



## Lawmakers hail call for good teachers

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AUSTIN — Key Republican legislators savored Gov. Rick Perry's focus on educational improvements, with one member saying he hopes lousy teachers can be encouraged to quit.

"We've got to start recognizing and rewarding the good teachers and letting them enjoy some financial fruits of their labors," said Rep. Bill Keffer, R-Dallas. "The ones who don't quite cut the mustard, they need to find another place to go to work."

The Texas State Teachers Association and Association of Texas Professional Educators said such comments reflect desires for improvement without putting substantially more money into schools.

"The real issue is we can't recruit enough certified qualified teachers to fill our classrooms," said the TSTA's Richard Kouri, who said more than 50,000 classrooms now lack a teacher certified in their subject.

Keffer joined the heads of House and Senate education panels at a Texas Public Policy Foundation forum in welcoming Perry's pitch for rewarding great teachers with bonuses.

Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, said it was wonderful that Perry didn't present a detailed school finance or tax plan, allowing lawmakers to do it.

"He told it like it is," said Rep. Kent Grusendorf, R-Arlington.

The pair said lawmakers trying to overhaul the \$30 billion public school finance system will put more money into schools, but not the more than \$4 billion a year sought by districts that won a district judge's ruling last year.

Byron Schломach, the foundation's economist, said Texas education spending since 1990 has outpaced inflation and enrollment growth, with expenditures surging the most under the "skinflint governors," Perry and George W. Bush.

"What our public schools are best at right now is spending money," he said.

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