



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA: Per-student spending drops in Texas; Rainy Day Fund would help**

Spending for Texas public schools dropped, on average, by \$143 per student between the 2015-16 school year and the current 2016-17 school year. In that same period, total public school enrollment in the state increased by about 80,000 children, according to estimates released this week by the National Education Association (NEA).

Average spending per pupil in average daily attendance (ADA) dropped from \$10,160 in 2015-16 to an estimated \$10,017 during 2016-17, NEA reported, drawing on Texas budgetary data.

That was a decrease of 1.4 percent and ranked Texas in the bottom third (36<sup>th</sup>) among the states and the District of Columbia. Texas spending was \$2,555 less per student than the national average, which had increased during the same period by 1.3 percent to \$12,572 per ADA.

“Texas has been going in the wrong direction,” said Noel Candelaria, president of the Texas State Teachers Association, NEA’s Texas affiliate. “We urge legislative budget conferees to take the House’s lead and provide more resources for the school children who represent Texas’ future.

“We applaud House members for taking an important first step in the right direction by voting to invest an additional \$1.6 billion in our public schools, an investment that will require dipping into the Rainy Day Fund. If their Senate colleagues don’t get on board, local school property taxes will continue to rise while school budgets fall farther behind,” Candelaria added.

While state appropriations to Texas public schools lag, the state ranks in the top one-third of states (16<sup>th</sup>) in the share of school funding paid by local property taxes. School property taxes accounted for 54.6 percent of the state-local school funding total in 2015-16, NEA reported.

The House education plan would add about \$200 in funding per student, House Public Education Chair Dan Huberty has estimated.

The average teacher salary in Texas was \$52,575 in 2016-17, ranking Texas 26<sup>th</sup>, according to the NEA survey of national education data. That was a slight increase from the \$51,890 average Texas salary in 2016 but left teacher pay in Texas about \$6,300 less than the national average.