



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA president's remarks for Texans for Public Education rally**

TSTA President Noel Candelaria will present these remarks at today's Texans for Public Education rally at the Texas Capitol:

Good afternoon. I am Noel Candelaria, a special education teacher. I worked in the Ysleta school district in El Paso, and I am the president of the Texas State Teachers Association. I am here today because — as a parent and an educator — I believe our greatest responsibility is our duty to provide every child the opportunity to learn...to achieve...to succeed.

There are many in this Capitol — both Republicans and Democrats — who share that belief, and they would rather focus on classrooms, not bathrooms.

However, others say there is no more state money for public schools, but they want to pay for vouchers?

It doesn't take a genius to tell the difference, and it doesn't take long to tell the truth.

Lieutenant Governor Patrick, teachers know that a bonus is not a pay raise. And, Governor Abbott, why not have the state pay for a real teacher pay raise? We have more than 10 billion dollars sitting in the Rainy Day Fund doing nothing. We have the money. So why does the state pay for only 38 percent of the cost of public education? Why does Texas spend \$2,500 less per pupil than the national average?

A majority of our teachers have to work a second job and spend hundreds of dollars out of their own pockets for classroom supplies. Why won't the state pay for a real teacher pay raise when we make \$6,300 less than the national average? Our students are not Republicans or Democrats. They are our future, and it's time to put politics aside.

The real moral issue facing this legislature is not bathrooms. It's the urgent need to invest in our classrooms...invest in our children...and invest in our future.

Together, we can make a difference. We must make a difference. It's time for our state leaders to get out of the bathroom and give every child the opportunity to attend a great public school.