



# TSTA NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2023

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## **TSTA: Vouchers will cost educators' jobs, shortchange most students and threaten the survival of some school districts**

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

A year ago, TSTA conducted a periodic moonlighting and morale survey of its teacher members. A record 70 percent said they were seriously considering leaving the profession, with inadequate pay a major reason. Forty-one percent said they had to take extra jobs during the school year to make ends meet for their families.

But many of those teachers remained in the classroom to give the Legislature another chance to pay them as the valuable professionals they are. Instead, the governor and the legislative majority are shortchanging educators and their students with an inadequate budget and trying to pass a voucher bill that would further endanger our public education system and threaten the futures of the millions of Texas school children who will remain in public schools.

A record, \$33 billion budget surplus gave lawmakers a golden opportunity to give Texas teachers, whose average salaries now trail the national average by more than \$7,700, the kind of substantial pay raises they deserve and need. It also was an opportunity to give school districts enough funding to give pay increases to support staff and improve classroom resources for more than 5 million students. But the governor and the legislative majority ignored the opportunity.

Barring last-minute changes, teachers will get woefully inadequate pay bumps, and more and more of the teachers who do remain in the classroom will be forced to take second or third jobs during the school year to meet their families' needs. School district budgets will remain financially strapped, with support staff still pitifully underpaid.

Passing a voucher bill would make it even worse. It would take hundreds of millions of dollars from public education over the next budget period and billions of dollars more in the years to follow to benefit private schools, while costing thousands of educators' their jobs, threatening the survival of some school districts and jeopardizing children's educations.