

ATPE FOUNDATION

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Report: Educators are frustrated with teaching to test

AUSTIN – Some of the state’s best educators are frustrated because they are forced to spend most of their classroom time teaching students how to pass high-stake tests, according to a recent report on a focus group held at the ATPE Foundation Regional Teacher of the Year Gathering.

“We have some of the state’s best teachers saying that instead of educating, they’re teaching to the test,” said Brenda Lynch, ATPE Foundation President and a secondary math specialist for the Region VI Education Service Center. “It’s no wonder they’re frustrated. Hopefully, the new STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) tests will allow teachers to create classroom environments that foster student-center discussion and problem solving.”

In keeping with its mission to advance public education through educator recruitment and retention efforts, the ATPE Foundation, established by the Association of Texas Professional Educators, invited the 2011 Texas Regional Teachers of the Year to a gathering June 7-9 at the Hyatt Lost Pines in Bastrop.

Twenty-two elementary and secondary Regional Teachers of the Year participated in four discussion sessions that covered support and professional development, teacher preparation and mentoring programs, excellence in teaching, and the future of teaching. The sessions were conducted by Creative Consumer Research of Houston, and the report was released in August.

The report offers four recommendations for improvements, including for educators to utilize mentoring as well as to leverage technology to incorporate critical thinking in order to move away from simply teaching to the test, Lynch said.

The foundation’s goal was to compile focus group information for use by education organizations, state agencies, school districts and legislators as they work to improve public education.

“The Regional Teacher of the Year Gathering allowed accomplished teachers around the state to have a real and in-depth discussion with their peers about why they continue to dedicate themselves to public education despite the challenges they face in the classroom,” Lynch said. “These teachers spoke openly about their concerns about the future of public education as well as their frustration with feeling unappreciated in a profession often discounted by the public as well as lawmakers.”

To view the report, visit atpefoundation.org/RegionalTeacher.aspx.

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The ATPE Foundation was established in 2000 by the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE), the state’s leading educators’ association and the largest independent association for public school educators in the nation. The foundation is dedicated to the advancement of public education and the success of Texas schoolchildren through literacy initiatives, technology programs and educator recruitment and retention efforts.