

# Advocate

Texas State Teachers Association/National Education Association

SUMMER 2005



## Not Again!

**Leadership fails public schools for the third time but their attempt to pass vouchers dies on the House floor**

# Reflections on the 79th Legislature:

Until the players change, the script stays the same



May 30, 2005: Sine die for the 79th Legislature and it feels just that way—that somebody or something has DIED. Could it be our hopes and dreams for a solution to the school finance problem died that day? How about the failure to provide Texas schoolchildren the education they deserve? What about the \$3 billion in cuts made by the 78th legislature that have yet to be restored, such as the \$1000 health insurance stipend for teachers and school employees? And dare we mention the empty promise of a pay raise, since we haven't had one in six years, and balancing the TRS deficit on the backs of future teachers and school employees?

This was the most disappointing and disheartening legislative session we have ever seen. It started with the introduction of HB 2, that TSTA and ALL the education-related groups united against for the first time in history! But the legislative leaders pressed on, thumbing their noses at the education experts, pushing this bad bill and its companion, HB 3, which was to be the financial

component for HB 2. In the long run, the legislative leadership proved to be weak, unable to lead or govern as they should, with the very future of our children's schools in their hands! Almost all education issues were voted on along partisan lines, with a few of our moderate Republican friends breaking with the majority, perhaps to their own future political peril.

Remember that the legislature was under a court order by District Judge John Dietz, who had declared the public school finance system unconstitutional. The legislature wasted five months with its feeble attempts to fix it, to no avail. The final day of the session found the leadership playing the blame game, while Texas schools face the next semester with reduced staff and services due to lack of revenue, classrooms with inappropriately certified teachers, and many districts with maxed out local tax efforts and no additional help on the way. Once again, politics have shortchanged our children and the people who serve them in our public schools.

We are faced with the reality of the situation: Until the players change, the script will stay the same. Politics as usual. Legislative gridlock. Poor leadership and failed promises. Partisan posturing and threats to those who have the guts to break with the leadership.

This profound failure of state

and legislative leaders to pass a school finance reform bill is the direct result of a lack of commitment to public education. Plain and simple. The state leadership has failed their end-of-course exam because they chose to be cheerleaders chanting "revenue neutral" instead of making the responsible choices of those who govern. Dueling "tax swap" plans would have rewarded wealthy contributors and left too many school children behind. We have now had three instances of shortchanging our schools: 2003, 2004, and now 2005! The leadership team of Perry, Dewhurst, and Craddick were unable to reach a compromise on the public school finance/education reform/property tax relief package that was the centerpiece of the session. These leaders are assessed a well-deserved, red-letter "F" for the 79th Legislative session!

What can we do? We must show them and others who ignored the schoolchildren of Texas that we are angry at their lack of responsible leadership and that there is a price to pay for this failure to lead. The ballot box is the great equalizer between good and bad government. We must vote them out of office, for that is the only solution and hope for the future of our great state. Because, remember, until the players change, the script will stay the same, and WE DESERVE BETTER!

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

As we were going to press, the Governor called a special session. Please check [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org) for updates.



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# Advocate

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## Laredo President: We're Suing for Our Kids

"Nothing in this Act shall be construed to...mandate a State or any subdivision thereof to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this Act."

—No Child Left Behind Act, Section 9527(a)

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law says the federal government must pay for the rules and regulations it is imposing on our nation's public schools. But Washington law-

makers haven't done so, creating a \$27 billion shortfall that parents have had to cover with their tax money.

A diverse network of schools — including Laredo

ISD—teamed with NEA to file the first national lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education on April 20.

With this lawsuit, local communities are simply asking the Bush Administration to allow parents to spend hard-earned tax dollars on their children's classrooms—not bureaucracy, paperwork and testing companies.

In Laredo, Superintendent Sylvia Bruni, LISD school board members, and Laredo Education Association President Rene de la Vina held a news conference to announce the lawsuit. Joining them were representatives of Rep. Richard Raymond (D-Laredo)

### COLLECTIVE ACTION

That's what TSTA is about. In this issue, you'll read about the:

- lawsuit NEA and some of its affiliates—including TSTA and the Laredo Education Association—filed against the federal government on the No Child Left Behind Act.
- team of TSTA members, officers, and lobbyists who stopped vouchers for the third time (and this was clearly the session when the pro-voucher movement

thought they had it aced), as well as salaries based on standardized test scores and the loss of due process for support professionals.

- legal action TSTA took to make sure that, in the midst of the battle between Wilmer-Hutchins ISD and Wells Fargo, school district employees are paid first.

If you haven't renewed your TSTA membership for 2005-06, do it now. It's never been more important for us to stand together.



and Texas A&M University.

"We come to this legal action as a last resort," Bruni said. "The LISD is by no means against fair accountability; what we are absolutely unwilling to accept is unfair accountability."

"This is not a Democrat vs. Republican issue. It's not haves vs. have nots," said School Board President Dennis Cantu. "It's about an equitable education. It's about us for the children."

Go to [www.tsta.org/legal/current/nclb.shtml](http://www.tsta.org/legal/current/nclb.shtml) for more information on the lawsuit, NCLB's financial impact on Texas schools, and a resolution your school board may want to pass in support.

#### A MOTHER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST NCLB

Raquel Ramirez, mother of seven children and frequent volunteer in the Laredo schools, shares her experience with what's wrong with judging all children by a single standardized test.

**It punishes children who are learning English:** "Just because you don't have the fluency in the language, it doesn't mean you don't have the knowledge. Being the daughter of a migrant family, I recall the disadvantages we had in trying to learn a new language our parents didn't know. For many of our people, the English language is fairly new. The title 'No Child Left Behind' is deceiving and disappointing. It's excluding. If you are not up to par with the English language, you are going to be left behind."

**It does not allow for**



#### differences among children:

"You cannot judge everybody by this one test. All of my children have different needs and different talents. To test all of them with the same exam is totally unfair. We need more flexibility. People learn in different ways. All of the children who speak Spanish or have a learning disability—they have potential, too."

**Testing favors urban dwellers:** "The kids are taking exams that do not relate to us because of the wording. For example, they asked a question about skyscrapers. Laredo does not have any skyscrapers. The poor kids are guessing."

**Teachers must teach the test at the expense of real learning:** "The teachers want to teach but all they can do is teach the test. They have to put aside their subject to teach the test. Our community suffers."



Clockwise from top left: Laredo Education Association President Rene de la Vina stands with his students after the NCLB news conference; Laredo Superintendent Sylvia Bruni is flanked by school board members, students, parents, and teachers at the podium; Raquel Ramirez gives the media the parents' perspective.

## SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR ESP OF THE YEAR

Ronnie Ray ESP Advocate of the Year Award recognizes a TSTA educational support professional member whose activities reflect contributions to public education and show outstanding accomplishments in one or more of the following areas: innovations to support the day-to-day educational process; professional achievements in his/her classification; involvement in the promotion of public education in the community; involvement in local, state, or national associ-

ations; and enhancement of ESP's image in his/her association, work site, or community. The nominee must be submitted by a region and/or local affiliate with a region and/or local affiliate only submitting one nomination. Nominations must be received no later than 4:45 p.m., Friday, September 30, 2005. The recipient will be submitted as TSTA's nominee for NEA's ESP award.

## NEW NEA-RETIRED DUES STRUCTURE

NEA-Retired (NEA-R) has enacted its first dues increase

since 1985. The new NEA-R dues structure will go into effect September 1, 2006. New approved NEA-Retired dues are as follows: NEA-R dues for Lifetime members and Pre-Retired Subscribers, \$200; NEA-R dues for Annual members, \$25.

Persons who enter into a lifetime membership agreement prior to September 1, 2006, will be grandfathered into the program at the rate of \$100 for NEA-R Lifetime dues or Pre-Retired subscriptions. Those who enroll after September 1, 2006 will pay \$200 Lifetime dues.

## NEA DIRECTOR PLACE 2 FILING DEADLINE

Nominations are open for NEA Director Place 2 with nominations due at TSTA's Organizing Center for Executive and Governance on September 15, 2005. The election will be conducted at the April 2006 State House of Delegates. Contact TSTA's Center for Executive and Governance, 316 West 12th Street, Suite 510, Austin, Texas 78701 or call 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 2 is for three years beginning on September 1, 2006.

## STAPLES EXTENDS RECYCLE FOR EDUCATION

Thanks to your efforts, once again Staples is donating \$1 to education for each printer cartridge recycled at Staples stores--and the program has been extended through December 31st!

Remind everyone you know to recycle. Staples has put no limit on the number of eligible cartridges.

## APPLY FOR NEA GRANTS

The NEA Foundation awards Innovation and Learning & Leadership Grants. Funded in part by Staples Recycle for Education (see above), the grants are for \$2,000 or \$5,000.

All practicing public school K-12 teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff are eligible. Examples of funded projects, grant guidelines, and a grant application are at [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org) or call 202-822-7840.



## Educational Issues Conference: Plan Now!

The TSTA Educational Issues Conference, previously known as the Critical Issues Conference, is set for November 4-6 at the Omni Austin Hotel Southpark, near the intersection of I-35 and Ben White Boulevard in Austin.

Sessions are planned on TAKS Writing, Reading, Math, and Science, Gifted and Talented, IDEA/504, Classroom Management, First Year Survival, Mentoring, Parent Conferencing, I Can Do It, and Sick Buildings.

Registration fee is \$99 for early registration (before October 14), \$119 for regular registration, and \$149 for walk-up registration.

Hotel reservations may be made directly with the Omni Austin Hotel Southpark, 4140 Governor's Row, Austin 78744, 512-448-2222 or the Central Reservations line, 800-THE-OMNI (843-6664). Conference hotel rates are \$80 for a single or \$99 for a double/triple/quad. The cut-off deadline for reservations is Friday, October 21.

**Watch [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org) and the Briefing for updates!**



## A PERFECT CELEBRATION

What would inspire teachers and support professionals to trade their normal school attire for a striped hat and leotards, ala the infamous Cat in the Hat, every March 2? NEA's Read Across America, celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday with a national day of reading, of course! Here's how the day was celebrated this year in several Texas schools.



1. NEA Executive Committee Member Marsha Smith of Maryland read at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin.
2. The Cat in the Hat, aka kindergarten teacher Merrie Thomas, with Spring Branch Education Association President Edie Clark.
3. Rep. Patrick Rose visited the class of his former teacher, Kathy Clark, in Dripping Springs ISD.
4. San Antonio Alliance's cats in the hat visited 29 schools in vehicles provided and driven by employees of Saturn of San Antonio and Saturn of San Antonio Northeast.
5. Texas First Lady Anita Perry read at Norman Elementary in Austin.
6. Education Austin Vice President Rita Haecker greeted children at the Bullock Museum.
7. Socorro Education Association had a big turnout for its colorful celebration.

# Education Deserves Better

## Legislative Leadership Fails Public Schools for the Third Time but Their Attempt to Pass Vouchers Dies on the House Floor

**No more money for schools. No pay raise. Just finger-pointing and the realization that it's still up to teachers, educational support professionals and parents to inform voters what's at stake for our children's public schools.**

Before the final gavel had fallen in the 79th Legislative Session, the writing was already on the wall that the

Legislature would fail for the third consecutive time to pass a school finance plan. So the leaders of the House and the Senate did what has become all too natural for them—they held dueling press conferences and blamed each other for failing to deal with the school funding crisis.

Lt. Governor Dewhurst fired the first shot, blaming

Speaker Tom Craddick for misleading him in a last-minute negotiation session brokered by Governor Perry. Speaker Craddick fired back that the Senate had sat on the House plan for months, in essence letting the clock run out. Then Perry, one of the most hands-off Texas governors in recent memory, chimed in once the session was over that legislators would suffer a “long, uncomfortable summer” as they will feel the heat from voters unless they get back to work.

That, of course, came one day after newspapers across the state lambasted all three of them. The 79th Legislature will be defined for its failure of political leadership—but for the teachers, educators and parents of Texas there was some GOOD, of course a lot of BAD, but most important there was a WAKE-UP CALL for all of us.

### The Good

#### **Vouchers defeated once again!**

These days the lack of bad news is the only good news for education in Texas. That was fortunately the case as TSTA members flooded leg-

islative offices with phone calls, emails and letters and prepared briefing books for a coalition of Democratic leaders and moderate Republicans to defeat vouchers and hand Speaker Craddick his first loss on a floor fight since he's held the gavel.

The irony is clear: at the same time legislators were failing to provide needed resources to help schools keep up with population growth, much less increased funding, the House Republican leadership tried to sneak through a voucher plan that would take money away from our public schools.

From Day One, Craddick gave full reign to his lieutenant, State Rep. Kent Grusendorf, who has long led the attacks against public education. Grusendorf agreed to remove vouchers from HB 2, the so-called omnibus “school reform” bill (it really should be known as the “school overhaul” bill), only later to try to amend a voucher plan on to the Texas Education Agency sunset bill.

TSTA members were prepared and the groundwork we had already done—from briefing elected officials on





our bipartisan poll, to escorting a delegation of parents who saw firsthand the devastating effects of vouchers in Edgewood ISD, to speaking directly with legislators—sent a message to Craddick that teachers, educators, and parents were prepared to fight for our public schools.

## The Bad

**Politicians try to cover their failures with empty, broken promises**

In the final analysis, there was no teacher pay raise; the promise that was made last session to restore the \$1,000 health insurance stipend to all educational employees was broken; no new money was provided to the public schools; and TRS benefits were reduced for 300,000 current employees and all future employees.

TSTA worked all session to try to create an education reform package that would meet the needs of our children, our schools, and our educational employees. Unfortunately, the leadership in the House ignored the entire education community and elected to draft legislation based on a report written by a right-wing think tank. TSTA had over 20 objections to the version of HB 2 that was adopted on a party line vote by the House Public Education Committee. After two weeks of arm-twisting by the Governor and Speaker for the bill and

over 5,000 phone calls against the bill from TSTA members, they managed to pass HB 2 by the slimmest of margins, 76 to 72.

A badly damaged HB 2 limped into the Senate Education Committee in mid-March. The Senate Education Committee spent almost two months rewriting the bill. TSTA worked extensively with members of the committee to fix the bill. Much of the bad language in the House version was stripped out in the Senate bill. We went to the Senate floor trying to fix problems with merit pay and pay raise language, and eliminate some bad due process language and a salary schedule that gave districts an incentive to hire uncertified teachers.

In the end, Texas schoolchildren are better off that HB 2 failed, because lawmakers based the bill on assumptions that fly in the face of what Texans want. According to TSTA's bipartisan poll:

- 72% of voters said they would like to see state funding for public education increase.
- 62% of voters would like to see the proven education reforms fully funded rather than trying alternative approaches such as performance based funding.
- 86% of parents with children in school give their child's school an A or B rating.

➤ Parents and voters repeatedly acknowledge the value of teachers as the single most important factor in determining the quality of our children's education.

As voters continue to name public education priority #1 for state government, it seems the Governor may be right about something—politicians ignore the will of the voters at their own risk.

## The Wake Up Call for All of Us

**The attacks on education will continue until we elect leaders who value education**

The 79th Legislative Session represents not only the third time the legislature failed to pass a school finance reform—it's the third consecutive session in which public education has come under an all-out assault.

Smaller class sizes, higher state standards, and better teacher pay have been the driving forces behind the improvement Texas voters have seen in their schools. But these are the same standards that are under attack time after time—through vouchers, exemptions granted under “local control” that allow districts to ignore class size limits and hire more uncertified teachers, weakening of due process, and the false promise of merit pay.

Until the players change the script will remain the same.

It was, after all, teachers, educators and parents who handed the Speaker his first defeat on a floor fight on an issue he supported. It was teachers and educators who “took it to the streets”—educating parents across the state about how lawmakers were ignoring their priorities and dismantling the reforms that have helped our schools improve.

School finance has now been left to the courts, to special sessions, and to future legislatures to solve—it's up to TSTA members to take the fight to the streets again if we are going to save public education in Texas.

# Changes in Retirement

## We'll Have a Chance to Change the Language in the Next Legislative Session Before Anyone is Harmed

HB 2568, by Rep. Eiland (D-Texas City) and SB 1691 by Sen. Duncan (R-Lubbock), were companion bills that purported to increase TRS' solvency and create the possibility of an annuity increase for retirees by reducing benefits for current and future educational employees. During a series of meetings about the bills, Eiland was open to TSTA's

suggestions and concerns. Duncan was less interested in our issues. Bolstered by the misguided lobby efforts of Texas Retired Teachers Association, who seemed hooked on the slight possibility of an eventual scant raise for retirees, Duncan prevailed and the bill went to the House floor for a vote where it died on a point of order.

SB 1691 was heard in Duncan's committee, where he peevishly asked each teacher group lobbyist if they were responsible for the point of order in the House. Privately he told TSTA we could accept SB 1691 or get a worse bill. TSTA was able to get SB 1691 amended with grandfathering clauses that held all current employees harmless for a couple of years, long enough to make positive changes in future legislative sessions to undo the harm. The worse bill, HB 1579 (next page), was much worse, and TSTA lobbied the Senate and defeated it.

HB 2568 and SB 1691 pitted active employees against retirees. TSTA steadfastly reminded legislators that this quick fix would not provide an immediate benefit for retirees and would do harm to most current and all future educational employees. Nothing will work unless accompanied by additional state funding above the current barest legal minimum. TRTA continued to give false hope to its members for a raise

with no evidence that a raise would be forthcoming. Instead, TRTA's position worked against the very future retirees they hope to represent in coming years.

TSTA will be working during the election cycle as well as during the next legislative session to provide a true remedy for TRS' problems. TSTA realizes that we are all in this together. We hope other organizations will work with us rather than chase a dream based on a whimsical promise.

### PASSED: SB 1691

SB 1691 makes three major changes to TRS and provides a "grandfather" provision to soften the impact.

►First, for each year that a person retires before age 60, their TRS annuity will be reduced by 5%, even if they have met the "rule of 80." The "grandfather" clause makes this effective for new hires after September 1, 2007. Because of the "grandfather" clause, no current employees will be affected by this change.



➤ Second, the bill repeals the right to take early retirement with a minimal reduction in benefits. A person who is not “grandfathered” will have early retirement benefits reduced dramatically. Currently, a person with 20 years of service can retire at 55 and receive 90% of the benefits they would have received under the “rule of 80.” Under this bill, a person not “grandfathered” will receive only 47% of those benefits. The bill “grandfathers” people close to retirement—defined as anyone who meets any one of the following criteria: is age 50 or above or has 25 years of service or has an age plus service that totals 70.

➤ Third, SB 1691 reduces the basis for computing retirement benefits from the three years of highest average salary to the five years of highest average salary, subject to the same “grandfather” provision. The bill “grandfathers” people close to retirement—defined as anyone who meets any one of the following criteria: is age 50 or above or has 25 years of service or has an age plus service that totals 70.

Other changes in SB 1691:

➤ Requires a person to meet a “rule of 90” to be

eligible to take a partial lump sum payment at retirement. The bill “grandfathers” people close to retirement—defined as anyone who meets any one of the following criteria: is age 50 or above or has 25 years of service or has an age plus service that totals 70.

➤ Requires a person hired on or after January 1, 2006 to pay the full actuarial value to buy out-of-state time in TRS.

➤ Directs school districts to offer no incentives to encourage early retirement.

➤ Requires a school district to pay the employee and employer contribution to TRS for any retire/rehire employee who is employed after January 2005.

➤ Repeals the right to buy “air time” effective December 31, 2005.

➤ Increases the active employee contribution to TRSCare, the retiree insurance program, from 0.5% to 0.65% of one percent of salary.

➤ Eliminates the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) effective December 31, 2005.

➤ Directs TRS to adopt rules to prevent employees from converting stipends, fringe benefits, etc., to salary in order to increase their final average salary

## DEFEATED: HB 1579

HB 1579, as introduced by Rep. Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham), only dealt with the retire/rehire provision. Senator Duncan added other provisions, making HB 1579 similar to SB 1691 but with two major differences:

1. HB 1579 would have authorized the TRS Board to approve—if they felt they had the money—a thirteenth check for retirees who retired before September 1, 2003.

2. But HB 1579 also would have reduced the annuity for those retiring before age 60, even if they met the rule of 80.

➤ Under SB 1691, the TRS bill that passed, there’s a 5% a year annuity reduction for retiring before age

60, but only for people hired after September 1, 2007. No current employees are affected.

➤ Under HB 1579, the bill that failed, the reduction was 3% instead of 5% BUT it would have applied to all current employees who did not meet one of the requirements to be grandfathered (50 years of age OR 25 years of service OR combination of age and service that equals 70 OR meets the rule of 80 on or before September 1, 2010). About 350,000 of the current 600,000 current employees—and all future employees—would have been harmed.

TSTA will be working during the election cycle as well as during the next legislative session to provide a true remedy for TRS’ problems. TSTA realizes that we are all in this together. We hope other organizations will work with us rather than chase a dream based on a whimsical promise.



# Passed

## Education Bills that Passed and Have Gone to the Governor to be Signed

### HOUSE BILLS

**HB 10 Pitts**—With the demise of HB 2 and HB 3, legislators moved additional money for public education to other bills.

HB 10 includes \$30.7 million for Teacher Retirement System to make the August 2005 \$500 pass-through payment to educators for health insurance.

It also includes \$560 million for Texas Education Agency to use to settle up with school districts for this biennium. It has \$340 million to fund the Proclamation 2001 for textbooks and \$316 million for the Student Success Initiative.

One of the last changes the conference committee made was to delete \$100 million that the Senate had approved to increase the state contribution to TRS to 6.22% (up from the current 6.0%) to begin to cover the financial shortfall in the pension fund.

**HB 25 Delisi**—Directs TEA to assist with the transition of military students from one school to another by (1) improving the timely transfer of student records; (2) developing a system to ease transition during the first two weeks at a new school; (3) promoting practices to foster access to extracurricular programs, etc.

The commissioner, by rule, shall adopt one or more nationally recognized norm referenced tests to administer to students who enroll after Janu-

ary 1, in order to qualify for a high school diploma.

**HB 74 Naishtat**—Exempts school districts from mold assessor and remediation licensing requirements.

**HB 126 Berman**—Changes from a Class A to a Class C misdemeanor the penalty for tampering with a governmental record required for enrollment in a public school.

**HB 283 Hope**—Upon the request of a parent of a student who has been the victim of bullying, the district shall transfer the victim to another classroom or another campus.

The school district shall implement a discipline management program. The program must provide for prevention of and education concerning unwanted physical or verbal aggression, sexual harassment, and other forms of bullying in school, on school grounds, and in school vehicles.

Adds to a school admission policy that a school shall admit a student if the student's grandparents are residents in the district and they provide a substantial amount of after-school care for the student.

**HB 308 Hope**—Upon the request of a parent of a student who has been sexually assaulted by another student, the district shall transfer the student to a different campus or a neighboring school district.

If that student does not want to change schools, the district shall transfer the student who engaged in the sexual assault to another campus, or to the district's disciplinary alternative education program if there is only one campus serving that grade level.

**HB 407 Uresti**—Provides that if a school employee is the spouse of another school employee and both are covered by the school insurance, the spouse has the option to be treated as an employee or the dependent of an employee.

**HB 492 Wooley**—Directs the SBOE, by rule, to include instruction in personal financial literacy in the TEKS for economics and as a requirement for high school graduation, beginning with the 2006-07 school year.

**HB 603 Eissler**—In determining the penalty for student misconduct, the board shall consider whether the act was in self-defense, whether there was intent, a student's disciplinary history and any disability the student might have that would substantially impair the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the conduct.

If a student assaults a teacher, the student may not return to that teacher's class without the teacher's consent. The teacher may not be coerced to consent.

Requires a principal or designee to inform each educator who has responsibility for the instruction of a student who has engaged in conduct listed in TEC 37.006.

**HB 984 Reyna**—Upon the request of a parent of a student with diabetes, an individualized health plan must be developed by the school and must include diabetes management and treatment. The Texas Diabetes Council is directed to develop guidelines for training school employees who are not health-care professionals to become unlicensed diabetes care assistants. The school board shall ensure that there is at least one unlicensed care assistant at each campus attended by a student with diabetes. Upon the written request of the parent, the unlicensed care assistant shall treat these students' symptoms and administer medication. A school employee may not be subject to any disciplinary proceeding resulting from actions taken in compliance with this act.

**HB 1018 Noriega**—Requires \$500,000 liability insurance for private transportation companies serving public or private schools.

**HB 1058 Pickett**—Current law

allows a school district to issue a high school diploma to a person who left high school before graduation to serve in WWII, if the person was honorably discharged. This expands that provision to cover people who served in the Korean War or the Vietnam War.

**HB 1106 Howard**—Repeals the public school facilities funding act (a program that has never been implemented).

**HB 1111 King, Phil**—Allows charter schools that specialize in performing arts to require an applicant to audition for admission to the school or for advancement from one grade to the next.

**HB 1687 Dutton**—Provides that a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program may not require a student or parent to pay a fee to participate in the program.

**HB 1826 Grusendorf**—Prohibits a school board from authorizing use of school employees or equipment to repair, maintain or construct real property not owned or leased by the school district.

**HB 2109 Berman**—Changes the eligibility requirements to qualify for but not the amount of the Early High School Graduation Scholarships.

**HB 2217 McCall**—Provides that land dedicated to the Permanent School Fund may only be traded for an equivalent market value piece of land. It allows the School Land Board to appoint fund managers to help manage real estate investments. Puts a cap of 15% on the portion of the PSF that can be invested in real estate.

**HB 2808 Morrison**—Renames the public and higher education coordinating group the P-16 Council. The council shall meet at least once a quarter to examine and make recommendations regarding the alignment of secondary and post secondary education curricula, testing and assessment, among other things.

**HB 3010 Grusendorf**—Current law requires Texas county, justice, and municipal courts to accept a case involving a child found in violation of compulsory school attendance laws. If a child is found in contempt of a justice or municipal court order, the case must be transferred to a juvenile court on the third offense. However, current law does not require a juvenile court to accept the transfer of cases regarding truancy. Therefore, a child may be repeatedly found in contempt of a juvenile or municipal court order with little or no consequence to the child.

HB 3010 requires a mandatory review by a juvenile court of referrals involving a child found in contempt of a county, municipal, or justice court order.

**HB 3169 Crownover**—Repeals the right of a person with at least seven years experience to buy up to three years of credit in TRS. This change goes into effect January 1, 2006.

**HB 3297 Bohac**—Requires each school district to include in the first report card of the year the most recent performance rating for the campus the student is attending and an explanation of the performance rating.

By the 10th day of instruction each district shall post on the district website the information in the campus report card for each campus and the district performance rating.

**HB 3468 Isett**—Creates an intensive English language instruction pilot program. The commissioner shall establish the program and campuses may apply to participate. The commissioner may select only campuses that have failed to improve student performance in reading and English language proficiency. The principal of the selected campus shall select the students to participate in the program. The commissioner may fund the program with up to \$6 million from state and federal sources.

**HB 3469 Hochberg**—Creates the Texas Clean School Bus program to reduce diesel exhaust from buses and to reduce the exposure of school children to diesel exhaust. The program shall provide grants for emission reducing projects, oxidation catalysts, particulate filters, etc.

**HB 3563 King**—Directs the UIL to adopt rules prohibiting participation in athletic competition unless the student agrees not to use steroids and the student's parents sign a statement acknowledging that steroid use is illegal and punishable by imprisonment.

The UIL is directed to develop a plan for testing students en-

gaged in athletic activities for the presence of steroids.

Not later than December 1, 2006, the UIL shall report to the legislature on its survey, program and testing program. If the legislature determines the educational programs have not significantly reduced steroid use, it may instruct the UIL to implement the testing program.

## SENATE BILLS

**SB 11 Staples**—Directs each district to adopt and implement a multi-hazard emergency operation plan. The plan must provide for training employees in responding to an emergency; mandatory drills for students and employees; coordi-

nation with local emergency agencies and implementation of a security audit. At least once every three years, a district shall conduct a security audit of the district's facilities.

Directs a district that constructs a new facility or does a major renovation to consider security criteria developed by the Texas School Safety Center.

**SB 23 Zaffirini**—The commissioner may establish a program of incentives for providers of early childhood care that provide coordinated services with the school district or Head Start.

The State Center for Early Childhood Development, in conjunction with the P-16 Council, shall develop a school

## TSTA Paperwork Bill Passes Legislature!



SB 493, TSTA's paperwork reduction bill sponsored by Sen. Leticia Van de Putte (D-San Antonio) and Rep. Tuffy Hamilton (R-Mauriceville), passed the Legislature and had gone to Governor Perry for signature at press time.

This bill requires the commissioner to annually review and reduce written reports and paperwork required of a school district by Texas Education Agency. It also directs the commissioner to adopt a policy to limit reports and other paperwork that a principal or classroom teacher can be required to complete.

SB 493 puts teeth into the current law, which directs

local districts to limit paperwork but lacks enforcement and penalties for not reducing paperwork. Excessive complaints would be an impetus for a special accreditation investigation authorized by the commissioner.

Please thank Sen. Leticia Van de Putte and Rep. Tuffy Hamilton for sponsoring this important legislation for us!

for pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start, etc.

**SB 42 Nelson**—Provides the SBOE may require not more than 30 minutes per day of physical activity for students enrolled in kindergarten through 8th grade.

Districts are required to collect, summarize and report annually campus and district level statistics relating to student health and physical activity in a form prescribed by the commissioner.

Provides a local district policy may not prevent a parent or grandparent from providing any food product for a child's birthday or at a school designated function.

Directs the Department of State Health Services to establish a School Health Advisory Committee to coordinate school health programs and services.

**SB 143 Wentworth**—Provides that educators called to active military duty be given additional time, equal to the amount of time on active duty, to complete any continuing education requirements relating to renewal or extension of a person's certificate or permit.

**SB 144 Wentworth**—The SBOE appoints the school board for school districts on military reservations. Current law specifically provides that enlisted personnel may be appointed. This changes the language to say enlisted personnel and officers may be appointed.

**SB 151 Zaffirini**—Creates a pilot program for five junior colleges to waive tuition and fees for educationally disadvantaged students who are taking college classes for high school and college credit. The school district the student attends shall pay for the textbooks for the class.

Creates the Texas Academy of International Studies through Texas A&M. The academy will provide academically gifted high school juniors and seniors a university level curriculum

that satisfies the advanced high school graduation requirements. The study will include English, foreign languages, social studies, etc., presented through an interdisciplinary approach focusing on international concerns. The academy shall be located in Laredo.

**SB 188 Zaffirini**—Directs the commissioner of education to adopt a memorandum of understanding on a process to assign an accreditation status for schools for the blind, reevaluate that status annually, and if necessary, make on-site accreditation investigations.

**SB 189 Zaffirini**—Allows districts to conduct an assessment and charge a reasonable fee for an assessment related to visual impairment of a student. Provides that the school for the blind may pay a teacher no more than an employee in a comparable position in Austin ISD.

**SB 256 Williams**—Directs school districts to provide the parent of each student, at the beginning of each school year, an explanation of the family privacy act and the right of the parent to object to the release of directory information about their student.

**SB 286 Wentworth**—Requires public officials, including school board members, to receive training in the requirements of the open meetings and public information laws. The officials must take the training within 30 days of taking office and take additional training every two years. The attorney general shall ensure the training is made available.

**SB 387 Wentworth**—Provides that school district policy must allow each current employee the opportunity to participate in a process for transferring to another position or campus in the district.

Not later than 10 days before the district fills a position it must post notice of the vacancy internally on the district website

and publish the position in the paper, giving current employees a reasonable chance to apply for the position.

**SB 483 Staples**—Allows designated school libraries to participate in group purchasing agreements with the TexShare Library Consortium.

**SB 493 Van de Putte**—This TSTA-introduced bill directs the commissioner to annually review and reduce paperwork requests generated by TEA. The commissioner shall adopt a policy to limit paperwork that a principal or teacher can be required to complete.

Adds repeated complaints about excessive paperwork as a reason the commissioner may authorize an accreditation investigation.

**SB 658 Madla**—Directs the SBOE to prohibit UIL area, regional, or state competitions on Monday through Thursday of the week of TAKS tests. This does not apply to make up tests.

**SB 776 Van de Putte**—Allows the adjutant general's department to administer high school equivalency exams for people enrolled in the adjutant general's Seaborne Challenge Corps.

**SB 851 Shapleigh**—To the extent funding is available, TEA is to establish a financial literacy pilot program in 25 districts to provide students with the skills necessary to make personal financial decisions as adults. TEA shall collaborate with the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner and the State Securities Board to develop the curriculum and materials for this program.

**SB 1146 Shapiro**—Creates an Early College Education Program for students who are at risk of dropping out or wish to accelerate completion of high school. Allows 9-12th grade students to combine high school and college courses. Allows a participating student, on or before the fifth anniversary

of starting high school, to receive a high school diploma and either an associate degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.

**SB 1395 Shapiro**—Authorizes the establishment of a high school diploma program operated by the Job Corp of the US Department of Labor. The Job Corp may operate a public secondary school at a Job Corps facility and may offer a secondary school curriculum, a high school diploma program or a GED program. Only students between the ages of 16-21 who are not high school graduates may participate in this program. Job Corps employee/teacher must be certified in accordance with TEC CH. 21, Subchapter B.

**SB 1448 Averitt**—Provides that health insurance provided by or offered through a school district must provide portability of coverage for all school employees.

**SB 1693 Duncan**—Allows the use of anything that is unconditionally guaranteed by Texas or the US government for collateral for deposits of school funds.

**SB 1863 Ogden**—Current law requires the state to contribute 8% of payroll to TRS. Since 1995 the state has only been contributing 6%. This changes the law to say the state will contribute between 6% and 10% of payroll to TRS.

Increases the active employees' contribution to TRSCare, the retiree insurance program, from 0.5 to 0.65 of 1% of salary.

Transfers the responsibility for administering the \$500 pass-through for educator insurance from TRS to TEA.

Requires school districts to pay the state contribution to TRS on behalf of new employees for their first 90 days of employment, beginning September 1, 2005.



# Failed

## Education Bills TSTA Opposed

### HOUSE BILLS

**HB 12 Corte**—Creates a pilot voucher program for Houston, Dallas, Austin, Cy-Fair and Northside (Bexar). Provides that private schools receiving a student by voucher would administer the TAKS and report the results to the Commissioner.

**HB 32 Eissler**—Provides that principals are not required to hold a teaching certificate to be certified as a principal.

**HB 158 King, Phil**—Provides that an exemplary or recognized school district could have an average of 22 students per class in K-4 and be specifically exempted from: educator certification, reports to the state on expulsions and disciplinary alternative placement requirements, and restrictions on the use of comp ed, gifted and talented, and career and technology funds.

**HB 220 Howard**—Provides SBOE will once again expand their inspection and adoption of textbooks to include viewpoints and special interest advocacy.

**HB 386 McCall**—Provides that a home schooled student may enroll as a part-time student in a public school and/or take online courses offered by school districts for credit. Districts may furnish free textbooks to homeschooled students and permit homeschooled students to participate in extracurricular activities. Homeschoolers are exempt from no-pass/no-play, and districts shall not administer TAKS tests to homeschoolers.

**HB 515 Madden**—Repeals the authority of the SBOE to estab-

lish standards for adequacy for school facilities. Empowers the commissioner to establish standards for facilities except the requirements related to space or square footage.

**HB 524 Mowery**—Provides that a student who performs at a markedly high level of accomplishment may be exempt from class the last day of each week. Using SBOE criteria, each district shall adopt a policy for whether a student qualifies for this program.

**HB 531 Howard**—Protects private family information of students attending public school, including: political views, sexual attitudes, religious beliefs, values, and other nonacademic areas. Establishes regulations for surveys covering the prohibited areas if the district notifies the parents in writing five days prior and allows the opportunity to review all materials. Information garnered from surveys may not be used to impact grades, promotion, or graduation. Unless required by law for special education students, a district may not, without the written consent of parents, provide psychological services to students or use progressive relaxation techniques with a student.

**HB 783 Zedler**—Repeals current health insurance of school employees and replaces it with a statewide health insurance pool. The state makes no contribution to the cost. Districts can choose to pay part or all of the cost.

**HB 973 Madden**—SBOE shall identify the essential knowledge and skills for social studies that all students shall demonstrate; it will be used to evaluate textbooks and will be on the TAKS test.

The adopted curriculum shall be consistent with American principles of patriotism, democratic values, etc. It may not focus in an unreasonably negative manner on American values, culture, or history; be partisan or promote a personal or religious value. The social stud-

ies TAKS test shall measure the same criteria.

**HB 1006 Isett**—Reduces the trigger for a roll back election from 8% to 3%.

**HB 1263 Harper-Brown**—Creates a pilot voucher program in school districts in counties with a population of 800,000 or more. This applies to the largest school district in an eligible county that has a majority of its students identified as educationally disadvantaged or at least 90% of the students are educationally disadvantaged the preceding school year.

**HB 1445 Madden**—Authorizes the creation and operation of a state virtual school network run by the SBOE. Local districts can offer electronic classes to students in that district. A state provider school district can provide classes to students enrolled in the virtual school network.

**HB 2534 Chisum**—Adds new requirements to promote citizenship, patriotism, free enterprise, respect for authority, etc., for a textbook to be eligible for consideration by the SBOE.

**HB 2568 Eiland**—Provides that employees of home rule school districts do not qualify for participation in TRS. An ISD employee who is employed on a campus or program that is granted a charter is covered by TRS. Employees of Open Enrollment Charter schools, authorized by the SBOE, are covered by TRS. Repeals the requirement for TRS to determine whether a local district's insurance is comparable to the state plan. This is a comprehensive revision of TRS administrative procedures.

**HB 2877 Keffer, Bill**—Relates to the State's responsibility regarding public education. Provides clarity for the legislature in what they believe certain constitutional provisions mean, with regard to public education. Defines operative phrases in hopes of giving the courts a reference point in deciding cases that relate to public education.

### SENATE BILLS

**SB 1486 Williams**—Repeals the provision that makes an independent hearing officer "independent" or impartial.

**SB 1488 Williams**—Current law provides that probationary teachers can be dismissed at any time during the year for good cause. This bill weakens the definition of good cause. Changes the definition of good cause (for termination of probationary contract teachers) from failure to meet accepted standards of conduct for the profession, as generally recognized and applied in similarly situated school districts in the state, to failure to meet generally accepted standards of conduct for the profession.

**SB 1489 Williams**—Provides that a probationary and term contract teacher may be discharged at any time for good cause (as defined by the Board of Trustees) or because of a financial exigency that requires a reduction of force. Provides that the hearing examiner process does not apply to the termination of a probationary or term contract teacher because of a financial exigency that requires a reduction in force.

The attacks on education  
will continue until we elect leaders  
who value education.



# Highlights of the April House of Delegates

►TSTA President Donna New Haschke and Vice President Ann Heuberger were elected to another term of office.

►Former TSTA state presidents were honored as part of the yearlong celebration of TSTA's 125th anniversary.

►Karen Barnes of Austin, Israel Cortez Jr. of Deer Park, and Claudette Thomas of Pasadena were elected education support professional at large members of the TSTA Board of Directors.

►Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year Gloria Voutos and Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year Sheryl Lindemann—

both TSTA members—spoke.

►School Bell Awards were given to the media for outstanding reporting on education issues.

►A revised Mission and Vision Statement was adopted (see Inside TSTA/About Us on our web site, [www.tsta.org](http://www.tsta.org)).

►Recommendations of the Collective Bargaining Task Force were adopted.

►Four bylaws amendments were adopted.

►Five special awards were presented; see next page for photos and the comments of President Donna New Haschke in presenting the awards.



TOP: TSTA Presidents Dale Young, Ollie Besteiro, Jewel Howard, Richard Kouri, Becky Brooks, Donna New Haschke, and Ignacio Salinas, Jr.

BOTTOM: Association of Brownsville Educators, shown with President Haschke and Vice President Ann Heuberger (far right), won five membership plaques.



## **JANE MACON**

### **Friend of Education**

“Jane Macon is an attorney with teaching in her blood. She is the chairwoman for After-School All Stars, a program to serve inner-city youths in the Edgewood ISD in San Antonio (<http://www.afterschoolallstars.org>). The organization’s mission is to provide opportunities to participate in sports, educational, cultural and community enrichment programs; to build confidence and self-esteem; to encourage youth to say ‘no’ to gangs, drugs, and violence and ‘yes’ to hope, learning and life.” —*TSTA President Donna New Haschke*

## **YOLANDA MOLINA**

### **Ronnie Ray ESP Advocate of the Year**

“Yolanda has spent her career being an advocate for migrant families and their children. She is a truly effective leader who is most adept at bringing groups together for the common good. She is a role model for us all—always cheerful and professional—the embodiment of a true leader and educator. She is also the embodiment of what public education in America is all about, providing the opportunity for this child of migrant workers to make her way to Washington, D.C., to talk to our nation’s leaders about improving public education.” —*DNH*



## **JAMES HARRIS**

### **Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award**

“James has served in every position in his local, from association representative to president. A long-time special education teacher in Lubbock ISD, James was one of the first teachers appointed to serve on the State Board for Educator Certification and the first teacher to ever serve as chair of SBEC, for three years. James epitomizes what the Ermalee Boice Instructional Advocacy Award means—a career dedicated to advocating for teachers and students without being afraid of the consequences.” —*DNH*

## **LARRY CLEMONS**

### **Mickey Leland Memorial Award**

“Larry Clemons is a retired teacher who just couldn’t stay away from the public schools. He has missed one day in the last three years as a volunteer at Finley-Oates Elementary in Bonham. He greets the children in the morning and talks to them over lunch. He buys school supplies for children that are from needy families and donates books and other supplies to the school. Mr. Clemons is a testament that in the area of human rights, one must always think globally but act locally.” —*DNH*

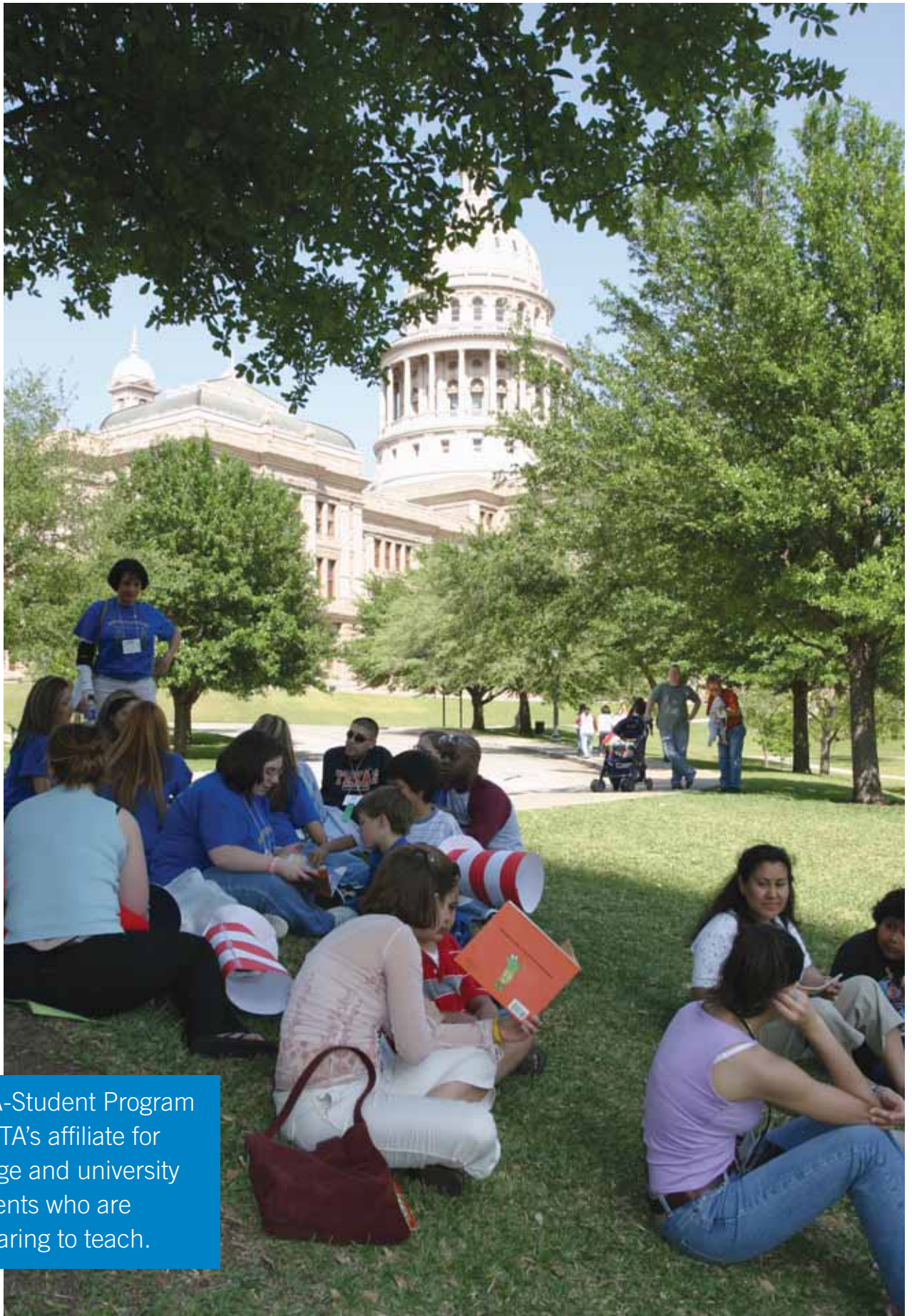


## **STUART M. DELUCA**

### **Human and Civil Rights Special Award (awarded posthumously)**

“In 1996, Stuart DeLuca helped found Texas Inmate Families Association to break the cycle of crime by strengthening families through support, education, and advocacy. Much of their work focuses on the children of inmates; current studies show they risk future incarceration at a rate eight times greater than their peers. He also helped form the TIFA Political Action Committee to elect politicians who believe we have an obligation to try to rehabilitate those we incarcerate.” —*DNH*





TSTA-Student Program is TSTA's affiliate for college and university students who are preparing to teach.



# Getting Ready to be Teachers

TSTA-Student Program is TSTA's affiliate for college and university students who are preparing to teach. Highlights of their April state convention: guest speaker Mandy Plucker, who is the NEA Student Program chair (top right photo); reading to kids and giving away books on the Capitol grounds; collecting school supplies for kids who need them; and the annual awards presentation. Posing with the school

supplies are 2004-05 officers Anita Conway, Lamar; Haley Eska, Baylor, 2005-06 president; Tara Driscoll, Sam Houston; Kolby Carlisle, Texas State; Lisa Rex-Kuhn, Texas Tech; Cher Nickerson, UT-Arlington; and Renay Jones, Arlington Baptist, outgoing president. The bottom photo is the award winners. To get involved with TSTA-SP, contact [ninaa@tsta.org](mailto:ninaa@tsta.org) or call 877-ASK-TSTA.





# Meet Yolanda C. Molina!

## TSTA's Ronnie Ray ESP Advocate of the Year

**My occupation is:** Data Entry Specialist/Migrant Recruiter for Mercedes ISD. I track migrant students; I interview their parents when they register and when they leave. I also address migrant families' concerns and provide guidance on their children's education. Teachers rely on me to keep them informed about the students they serve.

**It's a great job for me because:** I know what it's like to work in the fields. I dropped out of school when I was 15 and went to work picking radishes and cabbage. Later, after I married and had a child, I went back to earn my GED and got involved in my son's school. Three years later, they hired me as a parental involvement liaison at Taylor Elementary in Mercedes ISD.

**My proudest moment was:**

Being invited to provide testimony to the National Committee on Migrant Education on the importance of migrant and parental involvement programs in the Rio Grande Valley. I also have had the opportunity to train and share my experiences as a recruiter with other school district personnel, and address participants at the National Migrant Conference. And I am proud to have been elected to the Board of Directors for both TSTA and NEA.

**My primary concerns about education are:** Unfunded mandates and the failure of our government leaders to foresee that not only must we defend our nation by preparing men and women for battle, but we must also defend our nation by preparing our children to become great, responsible leaders. The second can only

be accomplished by providing our children with the best, highly qualified educators in the country to prepare them. Our leaders have failed to recognize that our educators are the most important resource for the survival of our nation. They speak about "No Child Left Behind," but they, along with all of us, must work to ensure that the educational profession does not get left behind either.

**I join TSTA/NEA because:** They have a place for everyone who wishes to participate. Our organization is the one that supports children and all education employees so that together we can lead our children into a better tomorrow. We need each other. We must always stand together. We must radiate unity.

**My motto is:** "Whatever it takes!"

We need each other. We must always stand together. We must radiate unity.





## DALLAS SUPPORTS ITS SCHOOLS

NEA's Minority Community Outreach Project-Dallas held a big community outreach festivity May 6-7 at Samuell Grand Park. Around 150 local businesses, community and school leaders, parents, and other members of the public gathered to generate interest and support for public schools in the Dallas area (photo above).

## AMBASSADORS: THE FOURTH GENERATION!

The 4th Annual Ambassador Academy was June 6-10 in Austin. The Academy is a training ground for emerging leaders, targeting members who have less than 12 years in the profession and have little association leadership experience. It is basic leadership training; graduates say the skills they gained help them in both their professional and personal lives. Watch our web site in the spring for an application form.

## 700 JOIN LAREDO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

In the wake of the lawsuit NEA and Laredo filed over No Child Left Behind (see

page 4), Laredo teachers and support professionals have been lining up to join the Association. In three days, more than 200 new members joined—and in two weeks, 700!

## TSTA AND WILMER-HUTCHINS SUE TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES

TSTA and the Wilmer-Hutchins Education Association (WHEA) took legal action in May to make sure teachers who worked the entire school year will be paid the portion of their salaries that is deferred until the summer months. The lawsuit was filed against Wells Fargo and Wilmer-Hutchins ISD (WHISD) out of a serious concern that the dispute involving the two will jeopardize the remaining four checks that had not yet been delivered to WHISD teachers.

"We did our job and taught the entire school year to meet the terms of our contract, so we rightfully expect the district to uphold its end of the contract and pay us for the work we have done," said Joe Tave, the president of WHEA and the named intervenor in the suit.

"We are taking this action because as the financial problems of the district are sorted out, the teachers who came to work every day for the school children of this district should not be denied the pay they earned due to mismanagement by WHISD or a money grab by Wells Fargo," Tave said. "We have no intention of letting anyone deny teachers one-third of their annual salary for this school year and making them and their families suffer as a result."

TSTA and WHEA are asking for a declaratory judgment to ensure that Wells Fargo's rights do not supersede the rights of the employees of WHISD in determining how available WHISD funds are used. Furthermore, TSTA and WHEA are asking the court to make sure that all employees are paid for work done before dealing with other claims on WHISD funds.

## TSU STUDENTS GET READY TO TEACH

TSTA-Student Program sponsored a one-day "Professional Development Day" for more than 500 student teachers at Texas State University in San Marcos in March. Speakers included Marsha Smith, an NEA Executive Committee member from Maryland; Dr. John Beck, dean of education; Dr. Gene Bourgeois, associate vice president of academic affairs; and Dr. Paul Paese, associate dean of education. A dozen workshops, primarily on classroom management and surviving the first days of school, were held.

## TSTA-Retired News

Carole Keeton Strayhorn, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, was the keynote speaker for the TSTA-Retired Convention in March in Austin. Workshops included "Identity Theft" by Liz Picone of NEA Member Benefits and Teacher Retirement information by Tom Guerin of the Teacher Retirement System. James L. Germany, Beryl Hogshead, and Letha Grace McCoy were recognized for their volunteer service.

Ten TSTA-R members attended the NEA-Retired West Regional Conference in Seattle in April. On hand to address the conference concerning Social Security issues were Carolyn Crowder, NEA Executive Committee member; Lily Eskelsen, NEA secretary-treasurer; Jim McDermott, congressman from Washington; and Al Campos, NEA lobbyist. The concerns that the people are being misled about Social Security, the facts about the issues of Social Security, and NEA positions and lobbying efforts were presented. Dennis Van Roekel, NEA vice president, addressed the conference on other national issues including "No Child Left Behind."



## Building International Relations

Gurtha Hunt and Laurie Gidlow both took trips to foster international relations this spring. While one was in Jordan, the other was in Israel.

Hunt, a member of NEA-Dallas, attended an institute on conflict resolution and global understanding because, “As a teacher, I feel a responsibility to teach students to be sensitive to one another and to teach tolerance,” she said.

At the institute, literature on *Seeds of Peace/Beyond Borders* was passed out and she signed up. Twelve educators and 30 youth from six Middle Eastern countries came to the U.S. in August, then 12 educators and 30 youth from the United States visited them in Jordan in March. “We are in constant contact,” Hunt said. Learn more about *Seeds of Peace* at

[www.seedsofpeace.org](http://www.seedsofpeace.org).

After retiring from the Richardson public schools, Laurie Gidlow started teaching in a private Jewish school, the Wise Academy of Dallas. A visiting travel director, realizing that many teachers at the school had never been to Israel, teamed with the school to sponsor a trip. He knew the teachers would love Israel and wanted them to teach their students about it.

Getting there was a little unnerving, Gidlow admitted. “The nightclub bombing was the week before we went,” she said, “and security getting on the plane was unbelievable. But it was fascinating—it was Greece with a Jewish twist—and I really want to go back. There were 26 of us and they took us to a reform school so we could meet the teachers. Now we all email.”

### THE EYES OF TEXAS ARE UPON THEM

Two teachers won Texas Excellence Awards for Outstanding Teachers. John Dunkin, an English teacher at Los Fresnos High School in Los Fresnos, won the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Teaching Award, and Debbie Flores, a fifth grade teacher at Bessie Haynes Elementary in Pecos, won the Verna Rogers Teaching Award. The awards program is cosponsored by the University of Texas at Austin, Texas Exes, and the College of Education.

### SPURRED TO CREATIVITY

The last time we wrote about San Antonio artist and teacher Clif Tinker, it was because he designed banners to hang in the Alamodome and a poster for the San Antonio Library. Since then, he was hired by

As a teacher, I feel a responsibility to teach students to be sensitive to one another and to teach tolerance.



the San Antonio Spurs to design a commemorative poster for season ticket holders. "They printed about 4,000 copies of the poster and I spent a couple of days on spring break signing all of them," he said.

That's Clif's poster that you may have seen at the TSTA House of Delegates in April; it depicts TSTA and the neighboring Capitol building and commemorates our 125th anniversary (see above). It's not too late to buy one: contact Sandra Solimine at [sandras@tsta.org](mailto:sandras@tsta.org) or 877-ASK-TSTA. The posters sell for \$10 plus \$2 shipping.

You can see more of Clif's work at [www.artend.com](http://www.artend.com).

### SHE'S ALWAYS PROVEN THEM WRONG

At age 8, Nancy Shugart lost 90% of her vision. She was a music teacher in Austin ISD when TSTA first ran her story; after being told by a college professor that she could never be a teacher, she taught 21 years. On to the next challenge: Shugart retired in 2002 and founded Prove Them Wrong with the mission of "teaching others who are faced with adversity

to awaken the power they possess and live their dream."

In her new work, she publishes an electronic newsletter and presents motivational and

inspirational programs for youth and adult audiences.

Sign up to receive her free electronic newsletters at [www.provethemwrong.com](http://www.provethemwrong.com).

Each edition includes an inspirational story, recommended links, and quotes.

### IMAGINE WHAT HE COULD DO WITH A TRACK!

Earnest R. James has been coaching track at Roosevelt High School in Dallas since the school opened in 1963. In 42 years, he's won four state team championships, 17 district championships, and three regional championships, and coached two Olympians, Roy "Robot" Martin and McClinton Neal. And all without having access to a track; practices are held at a neighborhood park.

## DFW EXPO FOR EDUCATORS

### Cosponsored by TSTA and NEA Dallas

Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, July 31, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Dallas Market Hall—Dallas, TX

*Tickets—\$8 adults, \$7 with internet coupon, \$6 groups  
Children under 17 FREE when accompanied by parent(s)*

DFW Expo is a two-day education and consumer event targeting educators at all staffing levels in the Dallas/Ft. Worth community. The Expo seeks to improve the quality of education of our youth by making available: the latest technology, curriculum and programs, products, equipment and training to educators who directly and indirectly work with students on a daily basis, ultimately impacting their education. The event also seeks to improve the personal well-being of educators so that they may gain and improve their stability regarding finances, home ownership, health, and fitness in order to effectively and positively impact their own lives. You can:

- Earn Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits
- Attend helpful information sessions on education and consumer topics

- Visit hundreds of education and consumer exhibitors
- Get information on teacher certification and advanced degree programs
- Hear motivational speakers, such as, "How to Love Your Job in Just 20 Days"
- Attend the Fashion Event featuring TJMaxx
- Learn healthy cooking tips at the healthy cooking demonstration
- Shop for gifts, books, toys and other items at up to 70% off retail price
- Relax at the Massage Oasis
- Win cash for your school district through the District School Spirit Program
- Enter to win great prizes
- Fun and excitement to get you ready for school

For more information, visit [www.4starevents.com/expoforeducators.htm](http://www.4starevents.com/expoforeducators.htm)



# Fun Tool for Healthy Eating

An Interactive Healthy Eating Plan Calculator that gives each child a customized list of what and how much to eat may be

just what they need to start a healthier lifestyle. You can find the calculator at [www.kidsnutrition.org/HealthyEating\\_calculator.htm](http://www.kidsnutrition.org/HealthyEating_calculator.htm).

Children enter their sex, age, weight, height, and physical activity level and they'll get an eating plan that provides all the nutrition and energy they need to grow without excessive weight gain.

The plans generated by the calculator are based on the new 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Institute of Medicine's nutritional recommendations for children ages 4 and older. In addition to suggesting amounts of the basic food groups, including fruits, vegetables, grains, milk products, lean meats and beans, and oils to be consumed each day, the calculator gives guidelines for the consumption of discretionary calories, such as sweets.

"All foods really can fit into a healthy diet for children. It's just a matter of how much and how often," Joan Carter, the Children's Nutrition Research Center (CNRC) dietitian who developed the calculator, said. "The diets of active kids have room for a bit more—and a bit more often."

CNRC is a cooperative venture between Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Agricultural Research Service (USDA/ARS). It is one of six USDA/ARS human nutrition research centers in the country.



# Parents' Attitudes Help Shape Kids' Athletic Identity

Whether kids are active and remain active into adulthood may have more to do with how highly their parents value their efforts than their actual performance on the field.

"Whether in algebra or athletics, what parents think of their kids' abilities tends to be identical to what kids themselves think," said Dr. Cheryl Anderson, a Baylor College of Medicine assistant professor of pediatrics. And, kids who have a good opinion of their abilities, something Anderson calls a positive "athletic identity," are more likely to enjoy and value physical activity — increasing the likelihood that they will remain physically active into adulthood.

"Children aren't born with a clear sense of who they are

for what is important. Instead, their identities and values are continuously shaped by what they learn from their parents and others as they grow," she said.

To help parents raise "positive athletic identity" kids, Anderson offers these tips:

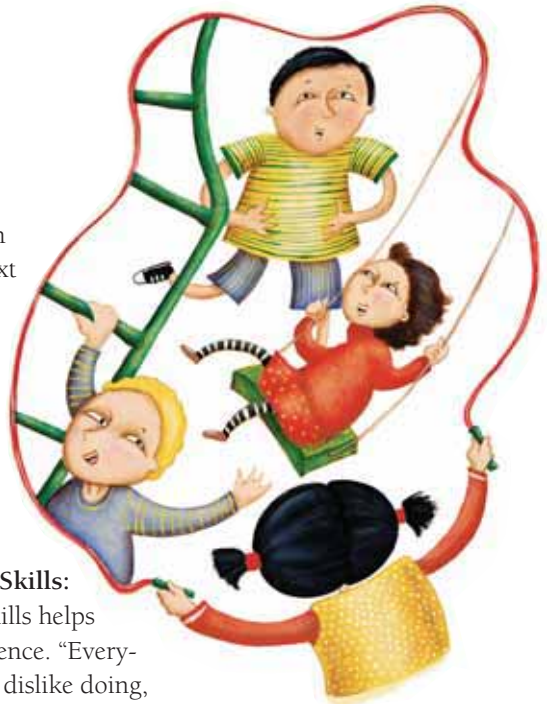
**Make Positive Experiences the Goal:** Show kids that what makes you proud is their effort, not whether they get a trophy. "Even a child on a community team who sits on the bench most of the time can have a positive experience as long as she's with friends, building skills, and having fun— it's OK to go slow," Anderson said.

**Value Variety:** Expose children to a variety of both individual and organized activities. "Each activity teaches kids

skills that can make the next activity they try easier to learn and enjoy, which in turn builds confidence," she said.

**Focus on Skills:** Mastering skills helps build confidence. "Everyone tends to dislike doing, and tends to devalue, things they are not good at," Anderson said. Skill building is particularly important for girls, who tend to already feel less athletically capable than boys when they enter first grade.

**Give Feedback:** Kids want you to watch, help, and praise them. Were their feet together? Head down?



**No Pressure:** It takes time to build skills, so avoid criticizing or pressuring children too much. Avoid pushing your dreams on your children.

**Be Patient:** It may take time for the child to find something they like to do. Some kids need more positive experiences than others before they enjoy an activity.

## WHAT ABOUT YOU? TIPS FOR EATING OUT

Are you stumped over how to eat healthier when you eat out, whether it's the school cafeteria or a restaurant? Here are some tips from mypyramid.gov, the US Dept. of Agriculture website that explains the new food pyramid:

- Ask for water or order fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars.
- Ask for whole wheat bread for sandwiches.
- Start your meal with a salad packed with veggies to help control hunger and feel satisfied sooner.
- Ask for salad dressing to be served on the side. Then use only as much as you want.
- Choose main dishes that include vegetables, such as stir fries, kebobs, or pasta with a tomato sauce.
- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of fried or sautéed.
- Choose a "small" or "medium" portion. This includes main dishes, side dishes, and beverages.
- Order an item from the menu instead of heading for the "all-you-can-eat" buffet.
- If portions at a restaurant are larger than you want, order an appetizer or side dish instead of an entrée, share a main dish with a friend, or, if you can chill the extra food right away, take leftovers home in a "doggy bag."
- When your food is delivered, try packing half of it to go immediately.
- Resign from the "clean your plate club"—when you've eaten enough, leave the rest.
- To keep your meal moderate in calories, fat, and sugars, order foods that do not have creamy sauces or gravies, add little or no butter to your food, and choose fruits for dessert most often.
- On long commutes or shopping trips, pack some fresh fruit, cut-up vegetables, low-fat string cheese sticks, or a handful of unsalted nuts to help you avoid stopping for sweet or fatty snacks.





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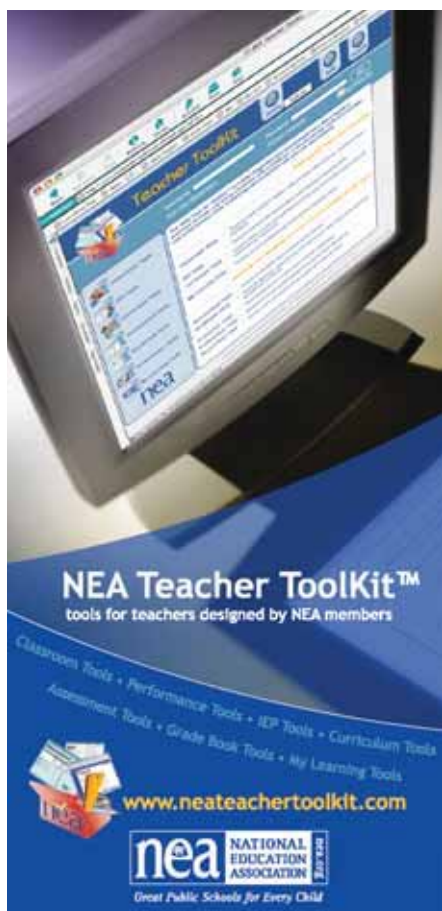
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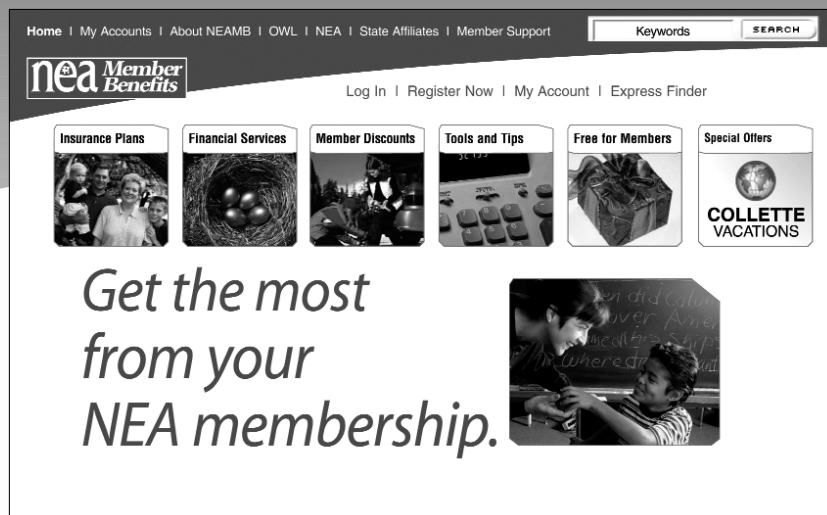


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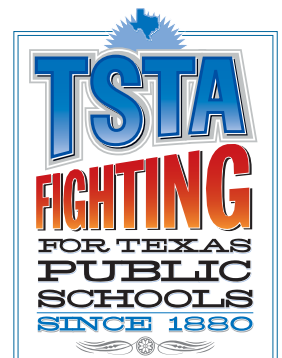
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