TSTA: Senate budget is shameful; school kids need help now

The Texas State Teachers Association today said Senate leaders should be ashamed of themselves for proposing a budget that continues to shortchange public school students and attempts to deceive local property taxpayers.

"The budget is about more than numbers. It is about people's lives, and this budget would make it more difficult for Texas' 5.3 million public school children to receive the opportunities for success they deserve," said TSTA President Noel Candelaria.

"This budget proposal would barely — maybe — cover enrollment growth, but only by increasing the burden on local school taxpayers, who already pay for the lion's share of school costs. Meanwhile, the lieutenant governor, who pretends to feel the pain over property taxes, continues promoting his ill-conceived idea to take tax dollars from under-funded public schools to pay for private school vouchers for a handful of select kids."

"This budget is shameful. The vast majority of Texas children will continue to be educated in neighborhood public schools. They need — and deserve — more than this from state lawmakers who purport to represent them," Candelaria added.

"The Senate leadership has ordered still another study of school funding, but that shouldn't be an excuse to delay giving Texas school children the resources they need now for success. As legislative leaders of both parties already have suggested, lawmakers should tap the Rainy Day Fund, which is approaching a $12 billion balance. School funding is a true emergency."

Texas spends $2,690 less per child in average daily attendance (ADA) than the national average, ranking Texas 38th among the states and the District of Columbia in this important measure of a state's commitment to its school children.