



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA: Even with raises, teacher pay in Texas still falls short**

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina issued the following statement on Gov. Abbott's announcement about teacher pay raises:

We are glad that Texas teachers finally received long overdue pay raises from the Legislature in 2019. The only reason it happened is because teachers and other school employees turned out in large numbers in the 2018 elections and unseated a dozen anti-education members from the Texas House and two from the state Senate and replaced them with education friendly legislators.

The governor and the Legislature, however, did not see fit to increase the state's \$75 monthly contribution to teacher health care premiums. That contribution hasn't been increased in almost 20 years, while health care costs have soared and continue to erode educator take-home pay.

Even with the pay raises, which went into effect in the 2019-20 school year, the average teacher pay in Texas continues to lag well behind the national average, according to data compiled by the National Education Association, TSTA's affiliate. NEA calculated the average pay increase for all Texas teachers last year at about \$3,000, which is less than the state is reporting.

But even using the state's salary figures, Texas teachers with more than five years' experience still are paid, on average, more than \$4,300 less than the national average for all teachers. Less-experienced Texas teachers are paid more than \$5,700 less. And these same teachers are being required to risk their health and perhaps their lives by returning to their classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of patting themselves on the back, our state leaders should be planning to add to those raises during next year's session.

Educators are returning to the polls in large numbers again this year, fighting to protect the legislators who made the 2019 pay raises possible against challengers who are being supported by allies of these same state leaders.