

# Texas behind in literacy levels, survey shows

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — Adult Texans' literacy levels are below the national average, according to preliminary results of a state survey released Wednesday by the Texas Education Agency.

The reading and writing skills of more than a quarter of Texas' 13 million adults ranked at the bottom level of the study, according to TEA.

That means they might be able to perform basic tasks, such as totaling a deposit slip or identifying specific information in a brief news story, the agency said. But they could not do more challenging work.

The Texas study was done in conjunction with the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey conducted by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J.

Participants in the literacy study were tested in three areas: prose, document and quantitative.

The prose score was based on ability to locate information in written text, like newspaper articles or instructions. The document score was based on ability to locate facts in complex materials and combine it with prior knowledge to generate new information. The quantitative score was based on ability to glean mathematical

information from documents.

On prose literacy, Texans' average was 259 of a maximum 500, according to TEA. The national average was 272.

On document literacy, the Texas average was 255, compared with 267 nationally.

Texans scored at the 258 proficiency level in quantitative literacy. The national level was 271.

A score of 225 or lower put people on the lowest of five literacy levels. The highest level was for those with scores of 376 or

more. No more than 3 percent of Texans surveyed scored in the highest category.

Responding to the survey results, state Education Commissioner Lionel "Skip" Meno said Texas must consider how to meet the educational needs of those performing at the lowest literacy levels.

"Today's survey results would indicate that a basic education is still lacking for many adult Texans," Meno said.

"Many of these individuals will require retraining, additional

education and continuing education to help our state and nation to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy," he said.

About 28 percent, or 3.4 million, Texas adults don't have a high school diploma. Twelve percent, or 1.5 million, have completed less than nine years of school.

Meanwhile, Texas' allocation of \$9 million for adult education programs ranks 46th among the states, according to TEA. California allocates \$400 million and Michigan puts in \$426 million.

# Report: school dropout rate decreasing

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — The number of students dropping out of public school over the past five years has decreased more than 40 percent, education officials say.

The annual dropout rate for 1991-92 was 3.8 percent, compared to 3.93 percent in 1990-91 and 6.7 percent in 1987-88, according to a report released Wednesday by the Texas Education Agency.

That means that Texas schools had 53,421 dropouts in 1991-92; 53,965 in 1990-91; and 91,307 in 1987-88. As in previous years, the

largest number of students — 16,058 in 1991-92 — drop out during the ninth grade.

"The report shows that in Texas we clearly are moving in the right direction," said Education Commissioner Lionel "Skip" Meno.

The report cites numerous factors leading to the lower dropout rate, including directing funds to students at risk of leaving school, funding for pregnancy-related services, and additional school counselors.

But Meno said the disproportionate number of students dropping out of the ninth grade, and

the disproportionate number of minorities leaving school were reasons for concern.

Hispanic students are 2.2 times more likely to drop out than white students, and African-Americans are 1.9 times more than white students, according to the study.

The report recommends restructuring the elementary, middle, and high school systems, extending the school year for students who otherwise would be held back, recruiting minority teachers, and establishing programs for students expelled from school.

# Bay City nuclear plant operators work to get project back in operation

The Associated Press

BAY CITY — Operators of the South Texas Project told federal regulators Wednesday they have significantly reduced maintenance problems and have reorganized management in hopes of getting the troubled nuclear plant back in operation next year.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials, however, said there is much yet to do.

Deputy Administrator John Montgomery said he is skeptical that Houston Lighting & Power Co., the operator of the plant, can meet a January target to bring the first of the plant's two units to 100 percent operation.

The twin-unit 2,500-megawatt plant, idle nearly all of 1993 because of maintenance and equipment problems, was placed this summer on the NRC's watch list, meaning it demands closer scrutiny by regulators. It is one of five nuclear plants nationwide to carry the watch list designation.

"It takes a while to get on the list," Montgomery said. "It takes a while to get off. We don't put it on quickly. We don't take it off quickly."

After years of delays and construction costs that exceeded the original estimates by billions of dollars, the plant's first unit began producing power in 1988. The second went up the following year.

In February, a pump problem prompted a shutdown of one unit. The second was idled a few days later.

It subsequently was disclosed that the plant had thousands of unresolved maintenance problems, prompting a special review of the plant operations by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.


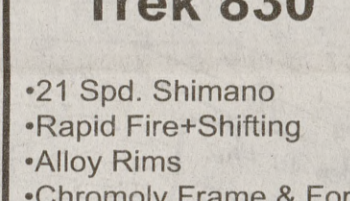
On Wednesday, Houston Lighting & Power Co. managers, in a presentation to NRC officials, said the backlog of problems on Unit 1 alone had been trimmed since May by 39 percent, from 3,000 to 1,825. They said they hope the backlog will go to below 1,000 before power production is resumed.

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# Culture

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Dale said changing the requirement from six hours to three would make the proposal seem broad enough so that it doesn't appear to be a requirement.

"Three hours is a minimum not a maximum," Dale said. "It's a good place to start."

Dale said the suggestion of the name change is because the requirement would be cut down to one required course instead of two.

# Election

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polling site will be viewed as illegal campaigning and will be ruled upon by the Student Government Judicial Board.

Other major changes include: increasing campaign expenditures, candidates will sign a grade release statement, the definition of "flier" and all campaign paraphernalia will now be filed with the Election Commission prior to its distribution or display.

Warhol studied different election methods this summer to devise a better way of conducting A&M's student elections. She

# Beavers

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"You just have to contend with great players like that and realize they're going to make some plays — you just hope they don't make too many."

The six-foot-two, 232-pound senior said one of his main goals is to lead the Big Eight in sacks — and he will not discriminate this Saturday against the Aggies. He said he hit hard and hit often — a practice that was instilled in him during his high school years at Yates High School in Houston.

"(At Yates) they said 'play at your best at all times,'" he said. "They always said 'whoever tackles the hardest (and) hits the hardest is going to win the game in the end.' And that has stayed within me."

This philosophy had time to further develop during Beaver's first two years at Oklahoma (with the exception of three games at the start of his freshman year) as he was ineligible because of the NCAA questioning his college examination scores. Though the two years sitting the bench were difficult for a number-one prospect out of high school, Beavers said he made the best of it.

"I felt those two years were a challenge to me," he said. "So I stayed in and I fought it and I had a great year last year and I'm looking forward to an even better one this year."

Last year, Beavers lead the Big Eight in fumble recoveries with

three, came in second with 11.5 quarterback sacks and third in sack yardage with 57 yards. He was also awarded national player-of-the game three times last season: twice by ESPN and once by ABC.

Beavers said that if any area of his game needs improvement, it's his pass-rushing skills and he has been working on those since last season.

"Back in high school, I would use quickness and finesse and all that," he said. "But now as you go up (in level of play), you've got to use more than speed, you've got to use your hands sometimes, you've got to use technique — that's the key."

Many observers have projected Beavers as a top NFL draft pick next year and one of the top-five linebackers in the nation. But Beavers said there are more important things than the draft that concern him right now.

"This game — we've got to get this accomplished first," he said. "This is a big game for me and my teammates."

"Right now, I'm not even thinking about the draft. I figure that if I have a bad season, that's going to hurt me in the draft anyway, so I'm trying to focus on this season."

A few years ago during the NCAA allegations, the draft was not much of a reality for Beavers. Now, with the potential of a promising professional career, "the Beav" said he is more than thankful to be where he is now.

"My greatest accomplishment is that I'm still here," he said. "I could have left here and been on the streets of Houston, but I stayed and fought through the bad times."

Beavers said he received a lot of help from his teammates and coaches during the troubled times, but his greatest inspiration came from his idol — his grandmother.

"I thank the Lord for her," he said.



Beavers