



TSTA NEWS

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TSTA: Task force must propose higher teacher pay

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina issued the following statement:

We applaud the Texas Education Agency for assembling, at the governor's request, a task force to study how to address the teacher shortage.

The task force needs to make higher teacher pay a priority, and I mean higher pay for all teachers, not so-called "merit pay" for a select few. Teacher pay in Texas has been substandard for years, and even after the raises approved by the Legislature in 2019, average teacher pay in Texas still lags more than \$7,000 behind the national average, according to the most-recent National Education Association survey. That is a big reason for the teacher shortage, which was worsened by the pandemic.

We also are disappointed that the first meeting of the task force, which was held today in Austin, was rushed without public notice and without live broadcasting access. The teacher shortage and how to address it are crucial issues for the future of Texas, and every meeting of this group must be widely publicized and accessible to the public.

The state leadership – beginning with the governor, who has repeatedly attacked teachers and public schools for much of the past year – must give teachers the respect they deserve and have earned as hard-working professionals, including during our deadly health emergency.

An important part of this respect is talking with teachers and listening to what they have to say.

We are glad that the governor and commissioner saw fit to appoint two teachers to the task force, but we are disappointed that a larger number was not added to a group of twenty-eight people. Who knows better about why there is a teacher shortage than real experts, the teachers themselves?