



Association of Texas  
Professional Educators  
305 E. Huntland Dr., Suite 300  
Austin, TX 78752-3792

Phone: (512) 467-0071  
Fax: (512) 467-2203  
Email: [info@atpe.org](mailto:info@atpe.org)  
Online: [atpe.org](http://atpe.org)

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**CONTACT: Michael Spurlin, [mspurlin@atpe.org](mailto:mspurlin@atpe.org)**

**Let Us Teach: ATPE Members Offer Input for Teacher Vacancy Task Force**  
*ATPE Survey Captures Voices of More than 400 Educators from Across Texas*

In early March, Gov. Greg Abbott directed the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to form a task force to address ongoing staffing concerns in Texas public schools. As initially announced, the task force included only two classroom teachers; following criticism from ATPE and other education stakeholders, TEA announced the addition of 26 more campus-level educator seats on the task force.

Yet 28 voices are still not enough to provide a full picture of the challenges facing Texas public school teachers. As Texas' largest educator association, ATPE decided to ask its approximately 90,000 members a simple question: "What would you tell the Teacher Vacancy Task Force?" From March 24 to April 8, we received more than 400 thoughtful replies, and we have kept the survey open so further educators can share their input.

ATPE Lobbyist Andrea Chevalier, PhD, a former middle and high school science teacher, has analyzed the replies and prepared a short summary report, but we also encourage task force members, TEA officials, elected officials, the media and the public at large to explore the responses in detail at [atpe.org/let-us-teach](http://atpe.org/let-us-teach). The voices of Texas educators are raw, passionate, and filled with care for students.

ATPE's summary report also includes a series of policy recommendations for the task force and ultimately the Legislature and school boards. In short, as Chevalier writes: "Our educators overwhelmingly express that they feel unable to teach because their plates are unrealistically overloaded, which, over time, has caused them to feel broken and unsuccessful in both their professional and personal lives. Although many educators stay in the profession for their students, the magic of learning has faded for both students and teachers. Returning joy to the profession by getting back to basics—letting teachers teach—will stop the exodus of existing educators and help inspire those who wish to work alongside them."

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**About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)**

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 90,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas' more than five million public school students. | [atpe.org](http://atpe.org)

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