

MARCH TO THE CAPITOL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is “March to the Capitol” all about?

Educators, parents, students and community members are marching to the Texas Capitol to demand that state government end decades of neglect and begin providing its fair share of support for our public schools, and fair compensation and benefits for the people who work in them. Texas ranks far below the national average in per-pupil state funding, and far below the national average in teacher salaries. It’s time for that to stop. [Check for updates here.](#)

Who can attend?

Everyone is invited: school employees, students, parents, and supporters of public education. TSTA and Texas AFT will be bringing in members by bus and other transport from local unions throughout the state. Pastors for Texas Children and Texans for Public Education are also bringing people to rally. But you do not need to be a member to attend. And yes kids are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Do I need to RSVP?

No. Registration is not necessary but is appreciated. [Register here.](#)

What will happen on March 11?

Attendees will arrive throughout the morning, with some opting to make visits with legislators. Then:

- 11 a.m.: Box lunch (free) on the Capitol lawn, and water provided
- Noon to 1 p.m.: Rally on the South Steps with speakers (three teachers and our state and national union leaders)
- 1 p.m.: Attendees head into the Capitol (expect delays going through security) Please consider using one of the additional entrances to the Capitol on the North, West and East sides. A wheelchair accessible entrance is located on the North side of the Capitol.
- 1:45 p.m.: Attendees gather inside in the Capitol Rotunda (on all four floors...pick one!) for a brief word, song and photos. ([You can download the lyrics to the song here.](#))
- 2:00 p.m.: Attendees are free to visit more with legislators, sit in the House or Senate galleries to watch (if they are in session) or head home.

What’s the best way to stay informed about any changes, rain plans, etc.?

[Like us on Facebook and monitor the event page.](#) Also check in on this page occasionally for any updates. You can also follow us on [Twitter](#) and on the TSTA App Calendar.

What if it rains?

The Capitol has rules about not setting up tents (where lunch will be served) if the ground is soaked from rain on previous days or day of the rally. If rain is very light, the rally will continue on South Steps at noon. If rain is heavy, we will simply meet inside in the Rotunda at noon instead. Please check the weather and bring appropriate clothing and possibly rain gear.

What if I want to visit with my legislator?

Locals should set up meetings with their legislators before the event, but feel free to stop by their office. They are expecting you. If you don’t belong to a union or are a statewide member, feel free to look up your legislators and drop by their office to share your thoughts with them (or most likely a legislator’s staff member). You also can sign in at their offices so that lawmakers know you have visited in support of public education. Remember the three rules of informal lobbying: Be nice. Be nice. And Be Nice.

How do I find my way around the Capitol and who represents me?

[Here’s a map!](#) And you can find out who your state representative and senator are here.

How do I get to Austin?

If you’re coming by car, you’re advised to try the Capitol Visitors Parking Garage, which is the closest, most obvious choice, but it may fill up. There is also metered parking around the Capitol, some city-owned that take credit cards and some state-owned that still take coins. You also can consider parking farther away from the Capitol and using the city’s transit system or rideshare companies to get to the Capitol.

What should I wear?

Wear RED for ED! Legislators are accustomed to rally days with this apparel, so professional attire is not required.

What about signs?

We’ll have some signs to hand out at the rally, but consider making some of your own to add to the diversity. And remember, some signs (e.g. with long sticks) might be prohibited inside the Capitol. Other signs can be brought inside, but not displayed in the galleries or committee hearings.

Is the Rally and Capitol accessible for those with mobility issues?

The Capitol’s north entrance is wheelchair accessible, and elevators are located in the Capitol. Please take into consideration, however, the need to get from parking to the Capitol if you can’t get dropped off at the nearest gate to the grounds. Those with official/valid Texas Disabled Parking plates or placards are allowed to park at state meters by the Capitol for free.

What other tips do you have for the day?

1. TSTA will have an information tent near the large lunch tent on south side of the Capitol. TSTA staff will be available in the tent and circulating in the crowd to assist you.
2. Go to the bathroom before you get to the Capitol or in the Capitol during the morning! Yes, the Capitol has bathrooms on every floor and for the Extension floors, but it will obviously be crowded and you could face a wait. Also try other floors or the Extension for bathrooms.
3. Take the stairs in the Capitol if you are able. Elevators will be packed.
4. Bring a small snack for you and your kids if they attend. While plans call for a box lunch to be provided for free, and water, they may not be able to be distributed with heavy rains or soaked Capitol grounds. See “What if it rains?” above.
5. We’ll have plenty of water at the Capitol grounds (unless it rains heavily!) Bring a water with you, but feel free to leave it in the car/bus if weather is nice.
6. Wear sunscreen, even for a cloudy day.
7. Remember that you will have to go through a security screening to scan items and through a metal detector to enter the Capitol. While it’s perfectly acceptable to have a bag or backpack, you’ll be wearing it all day, and it might face inspection, so pack lightly.
8. If the South entrance to the Capitol is packed (and it will be) on completion of the rally, consider entering one of the other three doors.
9. With thousands of people at the Capitol, be ready to be patient, and enjoy the company of public education supporters from across the state!