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Educators fear bias in new test Largely ethnic districts face loss of funds

EL PASO (AP) — African-Americans and Hispanics scored far lower than whites in the trial run of a new minimum skills test for public schools, raising fears that the exam may be biased, a local educator said Tuesday.

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"I was looking at those statistics and found them very alarming," Gary Ivory, coordinator of research evalua-tion and testing for Ysleta Independent School District, said Tuesday

That could pose big problems for school districts with large minority populations, say officials in the mostly Hispanic Ysleta Independent School District.

The state plans to use the new test as an indicator of school district performance. A district with a pattern of oor scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic

poor scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, or TAAS, can lose its accreditation. "We're real fearful," Ivory added. "We're worried that a school district that serves a large population of minority students will be labeled as inferior by defi-

The TAAS will be administered for the first time in October. It replaces the 5-year-old Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills, or TEAMS, test. Students will take the exam every other year, and must pass a final test to receive a high school diploma.

The TAAS test, designed to be tougher than the TEAMS test, requires students to demonstrate ability to reason. The new exam contains more math word problems, longer reading passages and more thought-pro-

voking questions than its predecessor. In a mock test last October, Hispanics and African-Americans posted consistently lower scores than white students. More than 200,000 students from 784 school districts took the preliminary test.

There are ethnic differences on the 1990 TEAMS test results, but Ivory said the differences on the mock test were greater. The gap between minority students and white students widened for almost every age and subject category during the TAAS trial run, he said.

Albert Kauffman, senior attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said the group has not yet fully examined the results of the new tests, but is vigilant on standardized tests.

"As they try to be more comprehensive on these tests and try to cover more materials, the tests become more and more tuned to an upper middle-class approach to things in language," Kauffman said. "The more they do that, the more the differences appear

He emphasized that he does not believe minority stu-dents don't do well when standards are raised, but that test designers may not be assessing minority students' complex thinking correctly.

Texas Education Agency spokesman Joey Lozano cautioned against drawing conclusions from the results of the mock exam. Students may not have tried as hard as they would try when taking a real test, he said

But Lozano agreed that wouldn't explain why one ethnic group would post lower scores on the mock exam than another.

Before the trial run, a "bias committee" of more than 400 teachers and school administrators reviewed the TAAS questions and tried to eliminate questions with wording or content that might be ethnically biased, he said The test was reviewed again after the trial run, and

about 10 percent of the questions were dropped, Lozano said.

Results of the first real TAAS test will be studied for any further evidence of possible bias, Lozano said. TEA also will compare each district's test results

against scores in other districts with similar populations and ethnic characteristics, he said.

Next October, students in grades 3 and 5 must score a 65 to pass the test, and students in grades 7, 9 and 11 will need a grade of 60 to pass. All grade levels will need grades of 70 to pass the test beginning in the 1992-93 school year.

Houston loses conventions from insufficient hotel space

HOUSTON (AP) — The city is losing out on a number of conventions and trade shows because there are not enough hotel rooms downtown near the George R. Brown Convention Center, a convention expert says.

During the past year, about 10 groups have ruled out Houston as a possible site for a convention pri-marily because of the dearth of downtown hotel rooms, said Jordy Tollett, director of the city's civic center operations.

The lost shows could have added as much as \$100 million to the Houston economy, Tollett said. Last month, the American Society

Air & Waste Management Associa-tion, with an estimated attendance of 5,400, scratched Houston as a potential site for conventions Another 125 to 140 groups won't

even consider the city because there is not a hotel close to the Brown with 1,000 rooms that can be used as a convention headquarters, Tollett said.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel down-town is the city's largest hotel with 959 rooms.

The possibility of a new large hotel was a definite possibility in 1988 when Texas Eastern Corp. consid-ered building a large hotel at its Houston Center property adjacent of Hospital Pharmacists, with an esti-mated attendance of 10,000, and the after the City Council killed an ap-

Williams shows latest ad denouncing Richards

AUSTIN (AP) — So much for a

Less than 24 hours after offering to abandon "negative" advertising, Clayton Williams hit the airwaves

away, the candidates are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars this month to wage their video bat-

the. Richards fired the opening tele-vised salvo with a commercial accus-tie. BROWNSVILLE (AP) — Grey-hound Lines had an operating profit of \$1.5 million in June before inter-to are trying to survive on unen-to are trying to survive on unen-to a commercial accus-to a commercia

plication for \$20 million in govern-ment loans for the estimated \$100 million, 1,000-room hotel.

Texas Eastern merged in 1989 with Panhandle Eastern Corp., which sold the downtown property — including a 389-room Four Sea-sons Hotel — in December 1989 to Chicago-based JMB Realty Corp. for \$400 million.

"The project is definitely some-thing JMB is interested in pursuing if the economics can be worked out, said Ellen Horr, JMB spokeswoman.

"However, to my knowledge there are not any negotiations with any specific hotel chain," she said.

or developer right now. We are aware of the need and are willing to talk," she said.

mained in jail Tuesday, a day afte she was arrested on a murder india ment issued in her husband's death Bond was set at \$50,000. Investigators said a pending d vorce action by the entertainer a money may have motivated the slay

suicide

Sweat, 45, who was known as t 'King of the Cotton-Eyed Joe," w shot in the head shortly after here turned home from a nightclub per formance June 23.

Although Sweat's death was origi nally a suspected suicide, investig tors said they were nagged by sever discrepancies found at the scene an began investigating it as a homicide said Fort Bend Sheriff's detectiv Larry Nemec.

The entertainer was found lying on his back in a pool of blood, his ca keys, sunglasses and a .25-caliber and tomatic pistol near his left har Sweat, who was right-handed, ha suffered a contact gunshot wound the left temple, meaning the weapon was touching him when it fired, in vestigators said.

Autopsy results found no gun powder residue on his hands. Mrs. Sweat has told investigators

she was home when the shooting of curred and that she discovered he husband's body. Nemec said she has continued to deny any involvemen in Sweat's death.

The detective also said Mrs. Sweat had been served with papers but refused to sign them after her hus band filed for divorce in April.

If the pending divorce had be come final, Mrs. Sweat would "definitely not have" benefited financia from the musician's estate, Neme said

The entertainer's son, Sean Sweat 24, of Malakoff, said he believed shortly after his father's death that his stepmother was responsible.

"I believed it five minutes after saw her," the college student told the Houston Chronicle. "It consumed my whole being to prove this." "He was stolen from us," Sean Sweat said. "He didn't quit."

In a separate civil case, Sean Swat is contesting: the one-paragraph handwritten will submitted by his stepmother. The singer's son alleges the document is a fraud.

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Singer's widow Con remains jailed as murder suspect vice

Wednesday, August 22, 199 Wednesday, J

RICHMOND, Texas (AP) – Th son of late country musician Isaa

Payton Sweat said the indictmenti

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restored his faith in the justice sy tem and proves the death wasn't

Sharon Suzette Sweat, 38, r

The Battalion

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SOLID PINE CHEST **BEST PRICE IN 6 YEARS!** ing," she said. With the election still 11 weeks she wants. **4 DRAWER** CHEST Contact Lenses **REG.** \$89⁹⁵ **Only Quality Name Brands 549**⁹⁵ (Bausch & Lomb, Ciba, Barnes-Hinds-Hydrocurve) **SAVE \$40°° 000** TOTAL COST + FREE SPARE DRAWER CHEST 13800 REG. \$10995 5995 **SAVE \$50°°** Extended to August 31, 1990 Sale ends July 27, 1990 Call 696-3754 For Appointment **ROLLIE BURR'S** CHARLES C. SCHROEPPEL, O.D., P.C. UNFINISHED DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY FURNITURE CENTER 707 South Texas Ave., Suite 101D

rial candidate Ann Richards to a failed Austin bank.

Williams' aides said Richards had rebuffed his peace offer, continued attack

Richards' press secretary, Bill Cryer, said the truce offer was nothing but an excuse so Williams could withdraw an erroneous ad. "That offer was window dressing," he said.

And Richards issued a statement saying Williams had taken a "dangerous" turn onto a course "characterized by factual errors" in ads and speeches. "Clayton Williams' facts just don't add up. His pattern of mistakes, gaffes and wholesale fabrications are unfortunate and frighten-

VISA.

practices, being mired in lawsuits and swimming in debt.

Williams responded with an ad accusing Richards of taking money from savings and loan executives, giving S&Ls state deposits during her two terms as treasurer and destroying deposit records.

The Republican withdrew that ad Monday while offering to stick to a "positive" campaign if Richards would.

But when the Democrat kept her attack on the air, Williams campaign manager Zack Dawes said the Republican felt compelled to fire another volley.

"We made a serious proposal and she flatly refused," Dawes said. "We'd prefer not to use them (negative ads), but she seems to have decided that's the kind of campaign

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months after its drivers went on strike, a company official says.

Greyhound told a meeting of creditors here Tuesday that preliminary results for July and August showed further improvement.

I. Michael Doyle, senior vice president and chief financial officer, said the bus line will file a plan of reorganization in late October or early November and hopes it will be con-firmed by the end of 1991.

'Passenger counts have continued to climb throughout the summer,' Doyle said. "Last weekend our traffic was 87 percent of what it was the same weekend a year ago and 95 percent of our 1990 business plan, which was developed in 1989.'

Some striking drivers have taken said they denounced violence and temporary and part-time jobs with were not connected with it.

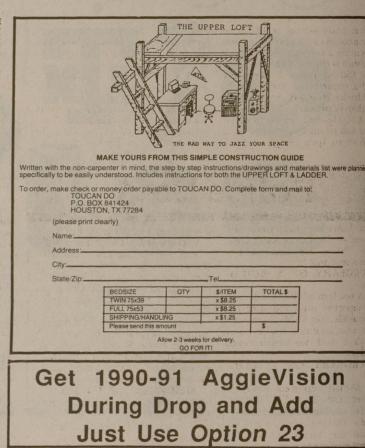
and \$50-a-week st benefit checks. Force sergeant for here pleaded guilt wife, who had thre

The bus line, now under the protection of bankruptcy court, has told the 6,000 drivers who walked out March 2 in a dispute over wages and job security that their jobs don't exist anymore because the company has resumed "business as usual" with 3,000 strikebreakers it hired.

Greyhound filed a federal racke faces a mandatory li teering lawsuit April 29 against the Amalgamated Transit Union, asking for \$30 million in damages.

The company is alleging that vio lence during the strike was orches trated by the Amalgamated Council of Greyhound Local Unions and its officers

Union leaders repeatedly have



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