

e Battalion

## Grading the teacher

### 70 percent of teacher prep courses in Texas fall below standards

AUSTIN (AP) — Thirty-five of 85 educator preparation programs in Texas did not meet standards, which are based on the percentage of students who pass teacher certification exams, according to first-time ratings of the programs released Tuesday.

"These ratings are the first of their kind in the nation. Over time, we're certain they will result in the increased effectiveness of beginning teachers," said Jim Nelson, chairman of the State Board for Educator Certification.

The board released the ratings of universities, education centers and school districts that prepare teachers to

work in Texas public schools. Called the Accountability System for Educator Preparation, the rating system was authorized in a 1995 overhaul of state education laws.

The 50 programs meeting state standards received an "accredited" rating. The 35 that did not are rated "accredited under review."

The programs that did not meet state standards have three years to do so or lose the authority to recommend people for teaching certificates under the law, said Stephanie Korcheck, director of policy and planning for the certification board.

To receive an "accredited" rat-

ing, programs must meet one of two minimum performance levels: — 70 percent of first-time certification test-takers must pass. This includes not only the total students, but the categories of male, female, black, Hispanic, white and other.

— 80 percent of those taking the test for at least the second time must pass, both overall and in the demographic categories.

If a program was rated "accredited under review" due to the passing rate of a demographic group containing fewer than 10 students, the program may appeal the rating. Of the 35 listed as not meeting standards, 19 are eligible to appeal.

## Record number of Texans take SAT

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas students' scores on the SAT college entrance exam were unchanged this year, although a record number of the 1998 high school graduating class took the test, according to figures released Tuesday.

"It is encouraging that our scores remained stable despite the record increase in the number of students taking the exam," said Texas Education Commissioner Mike Moses.

According to Moses, testing experts say that test scores "typically go down when the number of students taking the test goes up."

The average Texas score on the verbal portion of the SAT was 494 this year, the same as last year. On the math section, the average Texas score remained at 501.

Both were lower than the national average.

Students nationally had an average math score of 512, up a point from last year, and an average verbal score of 505, the same as in 1997.

But in Texas, 48 percent of the Class of '98 took the SAT. That compares with about 43 percent nationally, according to the Texas Education Agency.

A total of 100,417 students in Texas public and private schools took the test — 6,383 more than in 1997 and the largest increase in 10 years.

The College Board, which administers the Scholastic Assessment Test, also reported that a record number of Texans took Advanced Placement exams, which allow high school students to earn college credit if they receive a high score.

A total of 44,093 Texas students took 74,192 AP exams this year, more than a 300 percent increase in student participation in the program over the past 10 years, TEA said.

The number of minority students who took AP exams also increased substantially.

**"It is encouraging that our scores remain stable despite the record increase of students taking the exam."**

— Mike Moses  
Texas Education Commissioner



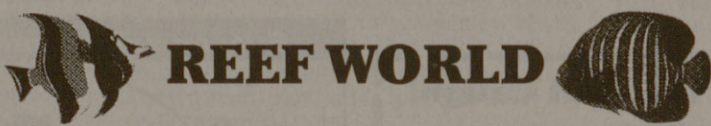
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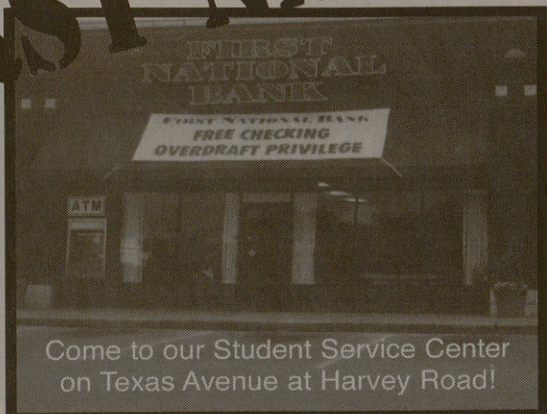
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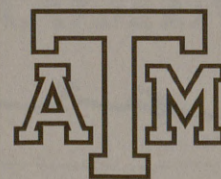
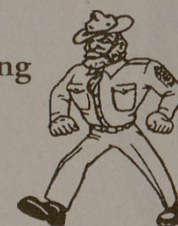
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