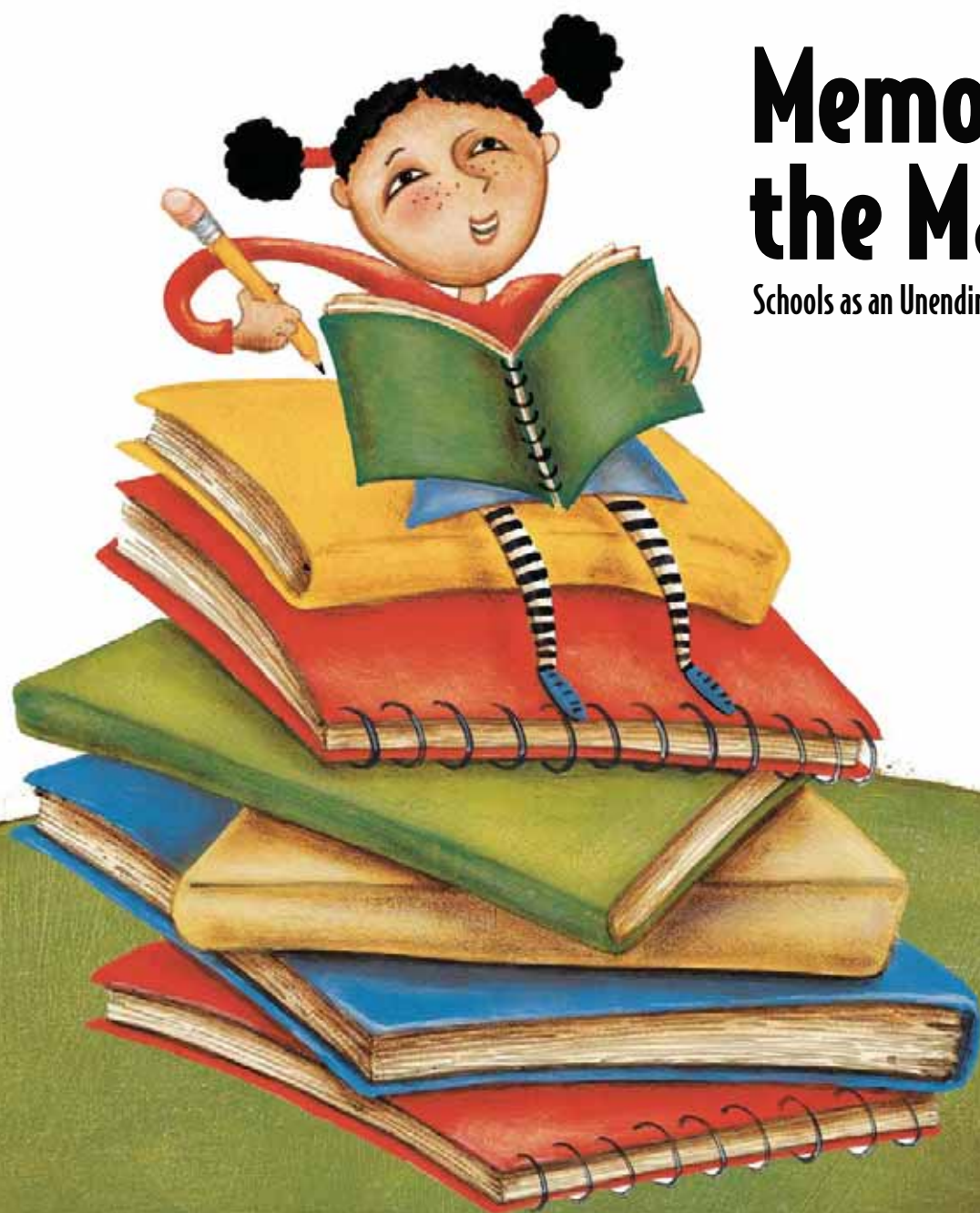


# Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

SUMMER 2004



## Memories in the Making:

Schools as an Unending Test of Remembering

Inside: more reasons to be proud you're a member

# Get involved in a movement

The 2004-05 school year is the 150th anniversary of Texas Public Schools. It is also the 125th anniversary of the Texas State Teachers Association. It was in June of 1880 that a group of educators met in Mexia, Texas, and formed our organization. A major focus then, as it is now, was to influence the Texas legislature. TSTA was instrumental in directing the attention of the Legislature to changes needed in public school law and to the need for the establishment of a state university. Four years

This is the year when collective action becomes a necessity and, therefore, a reality. We need to take back our public schools from those who exhibit political gamesmanship instead of true leadership in improving our schools which are the very cornerstone of our democracy.

Why do we need to unite under one strong, focused, organized association? Consider the following: Last February, the U.S. Secretary of Education called NEA members "terrorists" because we demand fixing and funding of No Child Left Behind (ESEA). Rod Paige said that the NEA resorts to "obstructionist scare tactics....against No Child Left Behind." His remarks against America's school teachers were profoundly disturbing, denigrating, and just plain wrong!

This past spring, Governor Perry proposed a school finance plan that put no additional funding in for the next school year but offered one billion dollars of "incentive money" into the next biennium. Incentives that would parcel out meager funds to only a few fortunate schools and would punish about 60% of Texas teachers who wouldn't get a pay raise are definitely NOT the answer to what our schools need, which is a real investment in their future! The proponents of "retro-reforms" to be tacked onto any school finance bill don't seem to understand that reducing

standards, increasing class sizes, eliminating due process, and especially vouchers, would undermine a generation of progress in our schools. These, and many others we've worked so hard to preserve and which have made such a positive difference in the lives of our students, are not negotiable! And, teachers, remember the career ladder? "Teacher incentives" are merit pay, no matter what other name they are given!

My friends, our detractors are out there. We must speak with ONE VOICE in the face of the organized, coordinated effort to spend less money on our schools and their employees. That voice is TSTA! For 125 years, no one has done it better than TSTA with our experience, service and commitment to students and Texas schools. No other teacher organization can make that claim.

If you're a member of TSTA, invite someone else to join TODAY. There is a membership form on page 31 of this magazine. If you're not a member, don't join just any organization, get involved in a movement! TSTA's collective action will only strengthen with your membership. Don't be a bystander! We need YOU—we must not leave even one educator behind at this critical time of securing the future for our students and our schools.




Incentives that would parcel out meager funds to only a few fortunate schools and would punish about 60% of Texas teachers who wouldn't get a pay raise are definitely NOT the answer to

what our schools need, which is a real investment in their future!

later the University of Texas in Austin (my alma mater) was created. (Hook 'em Horns!)

Our influence as a powerful advocate organization has been felt ever since those beginning days of 1880. So, on this, TSTA's 125th anniversary, we invite YOU to "Get Involved in a Movement"!



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# Advocate

Vol. 23, No. 4

Summer 2004

**TSTA Advocate** is an official quarterly publication of the Texas State Teachers Association/ National Education Association.

**How to Contact Us:** Call 877-ASK-TSTA, visit [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org), or write to TSTA, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, TX 78701. Please send address changes to the attention of Membership Records or [membershiprecords@tsta.org](mailto:membershiprecords@tsta.org).

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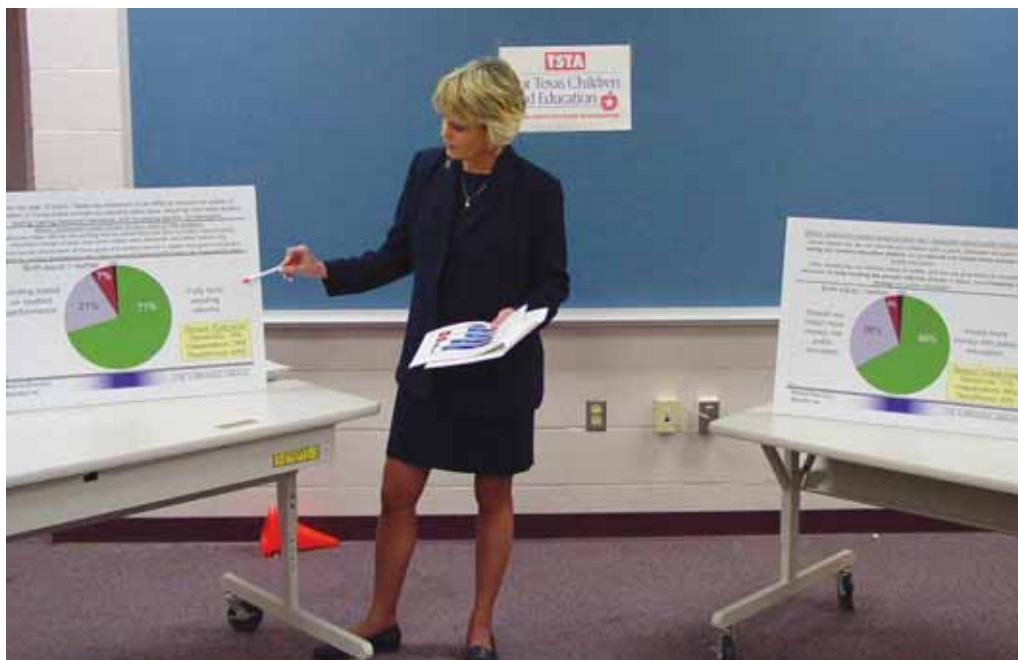
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College Station teacher Judy LeUnes was one of the TSTA local presidents who released the bipartisan poll on public education.

## Fund what's already in place, voters say

We don't need vouchers or incentive plans. We just need to fund the reforms that already are in place. That's clearly the message from a bipartisan statewide poll of 804 Texas voters, conducted in February by top Republican and Democratic pollsters.

Texans understand we must invest enough in reforms that are working to make sure our children have a certified teacher in every classroom, class size limits to prevent overcrowding, modern technology, and up-to-date instructional materials.

The polls show that Texans overwhelmingly reject the idea of creating a system that ties funding and rewards for schools and teachers to performance on standardized test scores; only 21% favored that approach.

Seventy-one percent believe we should fully fund the current reforms, increase state standards, and improve teacher pay. That was true for 78% of Democrats, 74% of Independents, and 64% of Republicans.

"Texans understand we must invest enough in re-

forms that are working to make sure our children have a certified teacher in every classroom, class size limits to prevent overcrowding, modern technology, and up-to-date instructional materials," said TSTA President Donna New Haschke. "Such proven programs are more important to Texans than experiments some call reform."

Forty-four percent of respondents identified public education as the most important priority for the legislature—a 6% increase over the findings of a similar poll conducted a year ago. Texas voters and taxpayers consider education significantly more important than holding the line on taxes or other issues such as health care, prisons, and transportation.

"As the state share of funds for public schools has declined to 38%, the lowest level since World War II, local property taxes have skyrock-

eted," Haschke said. "Too many schools have been forced to cut back on programs, increase class sizes, and either eliminate or start charging fees for extracurricular programs. Texans know that unless the state steps up and invests in our children's schools, these cutbacks will get worse. Texans do not want us to fail our children—and we cannot afford to turn away from the progress our public schools have made over the last decade."

President Haschke, Vice President Ann Heuberger, and local presidents in Abilene, Beaumont, Brownsville, Bryan/College Station, Corpus, Dallas, El Paso, Lubbock, San Antonio, Tyler, and Waco held news conferences to release the results. You can read the press statement at [www.tsta.org/news/statement-poll.pdf](http://www.tsta.org/news/statement-poll.pdf) and the pollsters' memo at [www.tsta.org/news/9663%20Final%20Memo.pdf](http://www.tsta.org/news/9663%20Final%20Memo.pdf).

# Teachers contemplate resigning at record levels

Almost half of today's Texas teachers—a record high of 45%—are considering leaving the profession according to a new study by Sam Houston State University, released at the April TSTA Convention. The top reasons: working conditions (41%) and compensation (25%).

The “Texas Teachers, Moonlighting, and Morale” poll by David and Travis Henderson has been conducted every two years since 1980. This year's report is especially disturbing in light of recent information that over 53,000 classrooms in Texas are staffed by inappropriately certified teachers. That figure doesn't take into account the number of classrooms staffed by long-term substitutes.

As the legislature convened to discuss school finance in April, 35% of Texas teachers were moonlighting an average of 10 hours a week to make ends meet, up from 26% two years ago; 76% believe it is hav-

ing a negative effect on their teaching. On average, teachers earn an additional \$4,705 a year from moonlighting.

According to the Moonlighting report, the average Texas teacher is a 43-year-old female with a bachelor's degree; she makes \$41,396 and is married with a working spouse. More interesting statistics: ➤48% are the family breadwinner.

➤They spend an average of \$500 per year for school supplies out of their own pockets. ➤Only 1 in 10 believes that a single standardized test should be used for student promotion.

Today's teacher is spending an average of 13.8 additional hours a week working at home—the most time spent working at home since the survey began—but 69% still don't feel like they have time to prepare.

The top problems they face are discipline (58%) and paperwork (34%).

“Given the stress, the

hours, the lack of support, and the inadequate salary, it is no surprise that the teacher shortage is getting worse and that experienced teachers are getting out of the profession,” said TSTA President Donna New Haschke.

“At a time when we are increasing the standards for all of our students and making our tests and graduation requirements tougher, we must have a qualified, certified teacher in every classroom,” she said. “As the legislature contemplates matters of funding and debates making changes in the way we operate our schools, at the top of the list must be addressing the issues that are causing our shortage and avoiding any actions like incentives, or elimination of current rights and benefits that would make the situation worse. Education reform that doesn't focus on creating a quality teaching force is doomed to fail our students.”

Given the stress, the hours, the lack of support, and the inadequate salary, it is no surprise that the teacher shortage is getting worse and that experienced teachers are getting out of the profession.

## Notice of filing deadlines for TSTA elections

### 1 TSTA STATE OFFICERS, ALTERNATE NEA DIRECTOR

Nominations are open for TSTA Officers (TSTA President and TSTA Vice President) with nominations being due at TSTA's Organizing Center for Executive and Governance on September 15, 2004. The election will be conducted at the April 2005 State House of Delegates. Contact TSTA's Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Suite 510, Austin, Texas 78701, 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514 or 1510, for a filing form and information regarding the filing process. The term of office for TSTA President and Vice President shall be for 3 years or until successors are elected beginning on July 15, 2005.

Nominations are also open for Alternate NEA Director with nominations being due at TSTA's Organizing Center for Executive and Governance on September 15, 2004. The election will be conducted at the April 2005 State House of Delegates. Contact TSTA's Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Suite 510, Austin, Texas 78701, 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514 or 1510, for a filing form and information regarding the filing process. The term of office for Alternate NEA Director is for three years beginning on September 1, 2005.

### 2 NEA DIRECTOR PLACE 3

Nominations are open for NEA Director Place 3 with nominations being due at TSTA's Organizing Center for Executive and Governance on September 15, 2004. The election will be conducted at the April 2005 State House of Delegates. Contact TSTA's Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Suite 510, Austin, Texas 78701, 877-ASK-TSTA, ext. 1514 or 1510, for a filing form and information regarding the filing process. The term of office for NEA Director Place 3 is for three years beginning on September 1, 2005.



## TSTA celebrates 125 years

TSTA held its 125th House of Delegates at Austin's Renaissance Hotel April 23-24. Some of the highlights:

Rita Haecker of Austin was elected NEA Director by a three-vote margin over Russell Bryant of Wichita Falls. It was the first time for the election to be held during the TSTA Convention.

Virginia Gallian of Denton was named the TSTA Friend of Education and Barbara Johnson of Hamilton was presented the Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award (see Amazing Members).

Dardon Ann Hayter was given the Ronnie Ray ESP Advocate of the Year Award, TSTA's top award for educational support professionals (see page 18).

TSTA Professional, Human and Civil Rights Awards went to 12 employees of the GE Zenith Bonham plant, who are known as the GE Elfuns, for being mentors at a Bonham elementary school; and to James Fuller for his in-

volvement in the public schools and community since 1969. The former Marine was an English teacher with Lubbock ISD for seven years and is now the Midland Assistant Coordinator of Developmental Studies, Coordinator of the Midland College Orientation, and Vice President of the Midland School Board.

School Bell Awards were presented to outstanding members of the media at the *Dallas Morning News*, *Denton County Morning News*, *Garland Morning News*, *Odessa American*, KMID-TV (Midland), *Austin Chronicle*, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, KAUZ-TV Wichita Falls, KETK-TV Tyler, *Austin American Statesman*, *Pasadena Citizen*, *Abilene Reporter-News*, KVIA-TV El Paso, *Houston Chronicle*, *Alvin Sun*, *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, *Ebony News Journal*, *Wichita Falls Times Record News*, *Greater Houston Weekly*, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, KPRC-TV Houston,

and KDFW-TV Dallas.

Eva Gonzalez was honored for her work as the outgoing NEA Director for Texas.

Receiving Pride in Communication Awards for newsletters and web sites were:

► Best newsletter in a local with 150 members or less: TSTA-Retired

► Best newsletter in a local with 501-1000 members: first place, Garland Education Association; second place, Beaumont Teachers Association

► Best newsletter in a local with 1,000 or more members: Classroom Teachers of Dallas

► Best regional newsletter: Region 4B

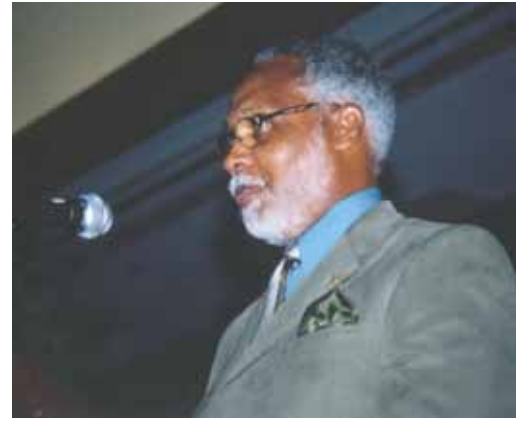
► Best website: Socorro Education Association

For the first time, TSTA presented awards to recognize local affiliates who are engaged in ongoing activity that contributes to the quality of their public schools within their respective communities. Instructional Awards were



Rita Haecker of Austin was elected NEA Director at this year's House of Delegates.





*TSTA Professional, Human and Civil Rights Awards went to the General Electric Elfuns and James Fuller.*



*School Bell winners who attended the HOD and the newspapers they represent. Back: Michael Ryan, Houston Chronicle; Bill Lodge, Garland Morning News; Terry Stutz, Dallas Morning News; Darryl Bowdre, Ebony News. Front: Andy Alford, Austin American Statesman; Raechal Leone, Odessa American; Keri Mitchell, Pasadena Citizen; Kathleen Holton, Alvin Sun; Monica Wolfson, Corpus Christi Caller- Times and Wichita Falls Times Record News.*

given to Conroe Education Association, Klein Education Association, Spring Educators Association, and TSTA-Katy. President's Awards for Instructional Excellence were presented to: Fannin County TSTA/NEA, Lewisville Education Association, and Ysleta Teachers Association.

Awards for increased membership were given in several categories; see Around Texas.

TSTA-Political Action Committee Trophies were presented in the following categories: Most New Continuing Contributors, Region



*"TSTA-PAC Woman," aka Vice President Ann Heuberger, with Gordon Gauthier, Legislative and Political Advocacy Committee chair.*

4D; Most Upgrades, Region 1D; Most Total Activity, Region 3D; and Most New Con-

tinuing Contributors & Upgrades in a Small Delegation, Region 2A.

## LAST-MINUTE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

We pulled this page after we'd already sent the *Advocate* to press to let you know the legislature adjourned May 17 without passing a school finance bill.

We logged more than 7,300 phone calls through our Legislative Alert system in three weeks, and we know many of you called your legislators directly. No other organization came close to responding the way you did and you should be proud of that. Thanks to you, legislators knew the problems incentive pay would cause for students, educators and public education, and they knew that no bill they were considering carried enough funding for the public schools.

We know they'll be back; we just don't know when. After adjournment, the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker held a news conference to say that two working groups, composed of six Senators and six Representatives, would be created, one to deal with finance and the other to deal with school reform. All three leaders referenced the need for a new accountability system, which we believe is a reference to incentive pay (see Donna's editorial).

If you have not already done so, please sign up for the Briefing and Legislative Alert at [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org), using your **home email address**, so we can keep you informed this summer. This battle's far from over.



# The History of TSTA

## AND THE CRISIS TODAY

By TSTA President Donna New Haschke

**T**his organization was born in 1880 because our founders had a political agenda and knew that only through collective action would they be successful in achieving it.

The issue was a first class university in Texas. It took us two sessions to pass a bill, but the result was the University of Texas and the creation of the Permanent University Fund which is still providing the funding to maintain a first class university system in Texas.

A legislative agenda with only one item—ahhh, those were the days.

In 1917, we elected Annie Webb Blanton as the first

woman president of TSTA. In 1918 she was elected Superintendent of Schools and became the first woman ever elected to public office in Texas. She led “The Better Schools Campaign” in 1918 and was instrumental in the suffrage movement in Texas. That was a woman who understood that the point of power was to make good things happen for our public schools.

In 1949, the challenge was adequately funding our public schools. It was TSTA that stood up and said we can do better for our children and our schools and the result was the Gilmer-Aikin Act.

In 1967, TSTA joined with the Black teachers’ organization, the Teachers State Association of Texas, to form one statewide association for all

educational employees. A key figure in making that happen was Vivian Roy Bowser, the president elect of TSAT in 1967. She understood that power came from numbers and was willing to set aside past differences and her own term as president to create a more effective organization.

In the early 70’s, the fight for control of our destiny turned into a fight inside the organization. While TSTA was the only professional association in the state, control did not rest with teachers even though they were the overwhelming majority of members. Membership was not yet open to educational support professionals, and the agenda was set and controlled by superintendents.

In 1974, TSTA affiliated with NEA and at the heart of that agreement was the requirement for proportional representation on governing boards by job category. No longer would a minority of the organization be able to control the majority. For the first time, we controlled the destiny of our own organization. The leaders who fought those battles and won them knew that having power without having the ability to set the agenda was meaningless.

In 1975, TSTA formed its political action committee. We raised \$500. In 1979 we made it to \$10,000. In the last campaign cycle we spent over \$500,000 to help elect pro-education candidates. Way back in 1975, folks like Virginia Stacey understood that in order for us to be players in the political arena, we must have a political war chest.

The ’80s and ’90s brought us an impressive list of leg-

Eighty-four percent of parents gave their child’s school a grade of A or B. Will someone please go tell the Governor that Texans like their schools and teachers?



islative victories: term contracts, duty free lunch, planning periods, K-4 class size limits, independent hearing officers, improvement in retirement benefits and a \$3,000 pass through pay raise, to name a few.

The new millennium started off well, when bipartisan support led to unanimous support for a statewide health insurance plan for educational employees, but when the 2003 Legislature came to town things took a turn for the worse.

An unfriendly House Public Education Committee, led by a chairman hostile to public education, launched an unprecedented attack on public schools and public school employees.

Backed by pro-voucher activists and right wing think tanks, they filed over 40 bills designed to pass their agenda. We stopped them.

They spent six months regrouping and getting organized. Several committees held hearings that were show-cases for every right wing think tank in the country. These so-called "expert" witnesses testified for vouchers, for merit pay, for eliminating contracts, against spending more money, for incentive pay plans for teachers, and in favor of turning every decision of any consequence over to local school districts.

Steps and staff changes were taken to insure the Governor had firm control over both the Texas Education Agency and State Board for Educator Certification. The instant certification rule was used as a field test to make sure everything was working the way the Gover-

nor wanted at both agencies. Then the Governor took a little boat trip to the Bahamas and came back with a plan. He held several press events to lay it out.

Meanwhile, we secured a legislative crisis grant from NEA and conducted a non-partisan poll of public opinion on public education. We released our findings in 12 press conferences across the state.

Eighty-four percent of parents gave their child's school a grade of A or B. Will someone please go tell the Governor that Texans like their schools and teachers?

When asked an open-ended question on what would have the most positive impact on improving our schools, 53% said teachers. Nothing else even came close. Also mention to the Governor that if he doesn't address the teacher shortage, all the reforms in the world will be worthless.

Only 21% of Texans thought we should fund schools based on improved test scores while 71% believed we should fully fund existing reforms. No one likes punishing schools that need help—did you get that, Governor? Apparently not.

In March, we significantly stepped up our media presence and had a very successful primary election, helping to protect some new friends and defeat some old enemies.

We formed coalitions with various groups and organizations in an attempt to unite the education community before the session started.

In late March and early April, I testified before the Joint Select Committee on Public School Finance and on the Governor's plan. My mes-

sage was short and not so sweet: "The schools need significantly more money than is being proposed, and it must be directed at ending the teacher shortage. The career ladder failed and your plan to give teachers incentive bonuses instead of real pay raises will fail!"

At press time, we were in the midst of a special session called by the Governor to try to pass his plan. Please check our web site to find out what happened—and while you're there, sign up for our weekly electronic newsletter, the Briefing, so you'll be ready for the next legislative session!

## TSTA: A History of Accomplishments

Because of TSTA's efforts over the years, you now enjoy the following benefits:

- 1937** Teacher Retirement System (TRS)
- 1949** state minimum salary schedule
- 1969** guaranteed five days of sick leave
- 1981** Term Contract Nonrenewal Act
- 1984** 30-minute duty-free lunch
- 1985** health insurance for retired teachers
- 1986** paperwork reduction law
- 1987** discipline bill
- 1987** repeal of subject matter testing
- 1989** retirement at age 55 with full salary
- 1990** site-based decision making
- 1991** sick leave for education support professionals
- 1991** payroll deduction for association dues
- 1991** school districts required to offer health insurance comparable to state employees'
- 1993** career ladder stipends grandfathered when program is abolished
- 1995** independent hearing officer for termination/suspension without pay cases
- 1995** teachers allowed to remove student and bar his/her return to class
- 1997** rule of 80 for full retirement benefits
- 1997** 5.5% across-the-board increase in state minimum salary schedule
- 1999** TRS multiplier increase to 2.2%
- 1999** \$3,000 increase in state schedule and required "pass through" to employee
- 2001** statewide health insurance plan with \$1,000 supplement for premiums
- 2001** TRS multiplier increase to 2.3%
- 2003** 40 bad bills killed (vouchers, class size, contracts, duty-free lunch, planning and preparation, etc.)
- 2003** including librarians, counselors, and others who make over \$50,000 in health care stipend

# Power, Protection, Passion

*What is it that you want in this state, in your district, in your classroom, with enough passion that nothing will prevent you from doing whatever you can, whatever it takes to achieve it?*

What is it that sets TSTA apart from the other groups in Texas and makes us worth the extra cost? That is a complex question, and one not easily answered. It is particularly difficult to answer it with a simple statement in the 30 seconds you might get to talk to a potential member at a New Employee Orientation.

Yet, there is a difference. One of the problems facing us in Texas is that the power that resides in the “education community” is fragmented across too many groups and too many individuals. That allows the policy makers (in Austin and in your community) to play one group off against another.

Power is not something we often discuss, nor is it something we feel comfortable about. Many of us tend to agree with what Lord Acton wrote in his 1887 letter to Bishop Creighton: “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Power is not a polite word. Many of us

have had power used against us with devastating human and personal consequences.

We don’t trust it and we don’t trust that others will use it wisely. But power is simply the ability to act and be acted upon. It is a part of every human exchange. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, it exists. I don’t agree with Lord Acton, though it likely is true that individual power should be limited. But I don’t believe that power is inherently either good or evil. It simply is. Who holds the power and how and for what it is used determines whether it is good or evil in any particular instance.

At my first TSTA House of Delegates, I heard Will Davis, whom we were honoring with a Friend of Education Award, tell a story about how the Governor and the Lt. Governor used to come meet with the Executive Director of TSTA, then greet the press and announce the state budget for education. Now, that reflects power!

But, you know what? That wasn’t this TSTA! That was a TSTA dominated and controlled by superintendents. The majority of TSTA’s members, the teachers, didn’t have power because the power wielded by TSTA was controlled by superintendents.

When, in the 1960’s and 1970’s, some teacher-leaders came to understand that dynamic of power, they decided to fight for control of their own organization. They organized across this state and nation and gained enough power to wrest control from the superintendents. In Texas, when the superintendents lost that internal power, they left TSTA and took some of the external power with them. They helped create competing teacher organizations, which led to the fragmentation of whatever power exists in the education community. The result of this splintering of power is the mess we deal with across the state and that you deal with in your local district.

Understanding this dynamic is essential to building the organization that will allow us to accomplish our mission. The kind of power that is essential to this enterprise is not the power that stems from position, or contracts, or compacts, but rather it is power that stems from the relationships between and among our members and leaders. It is the kind of power that resides in the Association, and is wielded by the Association, but that rests on the willingness and ability of the members to come together and create the power. And it must happen on the local, state and

national levels. It cannot exist and be successful if it is restricted to only one of those.

One of the purposes of this power is to provide protection for members and, especially, leaders. It is an essential responsibility of an organization like ours to provide that protection, and TSTA does that better than anybody else. We do it with liability insurance, representation in grievances and legal counsel when a job is threatened. But the most important weapon in our protection arsenal is power.

The irony in the relationship between “Power” and “Protection” is that the power that is essential to providing the protection we must provide is only present when the people who need the protection band together in relationships to create the power. It is the power of collective action.

It is the understanding of this kind of power and how you build it that, in fact, sets TSTA apart from the other organizations. Without power there are no benefits. Without power there is no real protection. Without power there are no “services.”

An organization that sells membership by saying “we do everything the others do, only cheaper,” inherently misses the mark. A successful organization in this arena cannot be the kind of organization that sells membership by saying “come join us and we will take care of you,” because that kind of organization creates a dependency in members rather than an empowerment of members.

Relationships and organizations of that type, based solely on transaction, on market ex-



changes, have their place and value; however such relationships and organizations alone do not build nations, create history or transform the human spirit. They do not create an organization that adds the third “P” to Power and Protection: Passion.

What is it in your professional life that you care about passionately? What is it that you want in this state, in your district, in your classroom, with enough passion that nothing will prevent you from doing whatever you can, whatever it takes to achieve it?

I know what it is for me. I believe passionately in public education as the foundation of a democratic society. For me, there is nothing more important than protecting and enhancing public education—and nothing will prevent me from doing all I can

to accomplish that. That is one reason why I feel so privileged to work for the organization that leads the fight for public education.

Many of you share this passion, but it is other things that may stir the souls of many of our members and potential members. What we must understand is that it takes power to accomplish whatever it is you feel passionate about. Salary, benefits, less testing, paperwork reduction, more respect for education employees, job protection, higher standards, truly leaving no child behind—whatever your passion is, together we can achieve it if we create the power.

But there is one more piece to this, and it is sometimes the hardest to understand and achieve: the power we create must reside in the Association at all three levels,

local, state and national. That is the only thing that will make it transferable to the next set of leaders, and the next and the next. And that

*Salary, benefits, less testing, paperwork reduction, more respect for education employees, job protection, higher standards, truly leaving no child behind—whatever your passion is, together we can achieve it if we create the power.*

means that, as leaders, we must be as passionate about creating the right kind of organization to wield that power as we are about fighting to achieve our goals. We must have leaders who are so passionate about creating that organization that nothing will prevent them from building it—because this is the key that

unlocks the door to success.

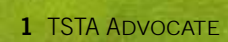
The more power that resides in the Association, the more protection we can provide. The more protection we can provide, the better able we are to amass the power necessary to fulfill our collective passions. The more we accomplish with that power, the more members we will gain—and the more members we gain, the more power we create for the Association and for education employees in Texas. When you connect all of the dots, it creates a circle—a circle that rests on our values and encompasses our passionate ideals.

Our vision is one of citizens building a common heritage, joining the Association to make history, engaging in a common political life and assuming an active and public role in creating our own organization. This is the kind of organization that will achieve the TSTA mission: to organize all education

employees at the site, local and state levels to effect ongoing change that enhances the professional, instructional and economic interests of our members. Together, we can continue to mold TSTA into this organization.

.....  
Based on Executive Director E.C. Walker's speech to the TSTA House of Delegates







# Memories in the Making:

## Schools as an Unending Test of Remembering

By Dr. Mel Levine, Founder, All Kinds of Minds

**F**rom the moment that initial classroom bell or buzzer sounds off jarringly in the morning until their homework is finally completed, children and adolescents are stressing and straining their memory muscles. So much of schoolwork is memory work. One part of memory is especially under the gun, namely a kid's long-term memory. This is the chamber in which a student stores and later on tries to find information and skills to take a test or demonstrate what he knows on a homework assignment or else in a class discussion. And students seem to vary greatly in the ease and precision with which they can operate their long-term memory system.





*“It is essential to identify students who are experiencing memory deficiencies in school”*

### Modes of Long-Term Memory

There are numerous modes of long-term memory. These include memory for facts (so called declarative memory), memory for how to do things (known as procedural memory), visual memory, verbal memory, sequential memory, and many other somewhat overlapping processes. A child may have superb visual memory but have to struggle to store and recall verbal material. A student may have difficulty in math because he can't remember facts readily and has never been able to get the multiplication tables on automatic pilot. Meanwhile, getting help from the same math tutor is a kid who can remember the facts but has trouble applying the procedures. He keeps lamenting, “I forget how to do this.”

Writing imposes some of the heaviest memory burdens, as a budding young author or reporter has to recall simultaneously and very quickly spelling, punctuation, capitalization, good grammar, facts, specific vocabulary, and letter formations.

Kids with long-term memory dysfunctions most often can't tolerate writing assignments, and every one is stymied by the differences between their interesting ideas they offer in a discussion and the drastically less sophisticated and interesting thoughts they are able to get down on paper. That's because the memory strain of writing in some cases takes up all of a child's brain resources leaving little or no energy for constructing good ideas.

Finally, kids with unreliable long-term memory may have trouble showing what they know on a test. It may be hard for them to memorize and even harder for them to recall what they need from long-term memory on the spot during the test.

### Demystifying Memory

It is essential to identify students who are experiencing memory deficiencies in school. They are at risk for failing end of grade tests and ultimately for a range of complications, including low self-esteem, depression, and loss of motivation. Some drop out. Some get in trouble. Affected children and teenagers must find out that they have memory gaps; otherwise, they assume they are hopelessly “dumb” or “stupid.” Then they give up on themselves altogether. On the other hand when we can demystify a student and explain to him the nature of his memory problems, he is likely to rise up, to accept help, and to help himself too. I like to inform these kids that when they grow up, their memory will not have to take the beating it gets in school! There's hope.

### Storage and Retrieval

In assisting kids with long-term memory dysfunctions, it is important to acknowledge two closely linked phases of long-term memory: storage and retrieval. The more skillful you are at storing away knowledge the easier it is to retrieve the material subsequently. So we try to help students improve the way they study or file new information in order to remember more effectively.

Students need to be systematic and resourceful in deciding how best to retain what they are trying to learn. They should be aware that the best way to remember something is to change it in some way. They can elaborate on the information, forming associations or links between what they have learned and experiences they've had or knowledge they've acquired previously. Parents can help by

serving as audiences as children talk about what they are filing away. Recoding of information is another useful tactic. This is where you change the packaging of information from the one in which it was delivered. So, if something is presented verbally, you make a graphic – a diagram of it. If there is something visual to learn, you put it into words. Active learners understand the need to somehow make some changes in what they are learning. They make tables, drawings, and bulleted lists. The very act of creating these recoded information packets helps consolidate the information in memory. Also, your diagrams, lists, and other byproducts are convenient to study from.

There are many students out there who can benefit from plain old drill to drive facts and skills into memory. This regimented form of practice most often has to take place at home. It is best achieved right before a child puts his head on the pillow to doze off at night. That's when information seems to have a direct path to long-term memory – with little or no interference. It's been shown that what you study right before going to sleep actually gets replayed several times while you are asleep. That certainly makes it easier to recall on the quiz the next day – and maybe forever after. The kind of nocturnal drill I just described even can be fun. Keeping score, using timed trials, and offering rewards all boost motivation, which, in turn, energizes memory.

There are many other memory techniques kids can deploy to improve their learning. I find that kids often can be quite creative in coming up with their own homemade tactics once the nature of their memory shortcomings is explained well to them.

One final precaution: it's harder to remember things you don't understand. There's more to learning than rote memorizing. When a student is working to store facts, try to ascertain that he really has a grasp on the material. Otherwise, he isn't actually learning.

© 2001, 2002 All Kinds of Minds. Reprinted with permission. Visit [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org) for more information and resources addressing differences in learning. Dr. Mel Levine, MD, is the author of the best-seller *A Mind at a Time* and *The Myth of Laziness* (both from Simon and Schuster).



# Coming this fall: Educator Access!



Starting this fall, we'll be offering a great new group discount program—Educator Access—and it's free to our members! Just show your 2004-05 membership card, which you will receive in the fall *Advocate*, at over 80,000 locations and you will be entitled to savings of up to 50%.

## How does it work?

Starting in the fall, you will be able to use your personal member ID number, printed on your membership card, to log into a members only section of [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org). Enter a city or zip code to browse through the discounts and special offers in your home area or the area in which you will be traveling.

Click on a merchant from the list and follow redemption instructions. Note: Some merchants may ask for a coupon when redeeming your discount. These merchants are clearly identified on the list with "coupon required." To get your coupon, click on the merchant's name, then click "print coupon."

Enjoy the savings! With your membership card, you can save up to 50% on everyday purchases such as fast food and casual dining, dry cleaning, auto service and repair, health and beauty products, movie tickets, video rentals, family entertainment, golf, ski passes, hotel rooms, vacation packages, luxury cruises, outdoor recreation, and much more.

## Who are these merchants?

They are more than 80,000+ name-brand retailers and we're adding more all the time. Here are just a few names we think you'll recognize: Tony Roma's, Aamco, Best Western, Carnival Cruise Lines, Mrs. Fields Cookies, Meineke, Holiday Inn, Pearle Vision, A&W, ChemDry, Grandy's, and FTD.com.

**Questions? Contact Educator Access at  
[customerservice@memberweb.com](mailto:customerservice@memberweb.com)  
or 866-681-2420.**



## Building a supportive school board

The trustees are really friends of education and our input as concerned educators is taken seriously.

Following TSTA's plan of action for grassroots political involvement, Maverick County Local TSTA called a

town hall meeting to enable voters to meet and interview the candidates for local school board two years ago. The local

then endorsed candidates, issued news releases and campaigned on their behalf.

"On May 2002 we interviewed, endorsed, campaigned for, and elected our first two," Vice President Roberto Ruiz, who coordinates the school board elections, said. "On May 2003, following the same format and strategies, we endorsed, campaigned for and elected three more candidates. Now

on April 2004, we have interviewed, campaigned for and endorsed two more candidates.

"It has been a truly exhilarating democratic process because we can count on our membership and the support of the community," Ruiz said. "The trustees are really

friends of education and our input as concerned educators is taken seriously. Even the town mayor acknowledges our political credibility and clout, but we intend to keep focused on the best interest of our students and our membership."

### Students thank retired member for support

TSTA-Student Program President Renay Jones and

District 3 Treasurer Elect Anna Lee Guerra thank TSTA-Retired member Fran Valenzuela.

All three were delegates to the TSTA House of Delegates in April, where Valenzuela offered a successful new business item encouraging TSTA regions to get involved with student chapters.





# Don't mess with Texas teachers

**T**STA/NEA local leaders from the greater Houston area gave U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay a surprise reception back home in Texas. TSTA and TFT members — some 400 to 500 strong — marched together to a DeLay rally to protest the Congressman's failure to support repeal of the Social Security offsets that penalize Texas teachers.

DeLay accused teacher unions of giving out false information and implied that teachers don't understand the issue. NEA Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision Cadre member Joyce Roberta Miller Alper told DeLay:

- Teachers are informed.
- Teachers are discussing their own earned money lost through the Windfall Elimination Provision and their spouse's earned money lost through the Government Pension Offset.
- Mid-career changers—faced with the loss of their own earned benefits and/or a spouse's earned benefits—are dissuaded from

entering the profession.

NASA employee John Cobarruvias, a strong supporter of education and educators, gave this account: "In just 90 short minutes DeLay managed to insult most of the 400 in attendance, had a constituent removed by the police for attempting to ask a question, and provided ample opportunities for laughter and groans. All of this would have made excellent news for the TV reporters who took the time to attend, but DeLay had them removed from the public meeting."

Cobarruvias said DeLay "defended his actions by stating the teachers were getting 'more than they deserved' when it comes to retirement."

At press time, NEA and the sponsors of the House bill to repeal the Social Security offsets, Reps. Buck McKeon (R-CA) and Howard Berman (D-CA), were in negotiations with Social Security Subcommittee Chair Clay Shaw (R-FL) to bring the bill to the House for a vote. For an update or to take action, visit [www.nea.org/lac/socsec](http://www.nea.org/lac/socsec).



## They've got the power

These local associations embody the principles Executive Director E.C. Walker talked about on page 10. Shown in the photo are Socorro Education Association President Glenda Hawthorne and Scott Brantley; as a result of their winning attitude, the local is strong, active, and united and took home four first-place membership awards at the state convention!

Give us a call: TSTA staff will come out and talk to your local association about how you, too, can achieve these results!

In addition to the awards below, a special award for membership performance was presented to San Antonio Alliance, which was created through the merger of San Antonio Teachers Council and two Texas Federation of Teachers locals.

### GREATEST NUMERICAL INCREASE

#### **Teacher**

First: Socorro Education Assn.  
Second: Ysleta Teachers Assn.  
Third: Laredo Education Assn.  
Fourth: United Education Assn.  
Fifth: Ector County TSTA

#### **ESP**

First: Education Austin  
Second: Socorro Education Assn.  
Third: Pasadena Educators Assn.  
Fourth: Laredo Education Assn.  
Fifth: Alvin Teachers Assn.

### GREATEST PERCENTAGE INCREASE

#### **Teacher**

First: Socorro Education Assn.  
Second: United Education Assn.  
Third: Laredo Education Assn.  
Fourth: Corsicana Educators Assn.  
Fifth: Wood County Local Assn.

#### **ESP**

First: Harlandale Teachers Assn.  
Second: Socorro Education Assn.  
Third: Edinburg Local Assn.  
Fourth: Lewisville Education Assn.  
Fifth: Alvin Teachers Assn.

### GREATEST PERCENTAGE OF MARKET SHARE

#### **Teacher**

First: San Antonio Alliance  
Second: Port Arthur Teachers Assn.  
Third: Kemp Education Assn.  
Fourth: Hall County  
Fifth: Deer Park Education Assn.

#### **ESP**

First: Education Austin  
Second: Hamilton County  
Third: San Antonio Alliance  
Fourth: Christoval TSTA  
Fifth: Ector County

### PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN MARKET SHARE

#### **Teacher**

First: Socorro Education Assn.  
Second: Port Arthur Teachers  
Third: San Elizario Educators  
Fourth: Ector County TSTA  
Fifth: Corsicana Educators Assn.

#### **ESP**

First: Alvin Teacher Assn.  
Second: Socorro Education Assn.  
Third: Education Austin  
Fourth: Harlandale Teachers Assn.  
Fifth: Ector County TSTA

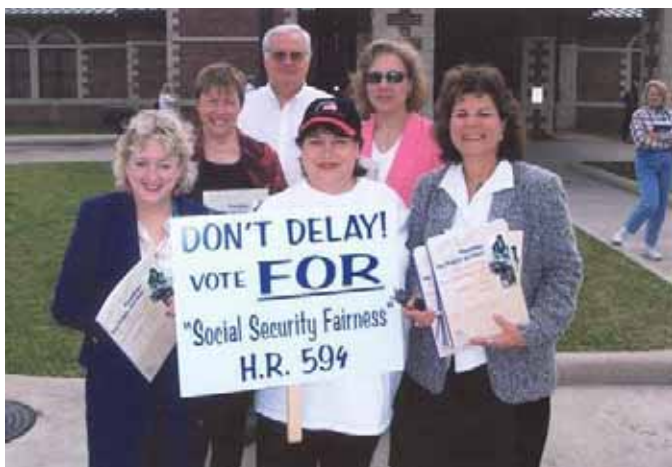
### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

#### **Teacher**

First: Socorro Education Assn.  
Second: Port Arthur Teachers Assn.  
Third: Laredo Education Assn.

#### **ESP**

First: Education Austin  
Second: Socorro Education Assn.  
Third: Harlandale Teachers Assn.  
and Alvin Teachers Assn.



Clockwise from left: Perry McCall, Spring Branch Education Association, who is retiring because the loophole is closing; Pam Collins Liebman, Alief Education Association; Sam Blackman, TSTA staff; Andrea Andrews and Joyce Roberta Miller Alper, SBEA; and Kerri Washenfelter, Fort Bend Federation of Teachers.





## Going the extra mile

Dardon Ann Hayter is named ESP of the Year

Hayter would say that one of the most important jobs she's ever had is association representative for her TSTA local association, the Pasadena Educators Association

Technically, Dardon Ann Hayter, winner of the TSTA Ronnie Ray Education Support Professional Advocate of the Year Award, holds two jobs: library clerk and administrative office clerk at Southmore Intermediate.

As such, she might be found answering the phones in the front office; serving as a liaison between teachers and alternative education teachers; gathering school work for students assigned to the alternative education center; shelving and cataloguing books; or supervising student volunteers in the library.

In reality, she gives much more. "I have been there long

enough to be a jack of all trades," said Hayter, who has been at Southmore nine years and with Pasadena ISD 14 years.

"She is always ready to go the extra mile to make sure that the students of this school are successful and happy," Assistant Principal Joe Sink said. "I do not exaggerate when I say that Ms. Hayter goes above and beyond the boundaries of her stated duties to make everyone here successful."

"Ms. Hayter does much more than her job description requires," Principal Lana Stahl said. "If we need help in monitoring tests, we call Dardon Ann. If a student needs help with their locker, we call Dardon Ann. If we need extra assistance with registration, we call Dardon Ann. If we

need someone to work at an athletic event, we call Dardon Ann. If we need someone to dress up as the Statue of Liberty, we call Dardon Ann."

Hayter would say that one of the most important jobs she's ever had is association representative for her TSTA local association, the Pasadena Educators Association.

"I believe that the association representative in each building is the key to our organization," she said. "I believe that the officers, especially the president, should be a support to the association representatives for a strong organization."

In addition to being an AR, she is currently serving as membership chair and vice president. ESP membership in her local is up 42%.

Last year, the main issues

were the paraprofessional pay schedule—PEA had to file a grievance to keep the school district from getting rid of it—and a privatization threat.

“Last year the paraprofessional pay schedule showed a 9.5% increase because of Dardon Ann,” fellow PEA member Sherrie Matula said.

“They put together a game plan and took care of the privatizing issue, too. Dardon Ann attends all the board meetings, sitting right up front, and she speaks out on issues dealing with teachers and support staff. Dardon Ann puts her job on the line every day, without a contract, to represent members.”

This year, the issue is duty-free lunch during testing and planning and preparation time. Salaries are a continuing concern: in Pasadena, teachers rank 88th in Texas in pay, administrators are 20th and the superintendent, at \$280,000 a year, is number 4.

“We need more people to join TSTA/NEA and we need for the people who are members to keep up with what’s going on locally and to become politically active,” Hayter said. “Some people think we’re a Democrat organization but we’re not Democrat or Republican. We vote for education.”

She’s gone at least seven times to the NEA Representative Assembly. “People don’t realize what it’s like. Anybody can have a say in this organization. I’m going again this year. You learn about the problems in other districts and states and sometimes they’re the same ones we have. We’re all working toward a common goal,” she said. “We’re all working for the children.”



## TEXAS EDUCATIONAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

### Schlechty to headline October conference

Come learn from one of the most highly respected teaching and learning experts in the nation! We are excited to announce that Dr. Phillip C. Schlechty is headlining our second TSTA/Texas Federation of Teachers’ Joint Educational Issues Conference October 29-31 at the Adams Mark Hotel in San Antonio.

Schlechty is the founder and CEO of the Center for Leadership in School Reform, and the author of such books as *Working on the Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals and Superintendents*; *Shaking Up the Schoolhouse: How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation*; *Schools for the 21st Century: Leadership Imperatives for Educational Reform*; and *Inventing Better Schools: An Action Plan for Educational Reform*.

You’ll want to take advantage of a dynamic professional development opportunity on Friday that can directly impact your

classroom instruction. Schlechty is featured at the pre-conference, which will run all day and is limited to 80 participants. The registration fee for the pre-conference is \$75.

He will also speak at the conference which starts Friday evening with a reception and run through noon on Sunday.

The conference will offer over 30 sessions for CPE credit on a wide range of topics.

The conference room rate at the Adams Mark is \$105 for singles and doubles. For information on the hotel, check [www.adamsmark.com/sanantonio/index.asp](http://www.adamsmark.com/sanantonio/index.asp).

Early conference registration is \$85, regular registration is \$99, walkup registration is \$119 and registration for non-members is \$198.

Check our web site, [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org), in August for workshop and registration information.





Debbie Clemens (right) and her mother Jan Wilde (left) with teacher Sharon Thompson.

## Pitching for educators

February 27 was a big day for Sharon Thompson of Katy ISD. First she was named Teacher of the Year for Memorial Parkway Elementary and then, while attending a gala with a former student that night, she discovered she was one of the honorees.

Debbie Clemens, wife of Houston Astros pitcher Roger Clemens, asked Thompson to accompany her to the Clemens Foundation's gala

and silent auction at the Westin Galleria in Houston. All of the winners of the night's Crystal Awards were listed in the program pamphlet—except one.

When Clemens, who was Thompson's student when she was a fifth grader at Westwood Elementary in Spring Branch ISD, began talking about her from the stage, Thompson was dumbstruck.

"It was a blur. All of a sudden, people were applauding

and she was motioning for me to come up on stage," Thompson said. "All I remember her saying was that I'd let her stay after school and practice her spelling. I need to ask for a copy of what she said!"

The Special Crystal Award is engraved with "To reach a child's mind, a teacher must capture his heart. For all you are and all you do."

"I couldn't sleep when I came home," Thompson said. "People said, 'You really touched Debbie.' I said, 'She really touched me, too.' It was my second year as a teacher and she had just moved to Spring Branch from Dallas, so we were starting something new together. Although I hadn't seen her in seven or eight years, the bond is still very strong."

The gala raised more than \$100,000 for the Spring Branch Education Foundation and the Readers Are Leaders Foundation.

Thompson has been the vice president for communications for her local association, TSTA-Katy, and will be co-president in 2004-05.

## Career ladder crusader named Friend of Education



Virginia Gallian was named TSTA's Friend of Education at the state convention this April. Back in 1985, she brought a lawsuit, Gallian et al vs. Denton ISD, on the career ladder, a controversial merit pay vehicle that was in place at the time throughout Texas.

Her school district developed an appraisal system that did not have a "clearly outstanding" category, which meant that no one in the district could get to level 2 or 3 of the

ladder. Not only did she win the grievance on behalf of all teachers in the district but the case established that a class action grievance could be filed if two or more teachers were affected.

"Virginia has retired, but she is now a member of the DISD Board of Trustees and often she is still the only one who is willing to stand up for the teachers in the district," TSTA President Donna New Haschke said.

"Keep up the good fight," Gallian told delegates. "I'm proud to be a lifelong TSTA/NEA member and I hope all of you in this room will be that."



# Making a difference for 32 years

Barbara Johnson, a fifth grade teacher in Hamilton and former member of the TSTA Board of Directors, received the Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award at the state convention.

The 32-year veteran's advice to new teachers? "Teaching is not for the timid, the lazy, or the indifferent."

Her work—at school, in campaigns, and in TSTA—came through clearly in the words of others.

TSTA President Donna New Haschke: "Barbara's motto, 'A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition,' sums up her attitude toward teaching and life."

Her principal: "Whenever I visit her classroom, it is a

pleasure to observe the students' joy of learning and enthusiasm for reading."

Former state House of Representatives member David Lengefeld: "There is no award on this earth big enough or great enough to properly recognize and honor the Barbara Johnson I know. We have fought many battles together over major political issues. Barbara is one to stand firm in her convictions and to fight to protect the issues in which she believes so strongly."

Johnson said she remembered the late Ermalee Boice, when she was associate executive director of TSTA, putting her hands on Johnson's shoulders, looking her

straight in the eye, and saying, "Barbara, you can make a difference." Boice would have been proud that she received this award.



Barbara Johnson with TSTA President Donna Haschke and Vice President Ann Heuberger.



## Marek Elementary nears completion

Mary Burks Marek Elementary, named for a lifelong member of TSTA and 35-year veteran of Alvin ISD, opens this fall. It's the first school in Shadow Creek Ranch near Manvel.

Stevenson Principal Cathy Baccigalopi said former students used to bring their children and grandchildren to meet the late Marek, whom she described as "the epitome of a teacher...warm, caring,

compassionate, loving, and knowledgeable."

Marek spent most of her life in Alvin. After earning bachelors and masters degrees from Sam Houston State University, she returned home to teach at Longfellow Elementary, Alvin Junior High and Harby Junior High.

She retired as assistant principal of Stevenson Primary in December 2002 and

died the following June after a 15-year battle with cancer.

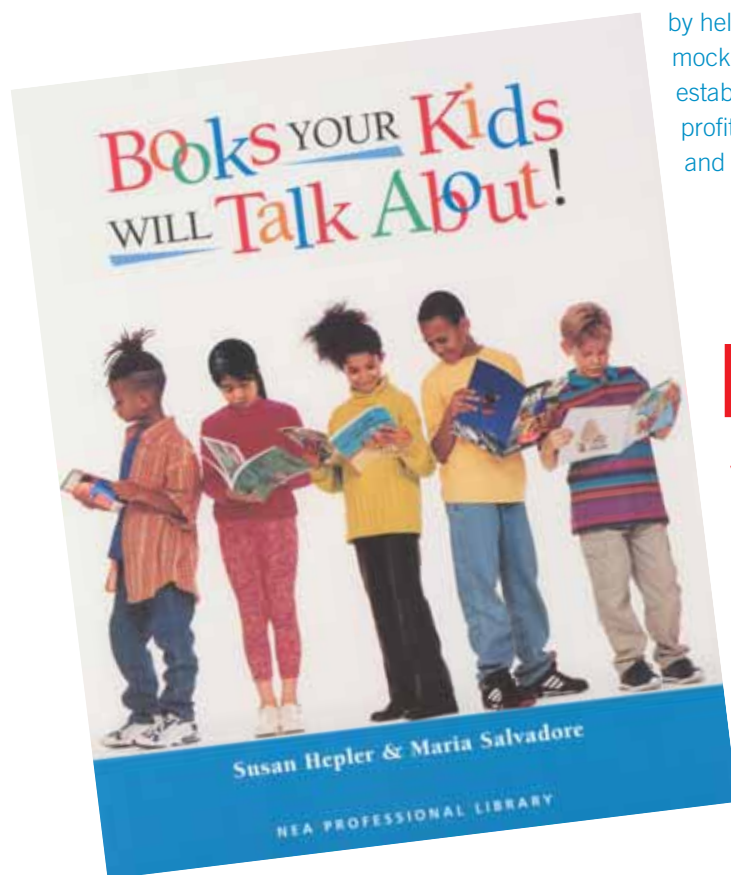


### MEMBER REELECTED TO CERTIFICATION BOARD

Congratulations to Marcella DeNice, a guidance counselor at Highland Park Elementary in San Antonio, who has been reelected to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards board of directors.

NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a board of directors, the majority of whom are classroom teachers. Its mission is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

IDEA: Did you know you can get an affordable loan from NEA Member Benefits to help cover the \$2,300 assessment fee for National Board Certification? Go to [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) for details. For more information about NBPTS, visit [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).



## FOR THOSE CREATIVE IDEAS THAT LACK FUNDING . . .

or for that professional development opportunity that's just too good to miss, the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education's Innovation and Learning & Leadership Grants can help.

One Texas teacher used her Innovation Grant to increase the problem-solving skills of students who are struggling with mathematical concepts by helping them develop a mock corporation. Students establish and manage a for-profit company that designs and sells clothing.

Working within several corporate divisions, students track and distribute salaries, market and advertise their clothing, and manage general operations. Students conclude the program with a fashion show.

Grant amounts are up to \$5,000 per project. All NEA members who are U.S. public school teachers in grades K-12, education support professionals, or higher education faculty and staff are eligible to apply.

Visit [www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm](http://www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm) today for guidelines and an application or call 202-822-7840.

# Books kids will talk about!

The NEA Professional Library comes up with another good one

It's fun to talk about our favorite books—and it's fun for kids, too! Encouraging kids to talk about what they've read is a powerful learning tool that can motivate and inspire.

*Books Your Kids Will Talk About* helps educators and parents navigate the ever-expanding universe of children's literature. This comprehensive, multicultural, annotated booklist is orga-

nized around themes germane to a child's world. You'll also find suggestions on integrating the books into your curriculum.

*Books Your Kids Will Talk About* (item # 2051-0-00-PL) is \$19.95 for NEA members, \$22.95 for nonmembers, plus postage and handling. Call 800-229-4200, fax 301-206-9789, or visit <http://home.nea.org/books/>.

Other recent additions to the NEA Professional Library of materials, written by and for educators, include: *But High School Teaching Is Different: Success Strategies for New Secondary Teachers*; *Standing in Your Shoes: A Checklist for Classroom and Substitute Teachers*; and *When Children Are Abused: An Educator's Guide to Intervention*. Call for a free catalog.



## Materials you can use: Brown v. Board of Education

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. Check out NEA's jam-packed site "Horizons of Opportunities: Celebrating 50 Years of Brown v. Board of Education."

The site features a summary of the state of desegregation in the nation today and a school integration timeline, diversity timeline of NEA's support of and contribution to school integration and diversity, as

well as a nationwide calendar of events commemorating the court decision. It's all at [www.nea.org/brownvboard](http://www.nea.org/brownvboard).

At the site you may order a classroom poster, in addition to accessing links to key reports.

Another good web site on the topic: Voices of Civil Rights ([www.voicesofcivilrights.org](http://www.voicesofcivilrights.org)), a joint project of AARP and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

## Keep recycling those cartridges!

Where does the money for those NFIE grants come from? One source is the Staples Recycle for Education program which has been extended through 2004.

Since July 2003, more than \$500,000 has been raised nationwide for public education. Whenever an

eligible inkjet or laser toner cartridge is recycled at any of Staples' 1,100 stores, Staples donates \$1 to public education charities or The NEA Foundation.

The Foundation returns these funds in the form of the Innovation and Leadership grants described above!

### DID YOU KNOW?

- That you can find links to great classroom ideas and lesson plans, as well as grant and award opportunities, on the TSTA web site ([www.tsta.org/classroom](http://www.tsta.org/classroom)) and NEA's [www.owl.org](http://www.owl.org)?
- That our Joint TSTA/TFT Educational Issues Conference has been scheduled for October 29-31 at the Adams Mark Hotel in San Antonio—and that Philip C. Schlechty is our guest speaker and workshop presenter? Go to page 29 for more information!
- That our TSTA web site's "links" section connects you to job listings, education agencies, freeware, reference materials, and much more?



## Happy birthday, Dr. Seuss!

Support for NEA's Read Across America, the annual nationwide reading event held on Dr. Seuss' birthday, was at an all-time high for what would have been his 100th.

The celebration even reached our troops in Iraq; shown here is a photo taken by Lt. Col. Joe Pace of troops holding a sign that reads, "Hey America! Read with Our Kids Today." He and his wife, Lt. Col. Cathy Pace, are in Baghdad. Their children, Emily and Joseph, are in the Killeen public schools, cared for by a grandmother until their parents come home next year.

You may wonder how word of Read Across America reached Iraq. Joe is the brother of NEA Secretary Treasurer Lily Eskelsen, a native Texan, who sent him a Read Across America care package and shared the resulting photo with us.

### A FEW OTHER NOTABLE CELEBRATIONS:

➤ State Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn read to kids in Austin and shared a picture of the "Cat in the Hat" that she drew as a child.

➤ Saturn provided cars to chauffeur five San Antonio "Cats" on their quest to visit 31 campuses in one school day.

➤ U.S. Congressman Ciro Rodriguez read to second graders in Harlandale ISD.

➤ Read more about how readers and kids all over the United States celebrated at [www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross).



TSTA member Janet Spence's first graders at LBJ Elementary in Odessa are holding certificates signed by NEA President Reg Weaver.



# Protecting yourself against identity theft

The 1990's spawned a new variety of crooks called "identity thieves," people who illegally obtain some piece of your sensitive information and use it without your knowledge to commit fraud or theft. You can spend years and thousands of dollars cleaning up the mess identity thieves have made of your good name and credit record. Some victims have lost job opportunities, been refused loans for education, housing or cars, or even been arrested for crimes they didn't commit.

## HOW IT OCCURS

Identity thieves use a variety of methods to gain access to your personal information. They might steal your wallet or purse; steal mail; complete a "change of address form" to divert your mail to another location; or scam information from you by posing as a legitimate businessperson. Once they have your personal informa-

tion, they may:

- go on spending sprees using your credit and debit card account numbers to buy "big-ticket" items like computers that they can easily sell
- open a new credit card account, using your name, date of birth and Social Security number
- take out auto loans in your name
- establish phone or wireless service in your name
- open a bank account in your name and write bad checks on that account
- give your name to the police during an arrest (if they are released and don't show up for their court date, an arrest warrant could be issued in your name)

## MINIMIZING THE RISK

When creating passwords for your credit cards, bank and phone accounts, avoid using easily available information like your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your SSN or your phone number, or a series of consecutive numbers. When you're asked for your mother's maiden name on an application for a new account, try using a password instead.

Secure personal information in your home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having service work done in your home.

Don't give out personal

information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or are sure you know with whom you're dealing. Before you divulge any personal information, confirm that you're dealing with a legitimate representative of a legitimate organization.

Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes or at your local post office instead of an unsecured mailbox. Remove mail from your mailbox promptly. If you're planning to be away from home and can't pick up your mail, call the U.S. Postal Service at 800-275-8777 to ask for a vacation hold. Tear or shred charge receipts, copies of credit applications or offers, insurance forms, physician statements, checks and bank statements, and expired charge cards.

Before revealing any identifying information (for example, on an application), ask how it will be used and secured, and whether it will be shared with others. Find out if you have a say about the use of your information. For example, can you choose to have it kept confidential?

Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your account and changed your billing address.



## YOUR COMPUTER COULD BE A GOLDMINE FOR THIEVES

- Update virus protection software regularly. Viruses can have damaging effects, including introducing program code that causes your computer to send out files or other stored information.
- Don't download files from strangers or click on links from people you don't know. Opening a file could expose your system to a computer virus or a program that could hijack your modem.
- Use a firewall, especially if you have a high-speed or "always on" connection to the Internet. The firewall allows you to limit uninvited access to your computer.
- Use a secure browser — software that encrypts or scrambles information you send over the Internet — to guard the safety of your on-line transactions.
- Try not to store financial information on your laptop unless absolutely necessary. If you do, use a "strong" password — that is, a combination of letters (upper and lower case), numbers and symbols.
- Avoid using an automatic log-in feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. If your laptop gets stolen, the thief will have a hard time accessing sensitive information.
- Delete any personal information stored on your computer before you dispose of it. Use a "wipe" utility program, which overwrites the entire hard drive and makes the files unrecoverable. In addition, remove the hard drive completely and dispose separately.

## "I'm just floating!"

**Doris Hill**, a special education content mastery aide at Valley Ridge Elementary in Lewisville ISD, applied in September for a scholarship from Security Benefit Group Charitable Trust, an under-



*Doris Hill, Lewisville*

writer of NEA's Valuebuilder Program. She didn't really think she'd get it. But in March, she was called to the office. "Liz Picone was there for NEA Member Benefits; she handed me flowers and a check for \$750," Hill, a member of Lewisville Education Association, said. "That will take care of my last payment for my last semester of college! God and TSTA/NEA do answer prayers. I'm just floating!"

Hill, a graduate of TSTA's first Ambassador Academy ([www.tsta.org/amacad](http://www.tsta.org/amacad)), has been continuing her education through the University of North Texas and will be teaching next year.

And that's not all! TSTA-Katy Education Association member **Andrea Forrest** won a \$750 scholarship, too!

"Liz walked into my 1st period class with a bouquet of flowers and asked if she could interrupt. I thought it was somebody's birthday, and she was a mother who had come to deliver flowers," Forrest said. "When she introduced herself and handed the flowers and a check for \$750 to me, I almost fell over! I was so surprised! I grabbed her and gave her a big hug."



*Andrea Forrest, Katy*

"I appreciate it so much," Forrest, who is a speech communication and ESL teacher at Katy West High School, said. "I am seeking my Masters Degree in Educational Management and Principal Certification

with PDAS Certification at the University of Houston Clear Lake. I will finish my coursework in the spring of 2005 and will use the scholarship this summer for my next 12 hours. Words cannot express my gratitude. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for the generosity of the Security Benefit Group."

The Security Benefit Group Charitable Trust Program was established in 2002 to help education employees reach their personal and professional goals. Funded in part by the Security Benefit Group, the program provides scholarships to full-time teachers, staff and administrators who have two or more years of experience.

Security Benefit, through the NEA Valuebuilder Program, offers mutual fund and variable annuity retirement products to educators, including variable annuity and mutual fund tax sheltered accounts, deferred compensation programs, and both Traditional and Roth IRAs.

Scholarships are awarded each quarter. Forward your postal mailing address (not email) to [Lpicone@neamb.com](mailto:Lpicone@neamb.com) to request an application.

## IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR IDENTITY HAS BEEN STOLEN

For tips on how to tell if your identity has been stolen

and actions you need to take to protect yourself in that event, go to [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) and click on "Tools & Tips," then "Financial Awareness

Bulletins." You'll also find other bulletins on topics ranging from preventing mold in your home to ordering prescriptions online.



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ing preferred dealers to enjoy great savings and incredible service. Prefer the phone? Call 800-342-1617 for a personal advisor to assist you in locating a great deal on a new or pre-owned vehicle. Check the web site daily for dealers being added—[www.tsta.org/benefits](http://www.tsta.org/benefits).

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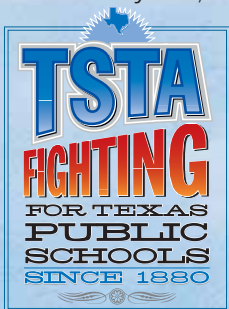
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Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

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CITY	STATE	ZIP	NAME OF ISD					
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EMAIL AT HOME			CAMPUS/WORKSITE					
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EMAIL AT WORK			POSITION (I.E. CLASSROOM TEACHER, LIBRARIAN, BUS DRIVER, ETC.)					
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<b>ETHNICITY</b>					
AREA CODE	HOME PHONE	AREA CODE	WORK PHONE	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native				<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic
				<input type="checkbox"/> Asian				<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (not of Spanish Origin)
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				<input type="checkbox"/> Black				
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Send to: <input type="checkbox"/> home email address <input type="checkbox"/> work email address								
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<b>TOTAL</b>								

**DISCLAIMER:** The TSTA Political Action Committee (TSTA-PAC) and National Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education collect voluntary contributions from Association members and use these contributions for political purposes, including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal office. Contributions to TSTA-PAC and The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. Although the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education requests an annual contribution of \$15, this is only a suggestion. A member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount, or may contribute nothing at all, without it affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or any of its affiliates.

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**Former student member?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO

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