



School finance: Now is the time

Reforming school finance and providing property tax relief begin with a substantial increase in state funding for public education.

Here's why:

- Funding per Texas student in average daily attendance (ADA) is about \$2,300 less than the national average, ranking Texas 36th among the states and the District of Columbia, based on National Education Association rankings.
- The state's share of the Foundation School Program has dropped to 38 percent, leaving the remaining 62 percent to be paid by local property taxpayers, according to the Legislative Budget Board.
- More state funding is necessary to give all students the resources they need, including smaller class sizes, well-equipped classrooms and facilities and up-to-date instructional materials.
- School enrollments continue to grow, with more than half of Texas' public school students coming from low-income families. Many of these students do not speak English well, and they require even more classroom resources.
- More state funding is the only way to effectively provide relief from local property taxes without crippling local services.

The money is there:

The comptroller has forecast as much as \$9 billion in additional general revenue will be available this session for education and other needs, and he has projected a record \$15 billion balance in the Rainy Day Fund. TSTA believes this is enough money for legislators to increase state funding for public education and provide relief from school property taxes.