



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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Contact:
Clay Robison, TSTA Public Affairs
512.476.5355, ext. 1233; clayr@tsta.org
Cell: 512.535.8994

TSTA: Most voters want to use Rainy Day money to restore school funding

Texas State Teachers Association President Rita Haecker today called on the Senate Finance Committee to use part of the Rainy Day Fund to complete the job of restoring all the \$5.4 billion cut from public school budgets two years ago.

The Finance Committee is meeting today to consider SJR1, a constitutional amendment that would dip into the \$12 billion Rainy Day Fund to pay for water and transportation projects.

“Texas’ water and transportation needs are important. But most Texans agree that nothing is more important than a first-class education for insuring Texas’ future prosperity,” Haecker said. “You cannot design, build and operate effective water systems and transportation networks without a well-educated workforce.”

That is why Texas voters, according to a bipartisan poll commissioned by TSTA this session, favored spending the Rainy Day Fund to restore the education cuts by a two-to-one margin over Rainy Day spending on water and roads.

Two-thirds of voters (66 percent) said the Rainy Day Fund should be used to restore all the public school funding. This includes 39 percent who chose education funding over roads (4 percent) and water (5 percent) plus 27 percent who would spend Rainy Day money on all three needs. Only 22 percent would save the entire Rainy Day balance for future needs.

The Senate has approved a budget that would restore only about one-fourth of the education cuts, and the House has approved a plan that would restore about half. There is enough money in the Rainy Day Fund to restore the remainder of the public school money and address other important needs, such as water and transportation, Haecker said.

TSTA also supports SJR63 by Sen. Wendy Davis, a constitutional amendment that would let voters endorse spending \$4 billion from the Rainy Day Fund for public schools. The poll indicates the amendment, if put on the ballot this November, would win overwhelming voter approval.