

# McAllen AFT News

McAllen AFT, 1500 Dove, McAllen, TX

December, 2012

Volume 20, Issue 4

## CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

### NEWTOWN

On our Texas AFT Web site is the following (which we could say no better):

Like all Americans, we are deeply saddened by the shooting rampage that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, on Friday. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families that tragically lost loved ones. We thank the teachers, school staff, first responders, and health-care workers who acted heroically to prevent more lives from being lost. Our hearts go out to the children and the entire community of Newtown.

Send your messages of condolence and support to the students, staff, teachers and community of Newtown.

Your messages will be passed along from AFT Connecticut to our three local affiliates in Newtown—Newtown Federation of Teachers, Local 1727; Newtown Federation of

Custodians, Local 3924; and Newtown Federation of Education Personnel, Local 3785—and shared with the entire community.

Please help us make sure the people of Newtown see, hear, and feel our support.  
[http://action.aft.org/c/340/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=5214](http://action.aft.org/c/340/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=5214)

### PRE-FILED BILLS IN JANUARY LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Rep. Eddie Lucio III, Democrat of San Benito, has pre-filed some noteworthy legislation concerning the role of counselors. His [HB 280](#) would restrict to no more than 10 percent the amount of a counselor's time that could be spent on duties other than counseling and guidance. The bill specifies that time spent administering student assessments would not count as counseling or guidance.

Rep. Lucio's [HB 282](#) would increase funding earmarked for the employment of counselors by school districts

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## **MORE TO THINK ABOUT**

and would steer that funding toward districts that have the highest percentage of students at risk of dropping out of school.

[HB 290](#) by Rep. Phil King, Republican of Weatherford, would authorize school districts to replace state-mandated achievement tests with locally approved alternative exams.

[HB 296](#) by Rep. Eddie Rodriguez, Democrat of Austin, would require a free breakfast to be provided for all students at a campus where 80 percent or more are eligible for a free or reduced-price breakfast.

**State Rep. Carol Alvarado, from Houston, on Thursday pre-filed five education-related bills.**



**THEIR FUTURE  
OUR FIGHT!**

Two relate to class size, two to graduation requirements, and one to required physical activity in middle school.

Alvarado's HB 273 would extend state law's requirement of a 22-to-1 pupil-teacher ratio to fifth grade. Currently the 22-to-1 cap applies only in grades K-4. Her HB 274 would require school districts receiving a waiver of the class-size cap to report the number of students added to each class affected and the resulting total number of students in the class.

Alvarado's HB 275 would add a requirement of an additional half-credit of physical education for graduation under the recommended or advanced graduation plan. Her HB 276 would add a half credit of health to the required course work for the recommended or advanced plan.

HB 277 by Alvarado addresses required physical activity in grades 6-8. Current law calls for 30 minutes of physical exercise for at least four semesters during these three grades; the Alvarado bill would require such moderate or vigorous exercise throughout each school year in grades 6-8.

### **EL PASO**

Texas Education Commissioner Michael Williams announced that he had ordered the takeover of El Paso ISD by a conservator and board of managers appointed by him. The El Paso School Board says they will appeal this decision to the U. S. Justice Department. Looks like a lawsuit.