

MCALEN AFT NEWS

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SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

A recent Texas AFT survey of public school superintendents from 241 districts found that state budget cuts of \$5.4 billion are having a significant impact on classroom instruction, teacher morale and help for struggling students.

“Students are not being sheltered from budget cuts, as some of the state’s leadership suggested would be the case last year when they took an axe to public education funding,” said Texas AFT President Linda Bridges. “Instead superintendents are telling us that teacher layoffs, larger class sizes and cuts in services for struggling students are creating a stressful environment and creating concerns about how to deal with the implementation of the new standardized tests being rolled out this spring.”

As one superintendent noted,

“The funds to produce a world-class educational system in Texas are there. The willingness to invest in our kids and our state is not. Cut now, pay later. Our state leadership has failed us.”

Texas AFT mailed surveys to 1,051 superintendents throughout the state in December and received 241 responses, 23 percent of the districts statewide. The superintendent survey findings echo concerns revealed in a November Texas AFT online survey of some 3,500 teachers and school employees regarding the impacts of budget cuts. That report also showed widespread teacher layoffs, increased class sizes, cuts to key services designed to help students pass standardized tests, and stressful working environments for teachers.

Bridges said superintendents noted that most positions eliminated from budget cuts were for teachers.

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Special points of interest:

- Driving out of Profession—**
- Veterans**

Younger Teachers not Staying

Hostile Work Place



TIDBITS

“The poorer districts are being hit hardest...It’s not fair that some districts’ target revenue is \$12,000 and mine is \$5,100.”

“Give back local control on property taxes. Remove the cap.”

“Close loopholes in the business tax.”

“They should have used all of the Rainy Day Fund and made education a priority.”

“We do not have a funding crisis in Texas. We have a leadership crisis that has

manifested itself in the state budget.”

“Fix the structural deficit from 2006 and look for new sources of revenue.”

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SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY (continued)

She added that a large number of superintendents said that larger class sizes and mounting pressures to achieve on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests this spring were likely to drive others out of the profession. One superintendent wrote, "I believe more experienced

teachers (about to retire) will leave the profession and more younger teachers will do all that they can to find jobs in other professions. Why go where you are not appreciated."

Another stated, "Most staff are thankful to have a job, and I feel they will stay in place for the next three years. After that, the

accountability system will drive them out." In the survey of school employees, 81 percent of respondents said the school climate for students, teachers and staff was worse or much worse, with 72 percent saying it was "stressful and taxing" and another 9 percent describing it as "hostile and unfriendly."

IMPACT ON INSTRUCTION



THEIR FUTURE
OUR FIGHT!

"We have fewer programs, and a narrower curriculum. We went from an academic 'full meal' to 'bread and water.'"

"Devastating. We have been cutting every year since 2006."

"The reductions are having a direct impact on the quality of instruction in the classroom."

— "Technology will take a big hit."

— "Not able to provide necessary materials and supplies."

— "Less resources to support struggling students."

— "Lack of personnel for intensive remediation."

— "Loss of reading specialists, intervention programs and summer school for struggling students."