awards for different forms of media and various populations. The instruction book and nomination form are available on TSTA’s website.

PROFESSIONAL, HUMAN, AND CIVIL RIGHTS AWARDS
February 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Executive and Governance

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

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

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

Willie Velasquez Memorial Award—recognizes individuals or organizations that have advanced participation in activities to eradicate inequities based on race, gender, or ethnicity and to improve inter-group relations and understanding, especially those projects that help the politically disenfranchised become more involved in the political process.

NEA Awards—TSTA also encourages regional and local affiliates or individuals to nominate an individual, organization and/or a region or local affiliate for an NEA Human and Civil Rights Award. For NEA forms and information visit: www.nea.org/grants/17859.htm. NEA Award nominations must be postmarked by December 10, 2010.

Pride in Communications Awards
Nomination Deadline: March 1
Submit to: TSTA Organizing Center for Public Affairs
Recognizes regional association newsletters and web sites. Entries are judged on the extent to which the local and/or regional association programs are identified and explained.

Detailed information, instructions and nomination forms are available on TSTA’s website at www.tsta.org/news/current/awards.shtml. You may also call the Center for Executive and Governance at (877) 875-TSTA for more information.
The exact number of delegates from Texas will be determined by our TSTA/NEA membership as of January 15, 2011. TSTA will be allocated one state delegate for every 1,000 Active (Professional or ESP) and Active Life NEA members, and local associations will be allocated one local delegate for every 150 members, or major fraction thereof.

NEA has established a policy of encouraging ethnic-minority representation reflective of the ethnics: make-up of the state’s population. The goal for TSTA is to elect at least 48% of our total delegation from among our ethnic-minority members. We cannot accomplish this goal unless their local is not a part of this cluster. Local members are removed from this cluster only if their inclusion would cost the local a non-supervisory delegate. Locals will be notified in February if they have been removed from the cluster.

The form must be received by the Center for Executive and Governance at TSTA no later than January 7, 2011, in order for your name to appear on the printed ballot.

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

NEA also requires proportional representation for supervisory and non-supervisory members. In order to ensure this is not violated, supervisory members are not eligible to run for state delegate or for the supervisory cluster election unless their local is not a part of that cluster. Locals are removed by late March 2011. Deadline for return receipt of ballots at TSTA is April 29, 2011, by 5 p.m.

NEA requires that all elections for state and local delegates must be conducted by open nominations and secret ballots. The form must be received on or before January 7, 2011, in order for your name to appear on the printed ballot.

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

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

Again, if you have questions please call Sandra Solimine at 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1519, or email sandra@tsta.org.

LOCAL DELEGATES

Some local associations are allocated one delegate for each 150 NEA members or majority thereof. In this election, one delegate is allocated for each 150 NEA members or majority thereof. The two elections have different requirements and timeframes for receipt of nominations and secret ballots. All members may run as either retired or state delegates.

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Again, if you have questions please call Sandra Solimine at 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1519, or email sandra@tsta.org.
State delegate allocations for local associations (including Texas Faculty Association) to the April 15-16, 2011, TSTA House of Delegates will be sent to local presidents on January 25. Delegates are allocated to locals in a ratio of one delegate for every 50 members or major fraction based on the local’s Active Professional, Active ESP and Active Life membership on January 15, 2011. The policy regarding election of delegates, forms and timelines will accompany the allocation. If a local wishes to conduct its election for delegates prior to January 15, it may do so and keep a list of delegates in the order of votes received. When the local delegate allocation is received by the local, then the top vote getters who are delegates are listed as delegates and the remaining vote getters are listed as alternates.

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

ATTENTION, RETIRED MEMBERS:

According to the TSTA Bylaws, retired at-large delegates for the state House of Delegates are allocated to TSTA-Retired/NEA-Retired members. The number of at-large TSTA-R delegates will be based on TSTA-Retired membership as of January 15, 2011. In order to run for a TSTA-R at-large delegate position, a candidate must be a member of TSTA-R and NEA-R.

These at-large retired delegates are allocated in the ratio of one delegate for every 75 members or major fraction thereof. Nomination forms must be received by January 15, 2011. Ballots for the election will be sent to members in early February 2011. The deadline for returning ballots to TSTA Headquarters is March 3, 2011.

Any retired member who is a TSTA-R/NEA-R member may nominate himself/herself or another qualified member for a retired delegate position.
The Road Calls, And So Do The Savings.

Take advantage of your NEA membership and enjoy a discount on our everyday low rates. When you're ready to go, we make it easy with great cars and great deals. And, pick-up is free.

Visit neamb.com or call 1 866 876-2372 to make a reservation.

The TSTA/NEA Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org

2010-11 ENROLLMENT FORM

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

MEMBER SIGNATURE DATE

MEMBER SIGNATURE DATE

TOTAL DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

†NOTE: Membership must include local and region dues if eligible.

✔

1. Professional Dues—TSTA/NEA (Active)
   $456.00

2. Educational Support Dues—Full-time
   $391.00

3. Educational Support Dues—Part-time
   $241.50

4. NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
   (suggested amount $5.00)

5. Region Dues

6. Local Association Dues

TOTAL DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

ANNUAL DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS AMOUNT

$ 9.00 (see disclaimer below)

NOTE: Membership must include local and region dues if eligible.

Average actual cost per month.

MEMBER EMAIL ADDRESS

THE NEA FUND

Contributions to the NEA Fund are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffer-

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

Send to:  

 homeowner address  

 work email address


MEMBER SIGNATURE DATE

LOCAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION / NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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For the latest news, go to www.tsta.org.
Texas State Teachers Association
316 West 12th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Fuel Up to Play 60, the in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by National Dairy Council, Dairy MAX and the National Football League, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is helping to make wellness part of the game plan in more than 60,000 schools across the country.

New for the 2010-2011 school year, funding opportunities for Fuel Up to Play 60 are available to K-12 schools enrolled in the program. The competitive, nationwide funding program is designed to help schools jumpstart and sustain healthy nutrition and physical activity improvements.

Whether you’re just starting out with Fuel Up to Play 60 or looking to expand and extend an initiative that’s already in motion, funds for Fuel Up to Play 60 can help. Learn more at FuelUpToPlay60.com.