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Edinburg's Christmas Social



Members at the Christmas Social

The Edinburg AFT Christmas Social took place this past Saturday, December 6, 2014. Members of Edinburg AFT enjoyed dinner, door prizes, a photo booth, cake and music. Co-chair Josefina Sanchez updated Edinburg members about the Legislative breakfast that took place that same morning, meeting outcomes, and concerns that Edinburg AFT is currently addressing and will continue to address after Christmas break. Members were given raffle tickets to enter a grand prize give-away of an iPad Mini as well as AFT t-shirts and gift cards. Congratulations to Mr. Geraldo Maycotte who won the iPad mini! Members enjoyed the photo booth, and they had numerous of props to choose from. Members enjoyed music and danced the night away. Thank you for all those who were able to attend and for those that were unable to attend; hope to see you at next year's Christmas Social!

Legislative Breakfast

On Saturday, December 6th, 2014, members were able to share their Edinburg, La Joya and PSJA AFT leaders got together for a "Legislative Breakfast". This is an event in which AFT members were able to share their legislative priorities with key allies, right before they go into session at the capitol. Legislators present were State Representatives Oscar Longoria and Sergio Munoz Jr. and Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa.

After a presentation by Texas AFT Secretary-Treasurer, Louis Malfaro,

members were able to share their personal stories with legislators. Issues brought to the attention of our Texas legislators that day included a call for full state funding for Texas public schools, a rejection of voucher and charter school expansions and a full day of Pre-K.

The legislators met AFT's requests with open ears and a promise to work hard to push our priorities come January. They also reminded those present, that participation by teachers



Members at the Legislative Breakfast

in the form of emails, phone calls and letters go a long way in getting these ideas across. The event was a success and was a great lead up to our big lobby day coming up this spring.

Inside this Newsletter:



Email suggestions to:
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Edinburg's Christmas Social/Legislative Breakfast	Page 1
Thank you Teachers/Staff	Page 2
How I got the most out of my AFT Membership	Page 2
Be Proactive with Edinburg AFT	Page 3
Know your Rights: Paperwork Reduction Act	Page 3
Kicking off the Legislative Agenda	Page 4
AFT delivers more than 125,000 signatures to Time	Page 4

Thank you Teachers/Staff

I would like to take the time to daily basis. Teachers are thank all the teachers/staff for overworked, the day has not their patience, dedication and been extended; so the teacher devotion. I know that it is a is expected to do a lot more very stressful job. Juggling within the same time period. with all the paperwork, grade level meetings, staff meetings, parents, students and administrators.

Somewhere down the line all are entered. Most of the time respect towards teachers/staff the excessive work is taken has been lost. Students, home and our families are parents and administrators are pushed aside. We often ignore mistreating teachers/staff on a the other responsibilities that

we have at home.

It is understandable why teachers feel overwhelmed and stressed. Yet teachers go to work every day to teach our children with a smile on their face.

Edinburg AFT is an organization that wants to see teachers/staff to be treated fairly and equally. Join us to continue improve our workplace. Enjoy your Christmas Break!



Josefina Sanchez
Magee Elementary
Co-Chair
Steering Committee
Building Representative



How I got the most out of my AFT Membership



Planning a winter vacation this year? Then I'm about to help you save some serious cash!

First, I appreciate the legal counsel, advocacy, and endless array of benefits Texas AFT provides each of us as members but mostly I appreciate the incredible savings they

provide all of us that we often overlook. Savings for car rentals, hotel stays, and even discounts on theme parks are just some of the perks that our membership affords. So as you venture out to find some deals online, consider my personal run-in with Texas AFT discounts.

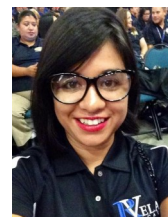
Last summer my husband, a McAllen local AFT member, and I took a trip with our family. My sister and her family decided to go along on the trip to Los Angeles with us. Now I don't have to share with you the stories of extra charges here and additional taxes there to say that going on vacation gets expensive very quickly! Despite the

mounting surcharges, we decided it was a must to go to Universal Studios in Hollywood on the last day of our stay. I logged on to the AFT website and crossed my fingers that there would be discount tickets to Universal Studios- I was so excited to see that there was! In fact, the discount was for 50% each ticket! After singing a little ditty in my head, I proceeded to cash in on the savings. In total my membership afforded me a discount of almost \$400.00!

We immediately figured out that our Texas AFT membership dues was less than what the savings was. In total Texas AFT helped

us save \$600.00 on that trip alone. Now I never go on vacations, or sometimes staycations, without checking the AFT membership site.

So whether you plan to go to visit snow-capped mountains this winter or head to NYC to celebrate the New Year, be sure to visit the membership website and save!



Dalinda Gonzalez-Alcantar,
M.Ed

AVID Coordinator at Robert Vela High School and a self-proclaimed savings addict

Be Proactive with Edinburg AFT

Sometimes violations of your rights are obvious and at times it's not so obvious. Ever get the feeling that something is not right but you aren't sure what? Contemplating whether you should say something or not? It may not be something that's directly affecting you but it may be happening to someone you may or may not know. What if it is happening to you?

Edinburg AFT is an organization that wants to make sure you and your colleagues are prepared to speak up when you know something is not right. Be Proactive! What do we mean by be proactive? Well...come to our monthly meetings and learn about your rights as an educator/staff member. Get to know your campus building representative. Your building representatives attend monthly trainings where they learn about educator rights and are capable to provide themselves and other members on campus with tools and resources to ensure you all are capable of addressing concerns when necessary.



Debra Halcomb
Memorial Middle School
Steering Committee Member
Building Representative

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Paperwork Reduction Act

Recognizing that burdensome paperwork was interfering with your ability to teach, the Legislature passed a law in 2003 that limits the volume of paperwork districts may require classroom teachers to complete. Although the Paperwork Reduction Act has applied since 2003-2004 school year began, many educators question its effectiveness and are unclear as to how it affects their duties.

A. The board of trustees of each school district shall limit redundant for information and the number and length of written reports that a classroom teacher is required to prepare. A classroom teacher may not be required to prepare any written information other than:

1. Any report concerning the health, safety or welfare of a student;
2. A report of a student's grade on an assignment or examination;
3. A report of a student's academic progress in a class or course;

4. A report of a student's grades at the end of each grade reporting period;

5. A textbook report;

6. A unit or weekly lesson plan that outlines, in a brief and general manner, the information to be presented during each period at the secondary level or in each subject or topic at the elementary level;

7. An attendance report;

8. Any report required for accreditation;

9. Any information required by a school district that relates to a complaint, grievance, or actual or potential litigation and that requires the classroom teacher's involvement; or

10. Any information specifically required by law, rule or regulation.

A. The board of trustees shall review paperwork, requirements imposed on classroom teachers and shall

transfer to existing non instructional staff a reporting task that can reasonably be accomplished by that staff.

B. This section does not preclude a school district from collecting essential information, in addition to the information specified under subsection (a), from a classroom teacher on agreement between the classroom teacher and the district.



"I'm all caught up on my paperwork," said no teacher ever.

Kicking off the Legislative Agenda

I wish I had good news for everyone, but I don't. AFT will have to continue our hard work for a brighter future. No more sitting on the sidelines! AFT needs you NOW, so stand up, stand together, and speak out for our students, for all education employees, and public education.

We start off by asking for Texas to fund our schools. Restore funding fully for 2016 – 2017. We recommend the use of the state's rising revenue (an estimated \$15 billion plus available for 2016 – 2017) to restore spending fully to pre-recession levels – an increase of more than \$600 per student. We are asking for the assurance of full funding for the long term. We recommend that the state build a new revenue structure to meet the growing needs of students, close property-tax loopholes that shift the burden from commercial to residential ratepayers, and close loopholes in the business franchise tax. We are asking the state to meet constitutional standards of funding adequacy and equity. We recommend for funding formulas to be changed to reflect the full cost of educating more than five million students, enforce funding equity, and

block private-school vouchers and equivalent drains on public education funding via other privatization schemes. Inform yourself on all the issues and ask your state senator and state representative for their support.

STOP the misuse of standardized tests. We recommend the end to the misuse of state assessments as the main measure of success, tighten limits on local benchmarks testing tied to state assessments, and ban the use of "value added" models for individual educator evaluations.

Respect and reward educators and support staff by providing affordable health care and retirement security. We are asking the state to boost health-care funding for all education employees and retirees, protect defined-benefit TRS pensions—benefits you cannot outlive, and make it a goal of the state policy to enable all school employees to retire under the Rule of 80 at 70 percent of their active salary with an annual cost-of-living adjustment.

These are just a few of our issues, so please join us and speak to Legislators. Legislators listen best to messages from folks in their home district.



Javier Olivarez
San Carlos Elementary
Co-Chair
Steering Committee Member
Building Representative



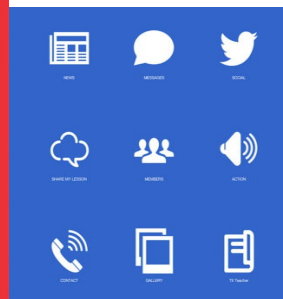
AFT delivers more than 125,000 signatures to Time

AFT President Randi Weingarten joined parents, teachers, union leaders and community activists at the Time-Life Building in New York City on Oct. 30 to deliver more 100,000 petition signatures to Time magazine. The petition asked Time editors to apologize for its recent "outrageous cover, which doesn't even reflect Time's own reporting" and casts teachers as "rotten apples" needing to be smashed by Silicon Valley millionaires with no experience in education. Since the petition's delivery, more than 20,000 additional signatures have been collected.



Want to receive instant notice when there's an Action Alert on issues that affect you as school employees? Need quick access to the Legislative Hotline, Texas Teacher and breaking news?

Download the Texas AFT app to your mobile device...



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