

TSTA FACT SHEET

The Texas State Teachers Association has 67,000 members. It is the oldest education organization in Texas.

TSTA President Ovidia Molina and Vice President Linda Estrada are TSTA's elected full-time state leaders. They work with an elected 37-member Board of Directors. Once a year in the spring, the democratically elected TSTA House of Delegates meets to conduct association business.

Mission Statement

The Texas State Teachers Association will unite, organize and empower public education advocates to shape public education in Texas thus providing a quality public school for every child.

Vision Statement

In order to shape public education in Texas, the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA) will:

- Be receptive and responsive to the diverse needs of the membership, embracing differences;
- Be results-oriented, achieving outcomes that have a clear impact on members;
- Focus on systemic change, rather than on individual change; and
- Generate sufficient resources to expand association programs and services to meet all organizational needs.

TSTA will maintain an internal culture that values:

- Open, honest and respectful communication;
- Organizational and individual change based on data, assessment and evaluation; and
- Shared accountability, collaboration and teamwork among all stakeholders – members, leaders, management and staff.

Further, TSTA must:

- Focus its resources on organizing; and
- Recruit and visibly organize within locals that show potential and commitment.

History

The Texas State Teachers Association originated in Mexia in June 1880, when the North Texas Teachers Association and the Austin Teachers Association combined.

The first statewide gathering of teachers had occurred Dec. 13, 1871, when the State Educational Convention met in Austin. At this time resolutions were adopted concerning the improvement of the teaching profession and the development of free public schools in

Texas. One of the most significant resolutions called for the establishment of a state university.

The North Texas State Teachers Association was organized in 1877 at Dallas, and together with the Austin Teachers Association in 1879 made plans for a joint meeting of the two associations at Mexia the following year for the purpose of organizing a statewide association. Educators traveled there on horseback and horse and buggy.

The desire for a state association was very strong by 1880, and the officials led in the planning for the Mexia Convention. On June 28, 1880, the two associations were joined. Membership dues were fixed at \$1, and arrangements were made to have the full proceedings published in the Texas Journal of Education. The name Texas State Teachers Association was officially adopted, and the organization's objectives were enumerated. A committee of seven members was appointed to direct the attention of the Legislature to changes needed in the public school laws and to the need for the establishment of a state university. Four years later, the Texas Legislature adopted language creating The University of Texas at Austin.

Early membership in TSTA was open to anyone interested in the promotion of the welfare of education. However, there was no organized campaign to unite the teachers, and the lack of communication in a state so wide as Texas was an almost insurmountable obstacle in the recruitment of members. It wasn't until 1919, 40 years after its charter, that the statewide publication, Texas Outlook, was begun. Membership growth took off with publication of the magazine.

In 1926, authorized by constitutional amendment, the building of the first headquarters was erected at 410 E. Weatherford Street in Fort Worth. It was completed at a cost of \$50,000. It was occupied by the staff in 1930 and remained the TSTA Headquarters until 1949 when the House of Delegates voted to move TSTA from Fort Worth to Austin.

The Association then established headquarters in a suite of rooms on the third floor of the Driskill Hotel in downtown Austin until the new headquarters building could be constructed at 316 W. 12th Street, one block west of the State Capitol. The current headquarters was built in three phases. Phase I was completed in 1951 at a cost of \$450,000. Phase II was completed in 1967, and Phase III, a six-story addition, was completed in 1974 at a cost of \$1.5 million. The building was completed clear of debt as a result of 20 years of savings and investments.

There were several setbacks for the young organization, including a financial crisis caused by the decline of the market for agricultural products as a result of the outbreak of World War I. The Great Depression of 1931-32 almost wiped out the association, and in 1942, the shadow of World War II created instability. In spite of these setbacks, TSTA endured.

Prior to 1967 there were two teacher organizations in Texas. They were TSTA for white teachers and the Teachers State Association of Texas for black teachers. In 1967, the

10,000-member black organization dissolved its charter and was welcomed into the Texas State Teachers Association with full voting rights and membership.

Since those first legislative proposals in 1880, TSTA has been involved in historical legislation that affected public schools and teachers in Texas. TSTA is credited with authoring the minimum foundation laws that set statewide teacher salaries. It authored legislation creating the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. It authored certification laws, and bills to establish maintenance and operation funds for schools. It supported child labor laws, mandatory schooling, civil rights for all, and thousands of other important bills. No major education legislation has passed or failed without the approval or rejection of the Texas State Teachers Association.

In 1974, TSTA formed a new partnership with the National Education Association in Washington D.C. By an all-member vote, unification with the NEA was passed.