

Association of Texas Professional Educators

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Supporting Your Freedom to TeachSM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AG opinion protects teacher pay

AUSTIN – School districts will be required to give teachers annual pay increases based on years of experience for the 2010-11 school year, according to an opinion issued today by Texas Attorney General Gregg Abbott.

The attorney general's decision is in response to a question from the commissioner of education on whether a law passed by the Texas Legislature requires school districts to maintain regularly scheduled pay increases in effect when the law was passed in 2009.

“Teachers work very diligently to provide our children with an quality education, and they deserve to reap the fruits of their labors,” said Doug Rogers, executive director for the 115,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators. “This salary maintenance provision is intended to prevent districts from decreasing local pay in order to circumvent the state pay increase provided to teachers by the Legislature.”

When drafting the language for House Bill 3646 (intended to give teachers a raise of \$80 per pay period), lawmakers included a stipulation to prevent school districts from arbitrarily lowering their salary schedules and essentially using the allotted funding for purposes other than educators' salaries. The law prohibits school districts from lowering their salary schedule below that set in the 2008-09 school year.

“This law was never meant to place financial hardship on school districts or to circumvent local control,” said Rogers. “If districts had been allowed to deny regular step increases that were pre-approved, they would essentially be withholding compensation that teachers were counting on and that is rightly due to them.”

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The 115,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators is the largest educators' group in Texas and the largest nonunion educators' group nationwide. Its membership consists of classroom teachers, para-educators, administrators, college students and retired educators. ATPE is committed to advocating for better benefits for all educators, promoting a collaborative work environment and the right of educators to choose the association they feel represents their interests, and providing the best education possible for all Texas school children.

