

The Battalion

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Texas A&M student body, administrators, faculty or the A&M Board of Regents.

Comments, questions or complaints about any of the editorial content of the newspaper should be directed to the managing editor at 845-3313.

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BATTIPS

The Battalion encourages its readers to contribute story ideas and suggestions by calling BATTIPS, The Battalion's phone line designed to improve communication between the newspaper and its readers.

The BATTIPS number is 845-3315.

Ideas can include news stories, feature ideas and personality profiles of interesting people. Readers also are encouraged to offer any other suggestions that could improve the newspaper.

B-CS school districts look into year-long format

By Melinda Cox
The Battalion

Long summer vacations might become a thing of the past if the State Board of Education has its way.

The board is encouraging school districts to consider an all-year format for their schools. Some pilot programs already have been conducted, but for most an all-year format is still being studied.

The all-year format is a variable school calendar, said Linda Dorsett, technical assistant of Communications Governmental Relations for the Bryan School District.

Students will still go to school 180 days a year, but only about 66 percent of them will be in school at one time.

Dr. Donna Wiseman, Texas A&M's associate dean for teacher education in the College of Education, said the format is a good idea, but the plan is a break from the norm.

"The traditional plan was established because of the type of society people used to live in," Wiseman said. "People

lived in an agrarian society, and children needed the summer to work in the fields."

Wiseman said the all-year format would be an economical use of time and space, providing students with creative education and shortening the gap between learning periods.

Dr. Claude Cunningham, the executive director of administrating and planning for the College Station School District, said the traditional summer break concerns educators and administrators.

Cunningham said students returning after summer vacation spend a great deal of time catching up on their studies and getting back into a school schedule.

"We are exploring the options of an all-year format," Cunningham said. "The plan is part of a state goal to expand the use of school facilities."

Cunningham said the format would be a staggered plan. One such plan might be a 45-15 format, meaning students would attend classes for 45 days and then have a 15-day break.

For example, a class might be divided

into four groups with each group beginning on different days.

Another plan might be to have a 30-15-15 schedule, which means students would attend class for 30 days, have a 15 day break and then come back for 15 more days before starting the schedule over.

Dorsett said the schedule is beneficial because it allows frequent remediation for the students and teachers. It also allows problems to be spotted and dealt with more quickly.

Charlie Lloyd, principal of the Collins Intermediate School in Houston, completed his dissertation on the use of the all-year format at A&M.

"The format is a good one because it offsets the learning loss that takes place during the break," Lloyd said.

Lloyd conducted a pilot program at Crockett Intermediate in Conroe during the 1989-1990 school year. The program was limited to the sixth grade and was on voluntary basis.

"About one-fourth of the class signed up, about 54 kids," Lloyd said. "We ran a 30-10 calendar, but held the instructional

activities the same."

Lloyd said students' attendance, attitude and achievement were measured, and the results were compared with the traditional schedule. In most categories, the students who attended school year-round did better.

"Year-round students had better attitudes, behavior and retention of learning," Lloyd said.

Response from teachers and parents has been mixed. Teachers and students get to enjoy frequent breaks and are not as likely to get burned out, Lloyd said.

Teachers do not have to spend as much time regrouping their students and students do not suffer quite the learning loss as before.

However, the all-year format also has some drawbacks. Teachers interested in continuing their education during the summer would find it harder to do so.

In addition, the change of lifestyle is hard on some parents, Lloyd said. For example, if a student has divorced parents summer vacation might be the only time the child spends with one parent.



PENNY DELOS SANTOS/The Battalion

Watered down

Jim Thomas of landscape maintenance sprays plants outside of the Sterling C. Evans Library.

BACK PAIN STUDIES

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Republicans urge anti-tax 'Tea Party' protest

AUSTIN (AP) — Republican legislators, accusing bureaucrats of trying to ambush budget-cutting proposals, Thursday urged Texans to send tea bags to state leaders to demand no new taxes.

"Taxpayers are furious," said Rep. John Culberson, R-Houston. "Calls are pouring in from

all over the state from frustrated taxpayers who are sick and tired of paying higher and higher taxes every year."

Meanwhile, Democratic Gov. Ann Richards agreed that some state agencies are complaining too loudly about proposed budget cuts, adding, "It's premature

to talk about any tax until we talk about cuts."

Richards also reached to Republicans for cooperation during the special session that opens Monday to write a 1992-93 state budget.

"I don't think this is a partisan matter," she said. "This is a mat-

ter of responding to what we sincerely believe is the public's demand that we do something about making government do its job, and do it effectively."

Lawmakers said the first "Texas Tea Party" anti-tax rally will be held July 22 at noon on the Capitol grounds.

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IN ADVANCE

Program presents panorama of folk dances, music

A cultural production, "A World of Difference," will be presented at 7 p.m. in the Civic Auditorium on Culture Avenue in Bryan.

Groups from Taiwan, India, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines, Czechoslovakia and local artists will perform native folk dances and music from their respective countries.

Tickets are \$5, with proceeds going to St. Joseph Hospital's pediatric unit. The program is sponsored by the Bryan-College Station Jaycees.

Gunman kills himself; hostage emerges safely

PASADENA (AP) — A gunman who killed a police officer and held a neighbor hostage for 20 hours fatally shot himself Thursday, police said.

Pasadena Police spokeswoman Roseann Boynton said Marvin Harris was found dead from a gunshot wound in Jean Lina's home after the woman walked out of the house with her arms raised and police moved in.

Police said Harris apparently shot himself in the head, but Boynton said she could not confirm the location of the wound.

Lina emerged from the home apparently unharmed. Her husband, Herald, was taken to her immediately, and minutes later, police escorted about half-dozen other relatives to her.

After Lina's appearance, Harris' family initially seemed relieved the ordeal was over.

"I'm very relieved the lady is

out," Harris' sister, Janet told reporters. "I'm worried about my brother." When a television reporter informed her that her brother had shot himself, she ran off in tears.

Harris, 40, fatally shot officer Jeff Ginn, 29, on Wednesday after the patrolman drove into the quiet west Pasadena neighborhood to respond to a call about smoke coming from Harris' home, officers said.

Capital murder charges were filed against Harris late Wednesday.

June Harris, mother of the man inside the barricaded home, attempted two times early Thursday to talk her son into surrendering, but failed. She talked to him once by telephone and a second time by a loud-speaker.