



AID FOR EDUCATORS



"Aid for Educators is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to fund our teachers with supplies and technology."

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"Schools say calculator mandate ignores funding issues"

Below are excerpts from the Fort Worth Star Telegram article dated April 15, 2014 by Aamena Ahmed. The article tells how poorer school districts need calculators or tablets for STAAR testing.

"We just don't have the funds to purchase a tablet for every eighth-grade student in our district," spokeswoman Patricia Ayala said.

As the state integrates a directive that requires eighth-graders in Texas public schools to have graphing calculators for [STAAR testing](#), some poorer school districts say such mandates ignore their financial difficulties

It's hard for school districts with a lower tax base to buy the same instructional material as other districts, said Ray Freeman, deputy executive director of the Equity Center, which advocates for [property-poor](#) school districts.



"Being a Teacher is Not for Sissies"

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In February, state Education Commissioner [wrote](#) to Texas superintendents to tell them they must ensure that eighth-graders have graphing calculators for STAAR assessments starting in the 2014-15 school year.

"They'll do what they have to do to be accredited, but it takes away money they are already spending elsewhere," he said, adding that it creates a situation in which "schools might have to give up an optional Spanish or career technology elective, since they may not be able to fund the materials for it."

[Read the whole story.](#)

The calculators cost more than \$100 each. Districts have provided them for algebra classes but not for most eighth-grade math classes. The state will not provide extra funding for the mandate

Aid for Educators wants to help provide tablets to teachers. Tablets can be used in many ways from calculators to class projects.

To provide more flexibility, the requirements were amended to include the option of substituting math applications on **tablet devices** for calculators. But many [property-poor](#) districts and their advocates said resources are limited and they have other issues to consider.

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"Most of the students in our school district live in poverty," said Marcus Nelson, superintendent of the Laredo school district, where more than 90 percent of the student body is [economically disadvantaged](#). "We don't have big budgets to spend from. We are trying to buy the equipment, but we can't ignore that it is expensive."

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In the Ysleta school district in El Paso, more than 80 percent of students are economically disadvantaged. Officials there said paying for tablets or calculators won't be easy.



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TABLETS FOR TEACHERS

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