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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 Au-gust 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' motiva-

tion," 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, he 'I was the one who told my mom about

cause in the summer I get bored," 10-ye David Tillman says. "We get lots of breaks

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

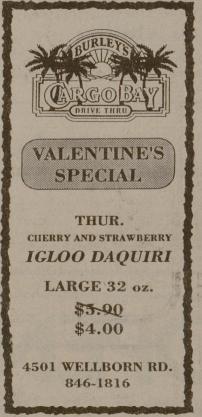
"It seems that as soon as the kettle is ab boil over, it's break time," Beken says. The numbers are the same: 175 school for both traditional and year-round st But those in the new program attend class six weeks and then either have a two-or week break.

Conroe's pilot program began in Augus with 54 sixth-graders at Crockett Interne and was expanded to six schools this par About 850 students now are enrolled ing 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 offi-cials 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.

Back to basics

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

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

Since Oct. 5, Toungate has been also received numerous let taught in isolation in a dreary 10- criticism. foot by 13-foot room at the school because he refuses to cut his wispy ponytail, which has grown to about 91/2 inches long.

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

subject of numerous newspaper arti- school and school board.

from children and adults acro nation

The Bastrop school distric

A state lawmaker has aske state education agency to inve the case and has drafted a reso condemning the school dis School officials, however, have mained entrenched. Recently, his mother said, To

ate has used the word "hate" Toungate's battle has been the quently when talking about

## **Bush's energy policy criticized** Lewis

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 dril-ling, 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 have been regulated. Independ weekend, saying there are cheaper, are good stewards." less damaging ways to increase en

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

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

With a war on that affect prices by the minute and creater the most sweeping energy legisla ever, Bode's appointment to IPAA post comes at a critical for the 4,500-member organiza

"There's been more activity energy scene just so far this than there's been probably in eight years in Washington,"

She was an energy strategisti Oklahoma governor's office counsel for Sen. David Borer Okla., before starting a tax lobb firm in 1984.

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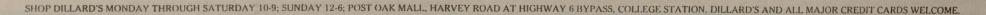
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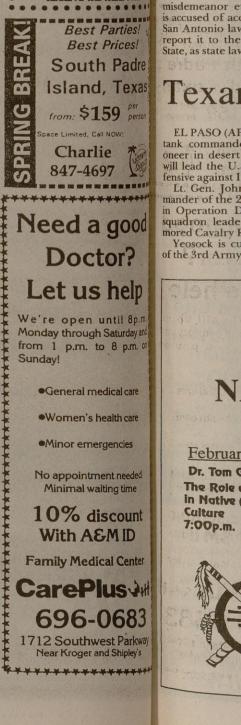
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