

# Educators praise test changes

## State Board of Education considers evaluation reduction

AUSTIN (AP) — Some educators praised proposed changes in the state's standardized test program for public school students Monday, including a projected reduction in how often students must be tested.

But State Board of Education members also heard concerns about how Education Commissioner Lionel "Skip" Meno's plan would work.

The board is to vote next month on the proposal.

It would change the schedule of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, expand the number of subjects to be tested by that exam and look toward a system based on more than just test scores. The TAAS currently tests students in reading, writing and mathematics.

The proposal would cut the number of subjects tested in a norm-referenced exam, which is meant to compare Texas students

with others around the nation. "Reducing the number of grades tested (by the TAAS) will, I truly believe, afford more time for learning," said Sally Hampton, a Fort Worth Independent School District administrator and member of a special student learning committee created by lawmakers.

Anne Cozart, a Fort Worth teacher and Castleberry ISD school trustee, also spoke for less frequent state-required testing.

The suggested activities that could be used to supplement standardized multiple choice tests, such as student projects, portfolios and exhibits.

But Priscilla Kimery of Plano, representing the Metroplex Association of Testing Supervisors from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, said she was worried about the uncertainty of numerous testing changes.

Schools that want to evaluate local programs over a period of

time may have to do their own, additional assessments "if they want a continuing, comparable basis for comparison," Kimery said.

"This in fact adds to the burden of the pupil testing or assessment, rather than subtracting from it. It adds to district costs," she said.

Under Meno's plan, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills would be administered in grades four, eight and 10, rather than three, five, seven, nine and 11.

Schools could use other state tests or assessments at grades two and six, but results of these would not be reported for accreditation purposes.

Students would be required to be tested for a total of 48 hours in all grade levels when the plan is fully implemented in 1994-95, compared with the current 75 hours of testing time, according to Texas Education Agency figures.

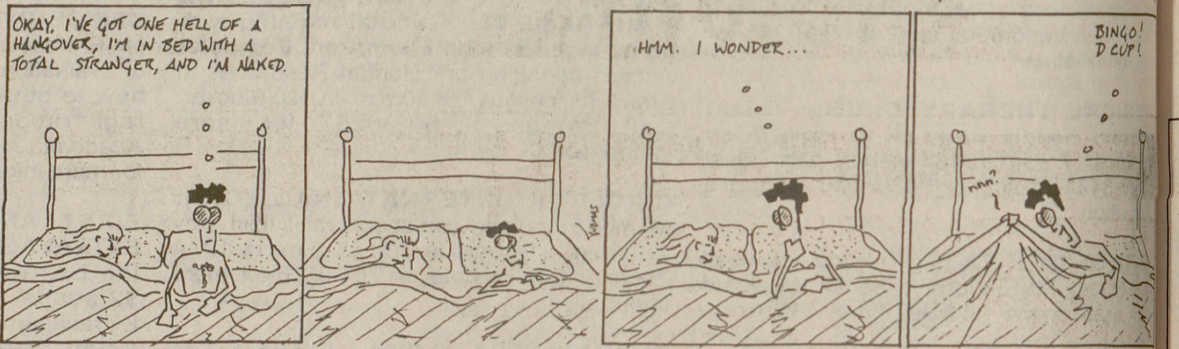
### Spade Phillips, P.I.

by Matt Kowalski



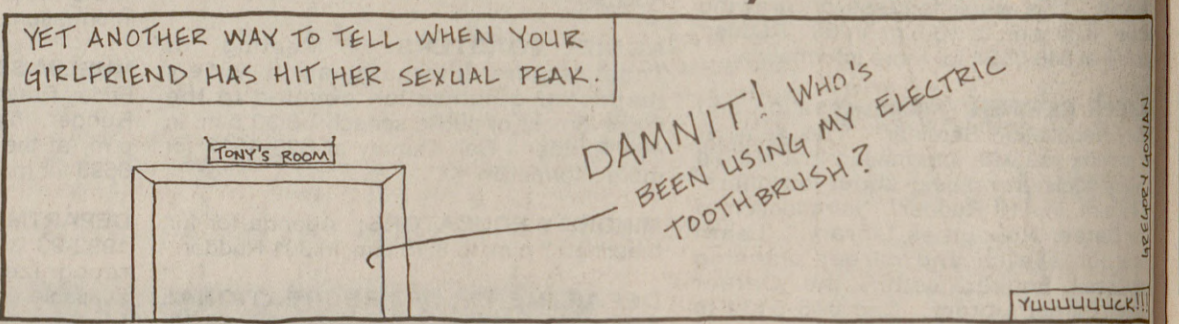
### (the story so far . . .)

by thomas deen



### FISH OUT OF WATER

by GREGORY GOWAN



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by William



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