



Two A&M students unload their car and carry up outside Texas A&M dormitories Sunday as their belongings to Underwood Hall. Cars lined up outside Texas A&M dormitories Sunday as students returned for the spring semester.

Photo by Mike Davis

Fireman shot while trying to render aid

Associated Press

SANGER — A Dallas fireman was shot, robbed, thrown in the back of his truck and left for dead Sunday after he stopped to help a stranded car, police said.

Kenneth Blakey, 46, crawled to his truck and drove about 10 miles to a Sanger gas station shortly after 5:30 a.m., Denton County Sheriff Randy Kaisner said.

Blakey was in serious but stable condition with a gunshot wound to his lower left side late Sunday in Denton.

Kaisner said Blakey's wide-buckled western belt, shorn in half by the gunshot, may have saved his life.

Blakey stopped to aid a stranded car in Denton County when three white males aged 18 or 19 got out, Kaisner said. Kaisner said they took Blakey's wallet and about \$140.

Blakey drove to a Sanger gas station for help.

Lawmakers seek improvement in public schools

Education reform sparked in Santa Fe

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — The banner of education reform is waving high over New Mexico, where lawmakers and the governor prepare to pass laws designed to improve public schools.

The 1986 Legislature, which convenes Tuesday, has before it a comprehensive reform proposal drafted by the interim Public School Reform Committee.

The plan has been embraced by Gov. Toney Anaya, with some modification of the tradeoff between the elimination of tenure and the granting of salary increases for teachers and other school employees.

The measure is widely supported in varying degrees, but many would like to see some modifications of the proposal.

Lawmakers, the governor and educators must debate and agree on the contents of the proposed reform bill, on a tax increase to pay for it and on a way to reconcile the measure's clear infringement on the authority and autonomy of state and local boards of education.

The reform plan, as drafted by

the reform committee, would:

- Fix the length of the school day according to grade level and require a minimum of 180 instructional days.

- Fix pupil-teacher ratios ranging from 20 students in kindergarten and first grade to 25 students for grades four through six, and daily teaching loads for grades seven through 12. The state superintendent could waive the ratios for very small districts and teachers would be free of "noninstructional" duties.

- Fix the amount of time that must be spent daily on language arts and mathematics in primary grades; require 23 units for graduation, including English, math, science, social science, physical fitness, communication skills and a specified list of electives.

- Require competency examinations for graduation and a system of evaluating pupil status and basic skills; establish remedial programs and restrict so-called social promotion for failing students.

- Establish a no-pass, no-play rule and limit absences for extracurricular activities.

- Tighten enforcement of mandatory attendance law and establish a fine against the parents of repeat violators.

- Require local districts to establish discipline policies and allow individual schools to establish discipline policies.

- Require recitation of the pledge of allegiance every day.

- Remove the gifted education funding calculation from special education category and give the program a separate "weight" for determining the funding level.

- Fix the number of credits teachers must have in various courses before they can be certified or student teach.

- Require apprenticeships, evaluations and training programs for school administrators.

- Repeal the tenure laws and replace tenure with a form of arbitration and due process.

Ordinarily, the type of educational "standards" contained in the bill are imposed on local school districts by the state Board of Education. But the New Mexico reform plan, like others around the country, deliberately side-stepped the state board.

But an advisory member of the reform panel, Edward Ortiz, said bypassing the state board is necessary unless the public and legislators are satisfied with state board-imposed reform over a longer period of time.

Morgan did not argue with the value of many of the proposed law's features, but added in many cases, "the Legislature's intent to improve education can be better met by the board."

However, board members may be reluctant to argue the point for fear of losing what power they will retain if the bill becomes law. Sources say some legislators are preparing constitutional amendments to either abolish the board or radically reduce its power, and at least to shorten members' terms in office from six years to four years.

Finally, even if there is support for the basic structure of the reform bill, there is much less agreement on how the money should be raised to pay for it.

Anaya is proposing to spend \$796.9 million on the public schools in 1986-87.

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