

MCALLEN AFT NEWS

McAllen AFT, 1500 Dove, McAllen, TX 78504

April, 2012

Volume 19, Issue 8

Texas Public School System Past, Present and Future

All children should be able to attend a safe, secure school and have access to an exemplary educational program that values and encourages critical thinking and creativity, not the “drill and kill” teach-to-the-test policies that are forced on students and teachers. As parents, educators and concerned citizens, we need to help lead the fight to improve student achievement, lower dropout rates, and attract and retain dedicated teachers.

The decisions made during the past few legislative sessions have been detrimental to the Texas Education System. Although the system has not been without problems in the past, it had made huge strides to become a more advanced and efficient. Public Education used to be a priority in Texas. Those days are long gone.

A brief history of the public school system in Texas shows that once upon a time, our representatives cared as much about our children, their education and future.

Public education was one of the primary goals of the early settlers of Texas, who listed

the failure to provide education as one of their grievances in the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico.

As early as 1838, President Mirabeau B. Lamar’s message to the Republic of Texas Congress advocated setting aside public domain for public schools. His interest caused him to be called the “Father of Education in Texas.”

After being admitted into the Union, the 1845 Texas State Constitution advocated public education, instructing the Legislature to designate at least 10 percent of the tax revenue for schools.

The public school system was made possible by setting aside \$2 million out of \$10 million Texas received for relinquishing its claim to land north and west of its present boundaries in the Compromise of 1850.

During 1854, legislation provided for state apportionment of funds based upon an annual census.

Continued Page 2 →

In this issue:

History of Texas Public Education 1

What can your vote do? 1

Tidbits 1

Special points of interest:

Texas Schools: Past, Present and Future 2

Rights to Vote 2

Need to Know 3

Important Dates 4

Legislative Maps 4



TIDBITS

Democracy is, “government of the people, by the people and for the people.” ~ Abraham Lincoln.

This means that we are not here to serve our government, but that our government is here to serve us — and we have the right to decide who

will represent us and how we want to be represented. It means that we have one of the greatest rights any free people can have: the right to vote.

Your vote holds your local and national leaders responsible for the decisions they make.

Your vote sends a message about the issues you think are important. Your vote affirms our rights as free citizens to elect our government and take part in democracy.

McAllen AFT
1500 Dove
McAllen, TX 78504
956-682-1143
mcallenaft2@yahoo.com
<http://tx.aft.org/mcallen>



McAllen AFT
1500 Dove Avenue
McAllen, TX 78504

Texas Public School System: Past, Present and Future continued...

In addition, during the course of its long history, the Texas Legislature also made these changes to help fund public schools in Texas.

Railroads receiving grants were required to survey alternate sections to be set aside for public-school financing

—> The Texas Constitution also provided for one-fourth of occupation taxes and a poll tax of one dollar for school support and made provisions for local taxation.

—> No provision was made for direct ad valorem taxation for maintenance of an available school fund, but a maximum 20-cent state ad valorem school tax was adopted in 1883 and raised to 35 cents in connection with provision of free textbooks in the amendment of 1918.

—> In 1949, the Gilmer-Aikin Laws

reorganized the state system of public schools by making sweeping changes in administration and financing.

Our state's bright beginning has devolved and are current situation can only be described as grim.

A recent Texas AFT web survey of more than 3,500 teachers, school employees and parents reveals the extent to which our schools are experiencing widespread layoffs, cuts to key programs and services, larger class sizes, and stressful conditions for teaching and learning—all related to the \$5.4 billion in state budget cuts enacted this year.

In addition to quantifying some of the

impacts, teachers and other school employees consistently commented on significantly lower morale from lack of resources to teach schoolchildren, and from longer work hours, more duties, increased paperwork, bullying by administrators, reduced planning time and lack of learning materials and supplies.

So what does the Texas Public School System look like in the future? It all depends on you. We need to fight to develop a school system worthy of our children.

Remember, "If our way of life fails the child, it fails us all." ~Pearl S. Buck



**THEIR FUTURE
OUR FIGHT!**

Pledge web site (below)

http://act.aflcio.org/c/256/p/dial/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=3422

As a registered voter in Texas, you have the right to:

- A ballot with written instructions on how to cast a ballot.
- Ask the polling place official for instructions on how to cast a ballot (but not suggestions on how to vote).
- Cast your vote in secret and free from intimidation.
- Receive up to two more ballots if you make a mistake while marking the ballot.
- Bring an interpreter to assist you as you qualify to vote if you do not understand the English language.
- Help to cast your ballot if you cannot write, see the ballot, or understand the language in which it is written.
- Report a possible voting rights abuse to the Secretary of State (1.800.252.8683) or to your local election official.
- Cast a provisional ballot if your name does not appear on the list of registered voters or you do not have proper identification.
- Vote once at any early voting location during the early voting period within the territory conducting the election.
- File an administrative complaint with the Secretary of State concerning violations of federal and state voting procedures.



McAllen AFT
1500 Dove Avenue
McAllen, TX 78504

What Do You Need To Know Before You Hit The Polls?

The first thing you must do is to vote if you have not registered in this county.

After you register, you'll be mailed a voter registration certificate or card with your name, address, and the number of the precinct in which you'll vote. (A precinct is a geographic area in your county.)

Once you know where your precinct is located, you can go online, check your local newspaper or call your local elections department and ask them where you are supposed to be voting on election day.

During the two weeks of early voting, you may vote at any voting location in the county. But if you choose to wait until election day to vote, you need to go

to the location you were assigned to.

When you are ready to vote, show your voter registration card or a valid I.D. to the election official and, depending on the type of voting machine they use, they'll provide you with a paper ballot or, for an electronic voting machine, a number or ballot activator card that enables you to vote on the machine.

Here is a list of acceptable/valid identification you may present in the event that you lose or forget your Voter I.D. card:

1) a driver's license or personal identification card issued to you by the Department of Public Safety or a similar document issued to you by an agency of another state, regardless of whether the license or card has expired;

2) a form of identification containing your photograph that establishes your identity;

3) a birth certificate or other document confirming birth that is admissible in a court of law and establishes your identity;

4) United States citizenship papers issued to you;

5) a United States passport issued to you;

6) official mail addressed to you, by name, from a governmental entity;

7) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address; or

8) any other form of identification prescribed by the secretary of state.



Hidalgo County Elections Department

101 S. 10th Ave.
 Edinburg, TX 78539

Ph: (956) 318-2570 Fax: (956) 393-2039

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

WHY VOTE?

When you vote, you are able to elect individuals who concern themselves with the problems affecting you and your area. Please keep in mind that elected officials are extensions of their constituents.

Everything they vote for/do not for, support/do not support will influence you, your friends and family. So when you get information about candidates, make sure that you look for someone who will help:

- raise teacher and support staff pay to levels exceeding the national average;
- extend quality state funded health insurance to all education employees;
- respect and safeguard the rights and benefits of education employees;
- guarantee that every class has a teacher certified to teach that subject;
- recruit and train teachers who reflect the state's diversity;

- provide a mentor (a master teacher) for every novice teacher;
- base teacher pay and evaluations on multiple measures that give a full, rounded picture of student and teacher accomplishment, and oppose Republican plans to use narrow test results instead;
- provide retired teachers a cost-of-living increase to restore their pensions' purchasing power, which has eroded more than 20 percent under Rick Perry and the Republicans since the last increase in 2001;
- repeal the federal government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions that unfairly reduce Social Security benefits for educational retirees and other public employees; and provide tuition credits and financial assistance for college students who become certified public school teachers and teach for a specified period of time in public schools.

Important Dates

- **April 9th through May 29th** for the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate, a person must be a continuous resident of the district from April 9th until the day of the general election
- **April 14th** MOVE Act ballots will be mailed to military and overseas voters
- **April 25th** deadline to mail voter certificates
- Last Day to Register to Vote **April 30, 2012** (Monday, which is next business day after statutory deadline)



- **May 14th** First Day of early voting
- Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (**Received**, not Postmarked) **May 22, 2012**
- **May 25th** Last Day of Early Voting
- **May 29th** 2012 General Primary Election
- **July 23rd** 1st day of early voting for Primary Run-off
- **July 27th** Last Day of Early Voting for Primary Run-off
- **July 31st** 2012 General Primary Run-off Election and Precinct Chair Election



REDISTRICTING

There has been much confusion about the newly drawn legislative maps, we have included links for you to view the new lines.

1. Texas Redistricting by Senate Map, House Map and Congressional Map
<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/redist/redist.htm>
2. District Viewer (View the new lines by county, city or address)
<http://gis1.tlc.state.tx.us/>
3. Who Represents me? (Go Find Your Current District at this link.)
<http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>

	McAllen AFT	
	1500 Dove Ave. McAllen, TX 78504	
	Phone: (956) 682-1143 Fax: (956) 631-0190	
	Email: mcallenaft2@yahoo.com Website: http://tx.aft.org/mcallen/	