



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

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News release: TSTA demands Legislature find new tax revenue for education

EL PASO – The Texas State Teachers Association on Saturday demanded that the Texas Legislature meet its revenue shortfall by spending all of the state's Rainy Day Fund and finding new tax revenue.

In a resolution adopted at the TSTA's annual House of Delegates meeting in El Paso, the educator group sharply criticized the legislative leadership for considering crippling budget cuts to the public schools.

Facing a revenue shortfall as deep as \$27 billion, the Texas House of Representatives has approved a new state budget that would slash public education by \$7.8 billion during 2012-2013. The Senate Finance Committee reportedly is considering a budget that would cut public schools by \$3 billion to \$4 billion.

In its resolution, TSTA said such deep cuts would cost tens of thousands of educators their jobs, cripple educational opportunities for tens of thousands of children and amount to a "complete abdication" of the Legislature's constitutional duty to fund the public schools.

TSTA demanded that lawmakers spend all \$9.4 billion projected for the Rainy Day Fund, consider closing some tax exemptions and find additional, new tax revenue to adequately and equitably fund the public schools and other critical state needs.

"Enrollment in Texas' public schools is growing by 85,000 children a year. Texas' outdated, inefficient tax structure cannot keep pace with this growth or dig the state out of its budgetary hole," the resolution stated.

TSTA noted that a huge part of the Legislature's budgetary problem is a \$10 billion biennial shortfall in the school finance structure. That deficiency was caused by cuts in local school property taxes, which the Legislature ordered in 2006 but didn't fully pay for with state revenue.

"The Texas Legislature has a responsibility to fund public education, and we must hold their feet to the fire," said TSTA President Rita Haecker of Austin, who was re-elected to a second term on Saturday.