



A Union of Professionals

Texas AFT
AFL-CIO

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Dear Member,

On behalf of the 66,000 members of the Texas American Federation of Teachers (AFT), I am glad to welcome you back for the 2023-2024 school year. I know this year will be challenging, just as the last several have been. But I am energized by the work of our union of public school employees, and I hope you are too. Through Texas AFT, we build our collective power to help ourselves, our students, and our communities thrive. Members like you work hard every day, educating our students, advocating for better working and learning conditions, and mobilizing to elect leaders who will support, not attack or abandon, our schools.

Together, we can do big things. We've shown it over the past year. On our webpage for returning members, you'll find details about our union's work, including our recent wins, as well as links to member benefits and upcoming events. Visit www.texasaft.org/welcome (see QR code). In the face of a statewide school staffing and morale crisis, I'm proud of the work our union has done to drive the plight of our profession into the public sphere. Together, we have changed the conversation in Texas, surfacing the real issues in public education around salary, staffing, and the public good — in a way that has never been done before.

We did it with research, data, and hard work. But we also did it with the voices of members like you guiding every step, through surveys, focus groups, local advocacy campaigns, media interviews, and rallies at the Legislature. We told lawmakers and leaders that they should respect us, or they could expect us. More than 26,000 of you answered that call, taking action in the 88th Legislature. We didn't win our Respect Agenda. But we kept the threat of vouchers and defunding public schools at bay, standing strong even when lawmakers held our pay raises and funding hostage. Now we await yet another special session, where school funding, school employee pay, and the fate of our public schools themselves will be decided.

Your union needs your help. A state with a \$33 billion budget surplus ought to be able to fund schools to thrive, not just survive. We cannot settle for crumbs or empty promises. To win, however, we must grow our strength. Please join our statewide Together We Thrive campaign and share it with potential members on your campus. Visit thrive.texasaft.org (see QR code) to learn more about what we're fighting for and sign up to participate in our working conditions tracking project later this fall. We can't win the respect you and your students deserve without you asking your colleagues to join and sharing our information.

Our collective activism will keep the "public" in public education, keep our schools as the centers of our communities, and ensure school employee voices are heard in the halls of power. I invite you to grow your advocacy with our union and help us build a strong movement for public education across Texas.

Together, we fight. And together, we will thrive.

In Unity,

Zeph Capo
Texas AFT President



**WELCOME
BACK**



**THRIVE
CAMPAIGN**