

McAllen AFT News

McAllen AFT, 1500 Dove, McAllen, TX

March, 2013

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LOBBY DAY

MCALLEN AFT TEAM

The McAllen AFT bus left from our office at 1500 Dove Ave, McAllen TX 78504 at 4:15 a.m. on March 11, 2013 for the state capitol. We are proud of our team for representing us at this Lobby Day Rally.

Some 3,000 Texas AFT members converged on the state capitol today from all across Texas to lobby their legislators to restore school funding, reduce the state's over-reliance on high-stakes testing, oppose private-school vouchers, and bolster Teacher Retirement System pensions. AFT members from Brownsville to the Panhandle, from deep East Texas to far West Texas spent the better part of the day visiting their area lawmakers one by one to make the case for public education.

"Our Kids, Our Future" was the recurring theme sounded by Texas AFT President Linda Bridges, Secretary-Treasurer Louis Malfaro, and others who addressed the throng of Texas AFT members under a perfect blue sky in downtown Austin.

McAllen AFT was represented by a total 46 people, made up of teachers, retirees, parents and students. All attended meetings with Rep. Terry Canales, Rep. Sergio Munoz Jr., Rep. Oscar Longoria, Rep. Ryan Guillen, Rep. Armando "Mando" Martinez Legislative Aide (Mr. Martinez was out because the legislature was in session and couldn't meet with us

at the appointment time.) and Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr.

Teachers, parents and children provided different perspectives at our meetings regarding the everyday problems they experience at school. Our retirees expressed their concerns on TRS.

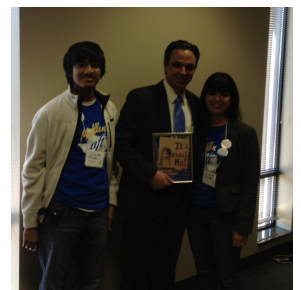
Dalinda "Dolly" Alcantar: I felt empowered by Lobby Day and especially excited about the opportunity to listen to our local legislators about their thoughts on education. I was especially pleased with how well informed they were on educational issues that would effect the teachers and students of the Valley. I am thankful that we have leaders prepared to fight for us in Austin!"

Walentin Kostenko: Lobby Day 2013 was an overwhelming success as far as representation from many AFT locals and the general public. I sensed that the majority of law makers visited is very supportive in resolving not only the many issues that plague public education but the Teacher Retirement System as well. All representatives that we visited provided a positive and supportive response as far as their determination in addressing the many hurdles that need to be overcome to assure that the children of Texas receive the quality of education that they deserve. There is no doubt that Texas will rise again to the level of excellence in education for which it was once known. The road to success is a combination of a determined will of the People and those who we have elected to represent us. Go Texas!



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LOBBY DAY PICTURES

OUR KIDS LOBBYING FOR THEIR FUTURE

High school kids asked that their teachers be provided with funds to purchase materials and supplies, because they knew that the teachers are spending their own money to provide for the class, which they think is not fair.

Elijah Villalobos: "I'm in 3rd grade and it is a testing grade and is very different from last year where we didn't take the STAAR test. A couple of weeks ago I had a breakdown because I am just so tired of the tests, benchmarks...I don't even want to go to school anymore and I used to love it.

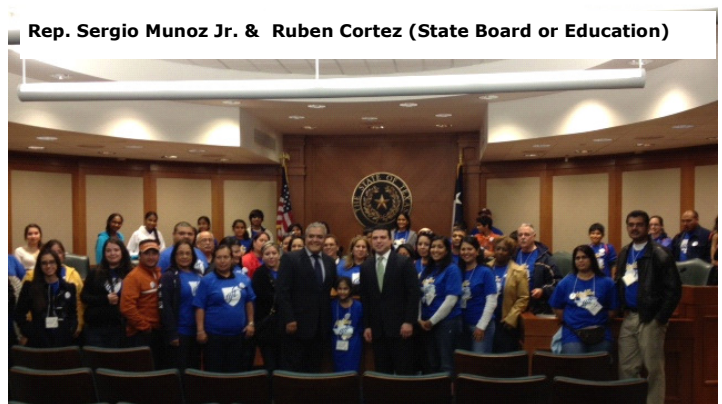
Mia Reyna: I'm in 3rd grade at Rayburn and my teacher is really nice and good but I just feel a lot of pressure. I cried the other day with my mom because it was too much and I stayed home. I wish it wasn't so much pressure.



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

We were advised by one of the legislative aides to always keep in contact with our legislator offices and keep the correspondence coming to let our legislators know that we are concerned about the issues of testing, funding, private school vouchers and teachers' retirement.

We ask you to continue calling your legislator's office with your concerns. Your call is logged and recorded and it definitely gets to your legislator.



Rep. Sergio Munoz Jr. & Ruben Cortez (State Board of Education)



Rep. Terry Canales



Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr.



Rep. Armando Martinez Office