



TSTA NEWS

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TSTA: New public education budget is shameful

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina released the following statement:

The portion of the new state budget that conferees drafted for public education is shameful. Legislators began the session with a record \$33 billion budget surplus and a deplorably under-funded public education system and deplorably underpaid teachers. They are ending the session with a deplorably under-funded public education system and teacher pay raises that amount to scraps left over from a feeding frenzy of property tax relief. And teachers are ending the session still fighting off an effort to take even more money from public education for private school vouchers.

Adding insult to injury, budget-writers have given the state education commissioner a \$75,000 pay raise, which by itself is \$15,000 more than the average teacher salary in Texas. Lawmakers seemed to have forgotten that teachers, not the top education bureaucrat, are the backbone of public education.

The new education budget will do little, if anything, to address the teacher shortage or provide school districts with the resources they need to meet the educational needs of more than 5 million students.

Budget documents guarantee teachers the same raises they received for the 2020-21 school year, which were minimal. This means Texas will continue to trail the national average in teacher pay by more than \$7,000, and a large percentage of Texas teachers (now about 40 percent) will be forced to continue taking second and third jobs during the school year to make ends meet for their families.

We fear the plight of under-paid school support employees may be even worse.

Budget documents also indicate no increase in the basic allotment for school districts, which needed an increase of close to \$1,000 in that key factor to cover inflationary costs alone. The ultimate losers are the school children of Texas.