



For more on TFT's plans for testing reform and school finance (and the rest of our state and federal agenda for 2007), see the TFT Legislative Agenda 2007 at www.tft.org.

Call to Action!

Legislators listen best to messages from folks in their home district. You can help pass TFT's legislative agenda by informing yourself about the issues and asking your senator and representative for their support. Here's how:

To ID Your State Senator and Representative:
Go to www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm.

Inform Yourself, Then Speak Your Mind:
Visit TFT on the Web at www.tft.org. Use the site to stay up to date with the TFT Hotline and Action Alerts and to write to legislators directly by fax or e-mail.

TFT "Call Direct" to Legislators:
Dial **1-888-836-8368**, give your state senator's or representative's name, and ask to be connected.

Prefer writing a letter?
Senators: P.O. Box 12068, Austin 78711
Representatives: P.O. Box 2910, Austin 78768
Governor: P.O. Box 12428, Austin 78711
(or call the governor toll-free: 1-800-843-5789)



You can learn more and take action at www.tft.org

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



80th Legislature 2007

Texas Federation of Teachers



*Join the movement
for change.*

www.tft.org



Texas Federation of Teachers
www.tft.org
3000 S. IH-35, Suite 175
Austin, Texas 78704
512-448-0130 or 800-222-3827



The Texas Federation of Teachers represents 53,000 teachers and public education employees in public schools, community colleges and universities.

The movement for change gets results...

Dear Texas Educator:

The modest school funding and teacher pay raise passed in 2006 amount to a short-term fix, not a long-term solution to the unmet needs and chronic underfunding of Texas public education.

Instead of a long-term funding plan, we have seen a divisive push to reward—and punish—schools and educators based on test scores, and even attempts to drain taxpayer funds out of our public schools for the benefit of private-school operators.

TFT has been a leader in standards-based reform for more than 20 years. Until recently, it was understood that rising standards would be coupled with resources to help students meet new challenges. But since 2003 that common understanding has broken down. The state has failed to keep its part of the bargain.

It is time for a change. Join TFT in challenging legislators to do their part by funding our schools properly and ending the overemphasis on standardized testing.

Polls show the public is on our side and supports greater investments in our children's education. And



*TFT President
Linda Bridges*

TFT advocacy gets results. Our winning record includes:

- the 1995 Safe Schools Act
- programs to help students master reading by third grade and earn promotion
- our 1997 scholarship bill to help paraprofessionals become certified teachers
- the 1999 \$3,000 state teacher pay raise
- a 15-percent increase in TRS pensions in 1999 and 2001

- state health-care funding for all school employees in 2001
- the 2003 revival of the paperwork-reduction law
- the 2003 amendment that saved state-guaranteed personal leave
- the repeal of costly individual health accounts (2005)
- stopping a new round of take-aways of retirement benefits in summer 2005
- 2006 pay raise for teachers, counselors, nurses, librarians
- preserving state health-care funding for all school employees in 2006

In 2007, help make new headway in the movement for change. Learn more at www.tft.org.

Linda Bridges, President
Texas Federation of Teachers

- Block vouchers and equivalent drains on public school funding
- Reward school personnel who take on added skills or tasks

Demand High Performance

- Keep raising academic standards and provide the necessary resources to help students meet those standards
- Make school districts and charter schools accountable for complete disclosure of how they spend taxpayer funds

Keep Our Students Safe and Healthy

- Maintain teachers' authority to remove disruptive students



- Strengthen required notice to educators of violent offenders on campus
- Safeguard educators against retaliation for use of removal authority
- Ensure that every school has enough full-time school nurses to protect students' health

Professional Compensation for Quality Educators

Teachers and educational support staff deserve better pay, better benefits, and more respect.

Pay Raises

- Raise teacher pay to match salaries for comparable private-sector jobs, and boost school funding to raise pay for all staff

Health Coverage as Good as the Governor's

- Increase state funding for health insurance for all education employees, and reverse funding cuts and eligibility cutbacks for retiree care

Better Pensions

- Increase the state contribution rate, raise retirement pay for all school employees, and make future cost-of-living adjustments automatic
- Reverse eligibility cutbacks and formula changes of 2003-2005 that have reduced benefits
- Repeal the federal Social Security offsets that cut duly earned benefits of Texas educators

Due Respect and Due Process

- Extend basic due-process rights and benefits to all education employees, pre-K through 16
- Respect existing rights and benefits of all education employees and protect employees from retaliation for exercising their state-granted rights

A Role in Local Policy-Making

- Let school boards bargain with an elected employee negotiating team on local contracts covering pay, benefits, and working conditions

TFT Has a Plan...

For Testing Reform...

1. Let individual teachers decide when and if benchmark testing, drill and practice for TAKS, and other TAKS test prep are appropriate for their students.
2. Replace exit-level TAKS with end-of-course tests properly aligned with curriculum and clearly defined state standards.
3. Bar use of standardized test results to determine financial incentives for teachers, unless teachers participate in developing the compensation plan and 80 percent approve of the plan.
4. Guarantee that tutoring by school employees outside the regular school day for students in danger of failing TAKS shall be voluntary and compensated.
5. Guarantee to schools and districts the resources and flexibility to implement research-based interventions to improve student achievement.
6. Guarantee interventions will continue for at least three years after a school is no longer rated "academically unacceptable."
7. For schools not making "adequate yearly progress" under federal law, mandate use of a "learning environment index" to (a) identify and measure teaching and learning conditions known to enhance student achievement and (b) trigger targeted state aid to improve those conditions.

For Finishing the Job on School Finance

With a budget surplus in 2008-2009, and with fair sharing of the tax burden by businesses for the long run, lawmakers can:

- Restore education programs cut since 2003 (e.g., pre-K grants, disciplinary alternative education programs, master teacher initiatives, Student Success Initiative)
- Restore fully the Children's Health Insurance Program
- Restore retired and active school employees' health-care funding
- Raise teacher pay
- Increase state aid to give school employees health care as good as the governor's
- Restore local funding capacity and enhance equity
- Provide extra funding for high-need students
- Reduce college tuition costs

Quality Education for Every Child

Texans believe every child deserves a good education in a safe and orderly public school. To achieve that goal, TFT calls on lawmakers to invest in these priorities:

Ensure Quality in Every Classroom

- Guarantee the education funding needed to achieve academic excellence for every student, pre-K-16
- Enforce class-size limits and extend them to other grades, starting with pre-K
- Assure universal, voluntary pre-K and kindergarten
- Guarantee appropriately certified educators in every class