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# Students jump at year-round school Popularity surprises officials

CONROE (AP) — School in July? Vacation in February?

"I like it," 11-year-old Emily Torguson says, "because during the summer, you get bored and you forget everything and you spend lots of time reviewing."

Emily and some of her sixth grade classmates at Collins Intermediate School are among the second group to attend school year-round in a pilot program other Texas schools are monitoring closely.

"I think maybe next year, it'll be a little easier for us," Emily said. "Maybe in the year-round school, we won't review as much and we can learn new things."

Officials in the Conroe Independent School District have been surprised at the popularity of the year-round program they introduced in August of 1989. The program was expanded this year and more interest is expected next year.

Proponents believe shorter vacation breaks during the school year result in less review time

and burnout and increased enthusiasm and retention.

"I saw such a difference in the kids' motivation," teacher Paula Nowiczewski says. "I think it helps them develop the mentality that learning is something you should do year round."

**"It seems that as soon as the kettle is about to boil over, it's break time."**

— Jo Ann Beken,  
 principal, Crockett Intermediate School

Sure, but what about those three months off in the summer?

Surprisingly, many students enrolled in the program say they do not mind missing the three-month break. Of course, it's midwinter and this

group hasn't been in class during the hot, hot summer.

"I was the one who told my mom about a cause in the summer I get bored," 10-year-old David Tillman says. "We get lots of breaks."

Jo Ann Beken, the principal at Crockett Intermediate, says the new schedule seems to be the irritability that brews among students a traditional school year drags on.

"It seems that as soon as the kettle is about to boil over, it's break time," Beken says.

The numbers are the same: 175 schools for both traditional and year-round studies. But those in the new program attend classes six weeks and then either have a two-or-week break.

Conroe's pilot program began in August with 54 sixth-graders at Crockett Intermediate and was expanded to six schools this past year. About 850 students now are enrolled in kindergarten through sixth.

## Doctor demands school return boy to class

AUSTIN (AP) — Zachariah Toungate, the third-grader whose battle with school officials over his ponytail has drawn him national support must be removed from isolation at school because it is hurting his development, his doctor said.

Toungate's mother, September Toungate, said Wednesday that the boy's pediatrician has written to school officials demanding that

Toungate be returned to his class at Mina Elementary in Bastrop or be taught at home.

The pediatrician told school officials that the isolation is detrimental to Toungate's emotional well-being, his mother said.

"He needs to come out of that room," she said.

Toungate's attorney, Charles Beall, says that under state law, if a doctor says a child cannot attend school, then the school district must provide a teacher to instruct the child at home.

Paul Fleming, superintendent of the Bastrop school district, could not

respond to a telephone call from the Associated Press because he was in a meeting, his secretary said. She said no one else with the Bastrop school district could comment.

Since Oct. 5, Toungate has been taught in isolation in a dreary 10-foot by 13-foot room at the school because he refuses to cut his wispiness ponytail, which has grown to about 9½ inches long.

The school says he is violating the district's dress code. Bastrop is a town of about 5,700 people that is located 30 miles east of Austin.

Toungate's battle has been the subject of numerous newspaper arti-

cles and television and radio reports. He has received letters of support from children and adults across the nation.

The Bastrop school district also received numerous letters of criticism.

A state lawmaker has asked the state education agency to resolve the case and has drafted a resolution condemning the school district. School officials, however, have remained entrenched.

Recently, his mother said, Toungate has used the word "hate" frequently when talking about school and school board.

### Back to basics

## Bush's energy policy criticized

DALLAS (AP) — The first draft of President Bush's national energy policy does little to encourage domestic oil and gas production, the new president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America warned Texas members Wednesday.

Most of the attention on the plan has been on what Denise Bode calls "exotics" — expanded offshore drilling, particularly off the Alaskan coast.

"It really leaves out the basics as far as energy production in the Lower 48, the backbone of domestic production," Bode said.

She said the plan should include the dissolution of regulatory barriers in natural gas production and of tax penalties for domestic oil drillers.

Environmentalists attacked the

plan immediately after its release last weekend, saying there are cheaper, less damaging ways to increase energy production.

Bode said independent producers, beset by low prices and a stiff tax structure, offer one of those ways since they can operate marginal wells with greater flexibility than major companies.

"Because it focuses on these exotics, (the strategy) misses the surest, most environmentally-sound areas, the proven areas in the Lower 48," Bode said. "They

have been regulated. Independent are good stewards."

With a war on that affects prices by the minute and creates the most sweeping energy legislation ever, Bode's appointment to IPAA post comes at a critical time for the 4,500-member organization.



Bush

"There's been more activity on the energy scene just so far this year than there's been probably in the last eight years in Washington," Bode said.

She was an energy strategist at Oklahoma governor's office and counsel for Sen. David Boren, Okla., before starting a tax lobbying firm in 1984.

EL PASO (AP) — A tank commander in desert will lead the U.S. offensive against Iraq. Lt. Gen. John M. Yeosock is commander of the 2nd Squadron in Operation Desert Storm. Yeosock is commander of the 3rd Army.

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