

# Teacher Testing

## Local teacher disagrees with use of literacy test

By BRIAN PEARSON  
Senior Staff Writer

Those who took the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers Monday probably found the exam to be less than challenging to the intelligence, says the president of the College Station Education Association.

Ann Heuberger, also a librarian at Oakwood Middle School in College Station, says the test doesn't meet its purpose of testing the competency and literacy of teachers and administrators.

Heuberger took the exam along with about 1,000 teachers and administrators in the area.

"It (TECAT) doesn't even begin to test to see if you're a competent teacher or not," Heuberger says. "It just tests to see if you're able to take this type of test."

The TECAT, she says, which was given Monday to about 210,000 teachers in Texas, would not be helpful in weeding out the illiterate and incompetent teachers in state's public schools.

*"Anybody who doesn't pass that test does not need to be teaching."*

— Scott Laws, literature teacher at A&M Consolidated High School.

According to state education officials, about 10,000 are expected to fail the exam.

Heuberger says the competency and literacy of a teacher should be determined by school principals and not by the TECAT. She added that the test should never have been given.

"Apparently the principals have not been doing a good job with evaluations if there are 10,000 incompetent or illiterate teachers in Texas," she says. "If there is an incompetent teacher, there's a principal that needs to be fired."

Heuberger says a majority of teachers in the area share the same opinion about the TECAT.

Scott Laws, a literature teacher at A&M Consolidated High School, says the test was "ridiculously easy."

Laws says the TECAT barely tested for literacy and didn't test for competency at all.

"Anybody who doesn't pass that test does not need to be teaching," Laws says. "I think it was a waste of taxpayers' money."

Steve Allen, a special education teacher at A&M Consolidated High School, also says the TECAT was easy.

Allen says he felt the TECAT was necessary because it could expose some teacher illiteracy in Texas schools.

"I think the test should have been given," Allen says. "But I think the test should be much more difficult than it is."

Texas teachers and educators who don't pass the test by June 30 will lose their jobs and teaching certificates.

### Some teachers make excuses to avoid test

AUSTIN — A case of the hiccups, a conflict with a golfing tee and an old reliable — car trouble — were just a few of the excuses given by teachers and administrators trying to get their following appointments changed to take the state's literacy test.

Volan Wood, director of teachers' assessment for the Texas Education Agency in Austin, said he had one woman call in who said she gets the hiccups every day at 3:30 p.m., so she couldn't take the afternoon test.

More than 100 of the more than 200,000 teachers and administrators statewide have actually gotten out of taking the test.

Wood said.

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### Texas teachers claim tests easy but unfair

Associated Press  
EL PASO — As teachers across the state completed a three-day competency test Monday, many of them said the same thing: "It was easy, but we shouldn't have had to take it."

Some grumbled aloud that it was unfair and some illustrated their discontent with stickers that read "Under Protest." A few admitted being nervous.

Although officials had anticipated 12,000 failures among the more than 200,000 educators tested Monday, no one voiced any fears of failing.

Brendy Benton, a chemistry and biology instructor at Andrews High School in El Paso, completed the three-hour test in 2½ hours at

Thomas Jefferson High School in the border city. She wore a T-shirt emblazoned with a red apple and the words "I'm a Teacher and I'm Competent." A sticker on her arm read "Under Protest."

"I resent it very much," Benton said. "First, I don't understand how they can give you a lifetime certificate and then on the basis of one test tell you it's invalid."

"Secondly, I don't feel this test measures your competency as a teacher in the classroom. All it does is measure your competency in reading and writing."

Students in Texas had the day off so their teachers could take the Teachers Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers, or TECAT.

The 1984 public school reforms passed by the Legislature mandated the test in an effort to improve the quality of education in Texas public schools.

Jon Heike said, "If the Legislature wants to pass a law, it's legal. Even if the majority thinks it's unfair, it's the law."

Heike was a student-teacher in the fall and started teaching science this semester at Andrews High School.

But Maxine Johnson of Austin, a Travis High School English teacher with 30 years of experience, disagreed.

"I think it's unfair because it puts to shame my having earned a permanent teacher certificate," she said.

"That was supposed to have been my ticket to being qualified."

In Houston, Linda Savell said the test was so simple that she resented having to take it.

"After graduating from college and taking all those tests, why go back and take an eighth-grade test?" said Savell, who teaches at Worthing High School.

"It was so easy," said Joanne Stemple, a second-grade teacher in the Houston Independent school district. "If they (other teachers) can't pass it, they shouldn't be teaching. I can read and write, and that's what it tested."

Lorene Patneade, an English teacher in El Paso for 11 years, said it was not a hard test, "but it's not a baby test, either."

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