

# Gov. Perry touts Legislature's success during stop at Tice Elementary

By Ryan Anderson  
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Texas Governor Rick Perry and House Speaker Tom Craddick touted the "successful completion" of the 78th session of the Texas Legislature during a recent stop at Tice Elementary School.

"We did what we set out to do," Perry said. "We kept the trust by keeping our promises."

Despite some high-profile partisan disagreements towards the end of the session, Perry felt that the ends justified the means when it comes to judging the success of the entire session.

"This wasn't an easy session for us," Perry said. "In fact, this was about the toughest session I can recall. People remember results more than the process and when you rank this session with past sessions, I think you will see that it was one of the most successful sessions in state history. We prioritized and we got the results we set out to achieve."

Among the results Perry touted was the passing of a balanced budget that featured an additional \$1.2 billion in public education funding, a new science initiative and \$324 million for the Texas Grant Program.

Best of all according to Perry, the budget does not raise taxes and reduces general revenue spending by \$2.6 million, while drawing down more federal funds. Additionally, the budget allocates \$1.1 billion in new funds for vital health care programs including \$172 million to help trauma centers handle more emergency cases.

Other accomplishments of the legislative session include:

- Establishing the \$295 million Texas Enterprise Fund to assist efforts to attract employers and create new jobs in Texas.
- Providing seed money for the Texas Mobility Fund that will generate billions in bond funds.
- Funding the Texas Emission Reduction Plan to bring the state's clean air plan into federal compliance.
- Laying the groundwork to ensure Texas has the safe, abundant water supply it needs by moving forward with plans to desalinate gulf water.

"State leaders showed the kind of budgetary discipline families must show," Perry said. "We set priorities, separated wants from needs and stretched every dollar. We protected the pocketbooks

of Texas taxpayers while protecting vital programs and increasing funding for public education and health care."

Citing Galena Park ISD's success as the largest district in Texas to receive an exemplary rating, Perry vowed to improve public education across the board in Texas.

"This is real family committed to helping children succeed," Perry said. "This district is committed to making a difference in students' lives and helping make dreams a reality. We need to find a way to duplicate your success across the state."

While most of Perry's remarks focused on the successful addressing of state issues, the governor feels the work for the elected officials of Texas is just beginning.

"Now that the other priorities have been addressed and we have examined every dime of state spending and increased government efficiency, Texans can know that in the near future we will pass comprehensive education reform that ensures better results in our schools and a stable, long-term source of funding so we can keep our commitment to adequately educating every Texas child," Perry said.

Regarding the possibility of calling a special session to take care of the unfinished business from the regular session, including comprehensive education reform, Perry said it was not a matter of if a special session will be called but when.

"We will have a special session to discuss education issues but we want to make sure we have everything in place before I call the session," Perry said.

As to whether redistricting, the issue that ground state business to a halt following a walkout by over 50 democrats, will be brought up in a special session, Perry was a bit more cryptic.

"We may or may not look at redistricting in a special session," Perry said. "Most likely the people in the state of Texas would want their elected representatives to decide district boundaries as opposed to having districts decided by a federal judge. We will look at it again I am just not sure whether it will be addressed in the special session."

Should a redistricting measure pass the Texas Legislature, it will be the first non-court ordered district boundary change in Texas in over 50 years.