

# Proclaiming our **LOVE** for public ed

## ATPE turns Valentine's Day into Lobby Day

**M**ore than 350 ATPE members dedicated their Valentine's Day to a matter close to their hearts: public school funding. Those who attended the 2011 ATPE Political Involvement Training and Lobby Day Feb. 13-14 in Austin had the opportunity to speak directly with lawmakers on proposed funding cuts, class-size limits and teacher quality.

The two-day event began Sunday afternoon with three training sessions and a live auction benefiting the ATPE Political Action Committee (ATPE-PAC). The closing session featured a legislative panel loaded with major education players: Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano), the chair of the Senate Education Committee; Rep. Rob Eissler (R-The Woodlands), the chair of the House Public Education Committee; Sen. Wendy Davis (D-Fort Worth), a member of the Senate Education Committee; and Rep. Mark Strama (D-Austin), a member of the House Public Education Committee.

On Monday, attendees traveled to the State Capitol for meetings with lawmakers. Both the House and the Senate honored ATPE members with resolutions. In the House, the resolution was sponsored by Eissler; the Senate sponsor was Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound).

ATPE extends a special thank-you to all of the members who made the trip to Lobby Day.



ATPE Lobby Day attendees gather in a Capitol stairwell for a photo with Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound), who sponsored a Senate resolution in their honor.



Jefferson ATPE members **Karen and Ike Ives** meet with Sen. Kevin Eltife (R-Tyler).



Mesquite ATPE members **Carol Davies** and **Janice Houston** and Region 8 ATPE Director **Rita Long** applaud the presentation of a Senate resolution honoring ATPE.



ATPE State President **David de la Garza** and Past State President **Sam Spurlock** display Senate Resolution No. 228 sponsored by Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound) in honor of the ATPE members who attended Lobby Day.



Willis ATPE member **Nancy Blackwelder** celebrates her winning bid in the ATPE-PAC Live Auction.



Willis ATPE member **Cory Colby** explains to Lobby Day attendees how he has worked to develop personal relationships with his lawmakers.



ATPE State Secretary **Cheryl Buchanan** encourages members to participate in the PAC's Peak Challenge and help ATPE-PAC raise \$10,000 by May 1.



Waxahachie ATPE member **Robin Brown** asks ATPE's legislative panel a question on class-size limits and the need for parental notification of districts' requests for waivers.



Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano), third from right, poses for a picture with Plano ATPE members.

# LOBBY DAY "TRENDS" ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## VIA TWITTER:

@SenatorBirdwell: Meeting w/ members of @OfficialATPE, a group of educators that really care about Texas kids. #txlege

@pmgibbs8: @OfficialATPE #lobbyday Just met with Senator Estes' education specialist. Very nice meeting. Region 9 ATPE and Denton ATPE

## VIA FACEBOOK:

Irving ATPE member Sharon Phares commented: "It was the best Lobby Day ever. Some of the [legislative] members even took notes during our meetings ... and they even tried to encourage us!"

Follow ATPE on Twitter @OfficialATPE, and "like" ATPE on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/officialatpe](http://www.facebook.com/officialatpe).



Rep. Mark Strama (D-Austin), Rep. Rob Eissler (R-The Woodlands) and Sen. Wendy Davis (D-Fort Worth) listen to ATPE members make emotion-filled pleas for the preservation of the hard 22-1 class-size limit in grades K-4. Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano) also served on ATPE's legislative panel.

# KEEP THE CONVERSATION ALIVE

## Stay involved this session with ATPE's legislative resources

You've seen the dire headlines, and ATPE can't stress enough just how important it is for public educators to be involved in the legislative process. But how can you start, maintain or improve your relationship with your lawmakers? Try taking advantage of the many resources ATPE provides to help educators stay informed and engaged as the session unfolds.



### WEB

Bookmark the **Legislative Session Resource pages** in the Advocacy section of [atpe.org](http://atpe.org); consider them your one-stop online resource for everything you need to know about the session. Learn the basics of the legislative process, find out who represents you and read tips on the best ways to communicate with your elected officials. You'll also find ATPE's Legislative Update, which helps you keep up with the latest legislative news from the Capitol. The Legislative Update page is updated regularly with information on ATPE-priority legislation, agency hearings and ATPE business.



### E-MAIL

Join ATPE's **Legislative Alert Network (LAN)** to stay plugged-in to the political scene. The LAN is a free e-mail service that helps you communicate directly with your legislators on the issues that matter to you. There are two types of LAN e-mail notices: issue updates and action alerts. Updates keep you informed about the latest news from Austin and Washington, D.C. Action alerts let you know when and how to contact your elected officials to influence important votes and decisions. All you need to join the LAN is an e-mail address. Sign up at [www.atpe.org/Advocacy/LAN/lanpromo.asp](http://www.atpe.org/Advocacy/LAN/lanpromo.asp). LAN members also have exclusive access to ATPE's Advocacy Center, a tool that allows you to contact your legislators directly through an automated e-mail system.



### STAFF

Call **ATPE Governmental Relations** when you have questions. In addition to ATPE's six full-time lobbyists, the ATPE Governmental Relations department includes dedicated support staff members ready to help you in any way they can. Simply call the state office at (800) 777-ATPE and ask for ATPE Governmental Relations, or e-mail your questions or requests to [government@atpe.org](mailto:government@atpe.org).



### PAC

Participate in the **PAC's Peak Challenge**. PAC stands for political action committee, and a PAC manages a fund that allows people with a common interest to pool their financial resources in order to make donations to candidates and officeholders who support their cause. Donating to the ATPE Political Action Committee (ATPE-PAC) is easy and a great way to stay politically active. Right now members are focused on the PAC's Peak Challenge: Raise \$10,000 for ATPE-PAC by May 1. That might sound like a lot of money, but it would take less than 10 percent of ATPE members contributing just \$1 each to reach the \$10,000 peak. Members who participate in the PAC's Peak Challenge will receive special recognition as well as earn credit toward ATPE-PAC awards programs. Learn more at [www.atpe.org/Advocacy/pac/pacspeak.aspx](http://www.atpe.org/Advocacy/pac/pacspeak.aspx).



### PHONE

Call the **ATPE Hotline**, a recorded phone message, for updates on legislative happenings. Reach the hotline by calling (800) 777-ATPE after business hours. During business hours, simply ask the receptionist to connect you to the hotline.