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Texas Education Groups Join Forces to Promote Voting *Early Voting Starts February 16*

AUSTIN, Texas — With an unconstitutional school finance system, rapidly changing accountability standards, and increasing needs for school funding, it's critically important that Texas educators, administrators, and school employees make their voices heard at the polls. That's why the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has created the education and election advocacy website *TeachtheVote.org*. ATPE has also teamed up with more than 10 other education groups in support of a new initiative called *TexasEducatorsVote.com*.

"We're coming together for the first time in an unprecedented way," ATPE Governmental Relations Director Brock Gregg said. "Our goal is to implore educators and the public to take action. There are about one million active and retired public school educators in Texas. If they all go out and vote, this could have a tremendous positive impact on public education."

ATPE and other groups are asking every superintendent and principal in the state to join *TexasEducatorsVote.com* to ensure nothing less than the highest education turnout the state has ever seen. School administrators have the opportunity to promote voter participation by all school employees and send the message that strong voter turnout among education stakeholders will help ensure the future success of our state's public education system.

What can educators do?

- Administrators can tell school employees to vote during the first week of early voting and set a goal for 100 percent voter participation on each campus.
- Send out a districtwide call to go to TexasEducatorsVote.com and fill out the voter oath. School administrators cannot promote particular candidates, but they can and should vigorously support voting.
- Ensure all educators know about TeachTheVote.org, a nonpartisan education issues website that presents voting records, candidate surveys, and relevant third-party endorsements. Here, they can learn about candidates' positions on public education for themselves.
- School district leaders can ensure that every employee is given time during the workday to go to the polls. We suggest coordinating with campus volunteers, such as PTO/PTO members, to help cover classrooms while teachers vote.
- School districts can also encourage employees to ride together to the polls and even provide district transportation.

An ATPE spokesperson will be available for interview. Please contact ATPE Media Relations if you're interested in covering this story.

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The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with more than 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school education.