

Texas teachers group submits merit pay plan

United Press International
AUSTIN — By receiving an across-the-board pay raise and earning extra money for working a little harder, Texas school teachers could make as much as \$40,000 a year under a plan designed by a teachers union.

But the incentive salary plan unveiled Tuesday by the Texas Federation of Teachers would cost taxpayers at least \$1 billion a year in higher taxes.

TFT president John Cole said the "model" plan — dubbed "Project QuEST" — has been presented to an 18-member select education committee that opened public hearings

Wednesday in Austin.

The larger Texas State Teachers Association will explain its proposals for reforms in public education Thursday.

In addition to a salary schedule pegged on a 24 percent pay hike, the TFT plan would also stiffen teacher certification requirements, change school governance, set up an in-house evaluation program and give teachers collective bargaining rights.

But Cole said that before merit pay is considered, all Texas teachers should receive a one-time pay boost of at least 24

percent.

The TFT proposals, he said, "offer a real opportunity for teachers to be rewarded for performance above and beyond the call of duty; but also protects the public against phony merit pay schemes which do not reward merit."

Under the TFT plan, teachers could add to their base salaries through an incentive program that would add from 5 percent to 55 percent through additional education and other extra work.

Teachers could earn additional pay for teaching summer school, sponsoring school clubs and field trips, attending PTA and open house meetings and in-service workshops and serving on textbook committees.

Cole suggested the money could be raised by increasing oil and gas severance taxes or through a "sin" tax plan suggested earlier by Gov. Mark White.

As an example of the TFT pay plan, a teacher with an M.A. degree and 10 years experience now earns \$18,140 a year in state base pay.

But the same teacher could make \$36,047 by receiving a 24 percent hike, obtaining a master teacher certificate, sponsoring a math club, serving on a professional support team, attending all PTA meetings, visiting parents at home and teaching summer school.



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College Station park granted over \$800,000

by Bill Conaway
Battalion Reporter

Because it was prepared, College Station has received an \$842,000 grant for park development from the state, says an assistant director of College Station Parks and Recreation. Of the five cities in Texas receiving funds, College Station's received the most.

Andy Czimskey said getting the money was no problem for the city.

"We met the criterion being

used by the Parks & Wildlife Department such as preliminary planning, matching funds in the bank and making the deadlines imposed," he said.

Czimskey said work began on the Southwood Athletic Park, the project being funded through the grant, more than two months ago. Paving of the streets and installation of water and sewer lines in the park will soon be complete. Baseball and soccer fields, the primary attrac-

tions of the park, will be built by the end of August, Czimskey.

"We plan on adding a swimming pool, tennis courts, a picnic pavilion, and a community building in the fall," he said.

The use of the funds and construction of the project are overseen by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, said Hogsett, a grant administrator with the agency. He said the department will watch the park until its completion.

Four hospitalized with burns after explosion at Du Pont

United Press International
LAPLACE, La. — Four victims of an explosion and fire that injured 17 others at a Du Pont chemical plant were in critical condition early Wednesday

with burns over 90 percent of their bodies, a spokesman said.

Plant officials speculate the explosion occurred Tuesday when process materials backed up in a byproduct storage tank

in the chloroprene production unit.

Chloroprene is a highly flammable, non-toxic chemical used in the manufacture of Neoprene, a synthetic rubber that is one of Du Pont's major products.

When the backup occurred, the materials apparently heated and caused the tank to rupture at 1:20 p.m., sending vapor clouds which ignited, plant manager William said.

"But details are still sketchy and we won't have a better idea of what happened for several days," Cobb said. "At the time of the rupture, we recognized a plug-in problem and were in the process of cleaning the system."

A plant spokesman said 12 company employees and 12 contract employees were injured when the explosion and fire raged through the E.I. Du Pont Nemours plant. Seven of the injured were treated and released.

Three remained hospitalized in critical condition, a spokesman said.

The blast could be heard 10 miles from the plant, which is 10 miles from New Orleans. Firefighters battled the blaze under control for 20 minutes, although a blue-black smoke billowed upward for more than an hour.

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