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Candidates talk on education changes

Teachers who attended last Wednesday's Rice district classroom teachers' association meeting heard state representative Robert Saunders tell them the test they took Monday wasn't what the legislature had in mind when it adopted the widest change in the state educational system that has come along.

Saunders told about 50 teachers gathered in the Rice High School Commons meeting area, "You weren't supposed to be taking a literacy test. You were supposed to be tested on whether you were competent in a subject area."

He said that was the intent of the legislature. What happened, Saunders said, was this: A teacher takes a literacy test while still in college. But the company that administers those tests, Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, will not allow the state to use the results as part of its teacher evaluation system. Saunders said he was told the testing company does not want to become involved in litigation that might result from decisions the state made using their information. Therefore, the state education agency is using this opportunity to obtain literacy information on teachers, instead of testing in their subject areas.

Texas Education Agency spokesman Barbara Clements, an educational specialist in the teacher assessment division, said Monday was that not only did the company refuse to allow the tests information to be used, but that some of it would not have been applicable, because some teachers graduated a year or two ago, and others a decade or two ago, and the tests differ over that period.

As for the intent of the legislature, she said that House Bill 72 called for teacher testing in their subject areas, as well as in reading and writing. When the TEA told legislation it would cost about \$27 million to create about 150 tests to give teachers in the various subject areas, and about \$6 million for the reading and writing testing that was administered Monday, the legislature opted only to fund the literacy tests.

Tuesday afternoon Saunders said that if it had been just a matter of money, the legislature would have gone for the subject area testing. But, it was a matter of time. In order to keep with the schedule of teacher qualifications by June 1986, Saunders said the agency could not have had the subject-area test written in time. Without such tests, the legislature is relying on the new evaluation system that has been established, where a teacher is evaluated in the classroom by an independent evaluator and by the principal.

Thus, it falls on the superintendent to make sure the teachers in that school district are competent in their subject areas. Saunders did say on Tuesday that the law does call for a one-time test. Since the test was given Monday, he thinks the legislature may resort to a subject competency test if the in-class evaluations indicate there may be a problem.

First test history

While the act of Monday's test now is history, action surrounding the test probably will continue far into the future in the legislature, in the court system, and many other places, including among the teachers themselves, according to new reports from across the state.

One direct result of the test is that teachers across the state, and probably less than five in the Rice District according to some teachers, refused to take the test for one reason or another, and therefore will retire at the end of this school system. There was no identification of who those teachers may be in the Rice district, but one reason is that a teacher may work in a non-language arts area, and feel uncomfortable being tested in language arts skills they have not formally practiced for a decade or two. As an example of how some teachers feel about the literacy test, one woman who holds a teaching certificate in physical education said she took the language test, now it is time for physical education test.

Candidate meeting

The teacher meeting last Wednesday originally was scheduled as a meeting with Saunders, but it was later announced that one of his three political opponents also would be there. Dan Buie of Elgin joined Saunders in answering teacher questions about various aspects of House Bill 72 that created the educational system changes. They covered topics from Career Ladder to No Pass, No Play.

To start the meeting, a representative of the Texas State Teachers Association advised the audience on how to react to various segments of HB 72. He advised all teachers to take the TECAT test if they want to continue teaching in Texas, in case the test is upheld by the courts. He also gave them tips on how to handle, and react to, personnel evaluation sessions.

Perhaps because Saunders was involved with the creation of House Bill 72, and therefore was more familiar with it, he spent most of the time talking to teachers when it came time for the question-answer session. When

asked whether he would vote for HB 72 again, knowing what has happened to teacher morale, would he vote for it again, Saunders said that it had a lot of good points, and some of the portions of the bill that are being discussed most also are being discussed among legislators with the idea of debating some changes in the next legislative session. Buie's answer said that he usually it was a good bill with good points, but that it has some "fatal flaws." He said the application of the no pass, no play portion of the bill was "overkill. It's not a new idea. When I was at San Marcos High if a football player failed a course, he sat on the bench, but he didn't have to miss the rest of the season."

In addition to talking about the test, Saunders said he planned to take the test himself. He taught school in La Grange until being elected to the legislature nearly six years ago. When the subject of Career Ladder came up, Saunders said that "I'm not too sure there aren't some deficiencies in the Career Ladder that make them so difficult that you might be better off without them. It was not funded enough to give it a fair chance," Saunders urged teachers to lobby their board of education for additional career ladder funding, since the state revenues will not increase and it appears the legislature will be reducing budgets next year instead of increasing them. "In the last session we made an attempt to even kick it out," Saunders said.

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RHS track teams have first meet behind them; travel to Refugio for Saturday meet

The first track meet of the season is under the belt for the girls and boys track teams at Rice High School. They participated last Saturday with 17 other teams in a meet in Yokum.

Lisa Brown took the spotlight by setting a new Rice High School girls' record in the triple jump. She hit 37-feet, 1-inch to place first in that event in the meet. The old RHS record was 36-feet, 5-inches.

Cleve Scott brought home another first-place win. He topped all other runners in the 100-meter dash. His time was 10.87 seconds.

Emelda Clayton captured a second place finish in the girls' 100-meter dash. Other girls' results include a third place finish by the 400-meter relay team of

Veronica Woods, Cheryl McGrew, Terri Clayton and Emelda Clayton.

In the 800-meter relay, the team of Terry Clayton, Marsha McTeer, Cheryl McGrew and Dorless Stovall placed sixth. Veronica Woods and Marsha McTeer placed 4th and 5th, respectively, in the 400-meter dash. Terry Clayton placed 5th in the 200-meter dash.

"Overall we had some pretty good times," coach Dollie Johnson said.

For the boys, Rodney Williams placed 7th in the 100-meter dash. 48-foot toss; Robert Hernandez had a time of 11' 50" in the two-mile run while Flip Weeks' time was 56:07" in the 400-meter dash. Tony Hosman won 6th place in the 200-meter dash and third in the 400-meter relay team of

135 feet. Michael Rhodes and Ron McGrew participated in the 400-meter relay.

Coach Bill Wild said the team probably captured only about 10 points in the meet, finishing in about 14th place.

In the boys' junior varsity competition, Joe Perez was 6th in the mile with a time of 5' 20" and Alcario Barrios and Duvarid Perdue were 5th and sixth, respectively, in the 100-meter dash. Edward DeLaGaza in the 400-meter dash had a personal-best time of 58.95 seconds. Barrios finished 5th in the 200-meter dash and third in the JV pole vault. Stephen Meinecke also competed.

The two varsity teams will travel to Refugio for another meet this weekend.

Raiders winless in first four games

The Raider baseball team is improving its play but in the first four games of the season have a record of 0-4. On Tuesday of last week Hallettsville Sacred Heart won 12-0 and last Friday in double-header at Sealy, the Tigers topped the Raiders in both contests.

As diligent as coach Gary McNeal has been about reporting the player statistics on each game, the Headlight's fearless sports writer has managed to lose the report from the last three games. The computer crashed after the Sacred Heart stats were called in, and when we turned to old fashioned paper and pen for the Sealy stats, we managed to leave the notebook at another meeting.

Of memorable note in the first Sealy game was that the Raiders only committed one error. In the first two games of the season, the team committed six or more.

The Raiders played again this past Tuesday night, and have scheduled another contest this weekend.

Pink Ladies meet March 18

There will be a meeting of the Eagle Lake Community Hospital Auxiliary (Pink Ladies) on Tuesday, March 18 at 9:30 a.m. in the hospital's conference room.

All officers and committee chairpersons are asked to attend and give their annual reports.

There will be a discussion of possible purchases of new equipment for the hospital.

Mark your calendar for the annual spring meeting, which will be a salad luncheon, at the First Baptist Church on April 7.

Weather Report

The weather forecast Tuesday a morning said conditions will favor lots of storm activity for Central and North Texas the next 12 to 18 hours as cool and upper level disturbances move over the state.

The rice belt could be the main target for storms spreading southward Tuesday evening but a few heavy storms also could bring a round of wet soils and work delays to the coastal bend.

Rain chances should drop to a lull for Wednesday and then increase by late Thursday as the next weather system approaches.

Soils generally are warm enough to insulate corn and sorghum from germination trouble even where the heavy rains hit, but ground temperatures in the mid-60s across the central rice belt are marginal to cotton whenever fields become wet. Managers there would have to weigh the risks of poorer seed germination and cotton seedling diseases against any advantage to rush planting ahead of possible rain delays.

Producers might use part of the early or mid-afternoon Tuesday to secure the farm area from objects which could be tossed by any storm winds; guard against any exposure to lightning from the late afternoon storms as lightning is one of the chief weather killers.

Moisture gains for grass lands could be limited while storms remain too widely scattered west of Victoria and over the coastal bend. Although soils are dry, a sudden down pour could see water lost as runoff into streams and creeks.

Here are the weather observations from the Texas A&M Research Site, Eagle Lake; in cooperation with the National Weather Service and the Texas Water Development Board. Air temperatures listed are sheltered air temperatures.

Date	Air Temp.	Soil Temp.	Evap.	Rain
Feb.	Max-Min	Max-Min	(Inches)	(Inches)
18	76-58	76-63	1.14	---
19	93-58	78-63	1.52	---
20	88-51	77-62	1.20	---
21	51-44	75-57	1.75	---
22	58-37	75-57	1.75	---
23	70-35	76-51	1.85	---
24	77-42	72-50	1.66	---
25	83-45	75-54	2.18	---
26	86-50	75-57	3.16	---
27	75-49	72-50	4.14	---
28	58-46	66-58	2.82	---
March				
1	67-30	68-55	1.83	---
2	76-38	71-58	2.01	---
3	75-54	72-54	1.48	0.67
4	70-46	64-57	2.18	---
5	74-44	69-55	1.90	---
6	72-50	71-53	2.68	---
7	76-42	71-55	2.52	---
8	78-48	73-54	1.48	---
9	80-56	75-63	1.14	---
10	86-66	82-64	1.78	---

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