



TSTA NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2022

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Killeen Educators Association seeks pay raises for all Killeen ISD employees

The Killeen Educators Association (KEA) will ask the Killeen ISD school board for across-the-board pay raises for all district employees next week.

“Killeen teachers and support staff have been working under stressful conditions during the pandemic and are being hammered by cost-of-living increases,” said KEA President Rachel Bourrage. “Teacher turnover is high, and hundreds of hourly employees aren’t even making a living wage. They all have earned and deserve larger paychecks.”

At the board meeting on Tuesday, April 12, KEA members will formally propose a 7.5 percent pay increase for all teachers, counselors, librarians and other professional employees and a \$3-an-hour increase for bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, custodians, aides and other support staff. Before the meeting, scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the district’s administration building, the educators will hold a “rally for salary” at 5:30 p.m. outside the board room.

Teacher turnover in Killeen ISD for the 2020-21 school year was 16.5 percent, which was higher than the state average.

“When experienced teachers walk out the door, students lose valuable insight, and the school district loses money in terms of separation costs and recruitment and training costs for new teachers,” Bourrage said. “We believe much of this turnover could be avoided with higher pay.”

KEA will present information to the board showing inflationary pressures on district employees, including an 11 percent increase in housing rents in Killeen over the past year, and the need for a living wage for all district workers.

According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Living Wage Calculator, a living wage for a single person in Killeen with no dependents is \$12.86 an hour. But many Killeen ISD bus monitors, custodians and cafeteria workers are in a pay range where the minimum hourly rate is \$11, and some of those employees have families.

“No one who works should live in poverty,” Bourrage said. “The district made some improvements to the pay of hourly employees for this school year, but they still have a way to go.”

She added: "The district can afford the pay raises we are requesting. The Texas Education Agency recommends that a school district retain a fund balance of 20 to 25 percent of budgeted expenditures. Killeen ISD's fund balance is consistently much higher than that. Financial safeguards are important, but they should not come at the expense of district employees and the students they serve."

The Killeen Educators Association is an affiliate of the Texas State Teachers Association.