



# TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## **TSTA: One-third of teachers moonlight to support families**

Almost a third of teachers (31 percent) responding to a Texas State Teachers Association survey hold outside jobs during the school year to support themselves and their families. The extra jobs are in addition to the 17 hours the respondents said they spend on average each week outside the classroom on teaching-related tasks, such as grading papers and preparing lesson plans.

The survey, conducted for TSTA by faculty members at Sam Houston State University, found that 49 percent of respondents had summer jobs.

Respondents reported spending an average \$656 a year out of their own pockets for classroom supplies and an average \$326 a month on health insurance premiums, expenses made necessary because the state has failed to adequately fund public schools. Even as health care costs have soared, the Legislature hasn't increased the \$75 monthly contribution it makes to educator insurance premiums in almost 15 years.

"Although the weekend gives students a break from their classes and time to relax with their families, for many teachers Saturdays and Sundays are spent working at extra jobs and preparing for next week's teaching duties," said TSTA President Noel Candelaria.

"Our teachers work extra hours and spend their own money to buy supplies because they are dedicated to their students' success, and it's time for elected officials to support students and educators with that same kind of dedication by providing the resources needed for success in the classroom," Candelaria added.

Candelaria suggested that financial challenges and the time spent on standardized testing are the factors that led more than half (53 percent) of the survey respondents to say they were seriously considering leaving the teaching profession. Public education funding in Texas lags almost \$2,700 per student below the national average, and teacher pay falls more than \$6,000 below the national average.

The survey also found:

- Ninety-five percent of respondents were opposed to a single exam determining a student's promotion, as the STAAR test does for many fifth- and eighth-graders.
- Most (59 percent) were major income-earners for their families. Seventy-nine percent were women, and 21 percent men.
- Seventy-two percent of the teachers who are forced to moonlight believe the time spent on extra jobs affects their teaching, and 86 percent of them said they wanted to quit their extra jobs but would need a pay raise of about \$9,000 to do so.
- In addition to the average 17 hours a week spent outside the classroom on school-related work, the teachers who moonlight worked about 13 hours a week during the school year at their extra jobs.
- Only 8 percent believed that legislators and state elected officials have a positive opinion about teachers, and only 30 percent believed that the public does, although public opinion polls typically find an overwhelming majority of voters hold teachers in very high regard.

Forty-two percent of the survey sample taught grades K-5, 26 percent taught grades 6-8, and 32 percent taught in high school. Fifty-two percent taught in urban schools, 38 percent in suburban schools, and 10 percent in rural schools.