



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

316 W. 12th St., Austin, TX 78701 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

**September 1, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:
Clay Robison, TSTA Public Affairs
512-476-5355, ext. 1233; clayr@tsta.org
Cell: 512-535-8994**

TSTA: Perry starving public education

TSTA President Rita Haecker issued the following statement today on the new state budget's impacts on public education:

"When it comes to public education, Rick Perry is all hair and no cattle. He talks a good game of economic development and job creation, but his under-funding of public schools and universities undermines Texas' ability to adequately prepare young people for the jobs that will make or break the state's future.

"Perry is starving public education in our state. His new, two-year state budget is the first budget during his lifetime (more than 60 years) that fails to fully fund Texas' school finance obligations, including enrollment growth. The budget cuts \$4 billion from school district formula funding and another \$1.4 billion in education discretionary grants for vital programs, such as full-day pre-kindergarten and dropout prevention.

"Thousands of Texas teachers already have lost their jobs, and we fear that more will follow. Some budget experts have estimated that as many as 49,000 school employees will get pink slips by this time next year. Classrooms are becoming more crowded, compromising educational quality in a state that already is dead last in the percentage of adults with a high school diploma.

"More than 43,000 returning college students are losing financial aid this year under Perry's new budget, and thousands more entering college freshman who qualify for financial assistance will have to struggle without state scholarships.

"Despite all these anti-student, anti-teacher, anti-family cuts, the Legislature, at Perry's insistence, left \$6.5 billion of the taxpayers' money unspent in the emergency Rainy Day Fund so Perry could win political points with ideological extremists. Average teacher pay in Texas (\$48,261 for the 2009-2010 school year) ranks 31st in the country, about \$7,000 below the national average, and per-student funding on public education ranks in the bottom third among the states.

"If Perry's neglect of education isn't reversed, employers with the higher-paying jobs will take their opportunities to other states. Rick Perry likes to brag about the so-called 'Texas Miracle,' but with public schools suffering billions in budget cuts while school enrollment continues to grow, the real miracle workers are the dedicated Texas teachers who are forced to do more with less in overcrowded classrooms. Rick Perry is no friend of public education, and that is a direct threat to our economy and a generation of young Texans."