



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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TSTA Urges TRS Board to Hold the Line on Teacher Health Care Premiums, Support Legislative Action

The Texas State Teachers Association today urged the TRS Board to hold the line on health care premiums for educational employees and join educators in asking the legislature for the first increase in the state contribution for educators' health insurance in over a decade. TRS administers TRS-ActiveCare, a health insurance program that provides health insurance coverage in most Texas school districts.

"Recent TRS insurance premium increases have caused severe financial hardship for many school employees," said TSTA Vice President Noel Candelaria, who addressed the TRS Board at their meeting in Corpus Christi. "It's time for the state to step up and do its fair share for Texans who teach and care for our children every day at our neighborhood schools."

Candelaria cited TSTA's recent moonlighting survey – done by professors at Sam Houston State – that found that 44 percent of Texas teachers take a second job during the school year just to make ends meet.

"One of our members told us he had to take a second job just to pay for health insurance," Candelaria observed. "Texas educators, who are already underpaid, should not have to suffer financially in order to secure health insurance for their families."

He said TSTA was pleased that the Board will not raise premiums now, in the middle of the school year, and asked that the TRS Board do everything possible to prevent another premium increase in the next school year. "Health expenditures have increased dramatically in the past decade, but during that same time the legislature has not increased the state contribution for educational employees' health coverage one dime," Candelaria said, noting that ten years ago, educational employee contributions accounted for 32 percent of TRS-ActiveCare costs, compared to a 57 percent share today.

"We want the very best for our children, and we can't keep the best teachers and educational employees in our schools if we keep forcing them to shoulder the burden of rising health care costs and budget cuts," Candelaria concluded.