



Teacher pay: Now is the time

The need is urgent:

- As many as half of the teachers who began teaching this year won't be in the classroom five years from now, and low pay is a major reason why.
- Average teacher pay in Texas lags about \$7,300 below the national average, according to the National Education Association, while other factors erode take-home pay for many educators.
- Health insurance premiums continue to rise, with the average teacher now paying \$359 a month, a TSTA survey found.
- Teachers, on average, are paying \$738 a year out of their own pockets to buy classroom supplies, according to the same survey. Spread across all 350,000 Texas teachers, this represents a potential \$250 million annual subsidy for elected officials who shortchange public education.
- Almost 40 percent of teachers take extra jobs during the school year to meet family financial needs, the survey found. About 53 percent are seriously considering leaving the profession.

The money is there:

The comptroller has forecast an additional \$9 billion in general revenue will be available this session for education and other needs, and he has projected a record \$15 billion balance in the Rainy Day Fund.

For all teachers, not just a few:

TSTA opposes "incentive" or "merit-based" pay plans, largely based on STAAR scores, which single out only selected teachers for extra pay.

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