



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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September 1, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TSTA: While state leaders talk about fixing school finance, Texas students pay the price

The Texas Supreme Court is again hearing arguments over school finance because the governor and the legislative majority haven't done their job, Texas State Teachers Association President Noel Candelaria said today.

"Gov. Abbott says he wants to 'fix' our schools. But when is he going to start?" Candelaria asked. "Instead of doing his job for 5.2 million Texas public school children, the governor is asking the Supreme Court to make the funding issue go away."

"During the last legislative session, state leaders left billions of our tax dollars sitting in the bank that could have been put to work in the classrooms where teaching students is the highest priority," Candelaria said. "But once again, our students have been left to pay the price for the state's failure to provide the resources needed to put an end to crowded classrooms, hire more qualified teachers and improve school facilities."

Candelaria pointed to three key data points that illustrate the problems that result from the state's failure to act.

- Last year, there were 3,700 fewer teachers in public districts than there were before school funding was cut by \$5.4 billion in 2011. Meanwhile, student enrollment grew by more than 220,000, a recipe for crowded classrooms.
- Last year, school districts were granted 5,883 waivers to exceed elementary class size limits, and thousands of middle school and high school classrooms also remain overcrowded.
- Texas ranks 38th in per-student funding, spending about \$2,400 per child below the national average.

"The arithmetic is simple. Our students and teachers are being shortchanged, and every day the state fails to invest in our classrooms is another day that students are forced to pay the price," Candelaria concluded.