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**3-year old finds victims of murder-suicide**

CLEBURNE (AP) — A man shot his wife to death, then fatally shot himself at a home day care center with 11 children inside.

Cleburne police have offered counseling to the children who were at the home during the murder-suicide Monday afternoon.

Police believe none of the children saw the attack.

The children ranged from infancy to age 11. Police said a 3-year-old found the couple dead in the backyard and told an 11-year-old, who called 911.

Investigators say 53-year-old Manuel "Michael" Gigis and his wife, 41-year-old Judy Rae Gigis, were having marital problems.

Mrs. Gigis, a home day care provider, was watching the children when she was shot. Sgt. Terry Powell said the couple's 14-year-old son was at school.

A neighbor of the couple, Stephanie Schultz, said Mrs. Gigis was a soft-spoken, kind woman who loved children.

Ms. Schultz said she and her 5-year-old son arrived home from a Texas Rangers baseball game Monday to find police and ambulances filling the street.

"We didn't have any indication that there was anything wrong," Ms. Schultz told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. "We had occasion to be in their home. Everything appeared to be normal. They really were very nice

**School administrators' resignations demanded over TAAS test dishonesty**

HOUSTON (AP) — In Houston, resignations have been demanded and prosecutors are investigating whether criminal charges are warranted. In Austin, 17 indictments already have been issued and one person has entered a plea.

Who are the accused in probes shaking cities across Texas? Not hardened criminals, but teachers, principals — even a deputy superintendent and an entire school district.

Their alleged crimes? Cheating on the very test state officials use to grade Texas' public schools and assess the academic performance of students.

The recent controversies with the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills Test, or TAAS, have prompted some to question whether the so-called cornerstone of the school accountability system is crumbling under the pressure to succeed.

"Our major complaint is it is such high-stakes testing — careers are on the line," says Annette Cootes, spokesperson for the 80,000-member Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). "You can be fired if the children aren't performing."

The atmosphere, Ms. Cootes warns, is conducive to corruption.

"It's human nature," she says, adding, "The cheating has to stop, because we all lose faith and we all lose credibility. We all hurt."

Supporters of the TAAS maintain the problems are isolated and that the test itself remains a viable way to measure school achievement.

"I don't think it reflects on the system as a whole. That's like saying if you have one child in a classroom that cheats on a test, let's do away with tests," says state Rep. Paul Sadler, a Henderson Democrat who chairs the House Public Education Committee.

Sadler says he "absolutely" be-

lieves the accountability system has integrity and accurately reflects what's happening in Texas schools.

"Is it perfect? No, it's not perfect. You're never going to have a perfect system. But it's the best system going right now," he said.

Texas schools are rated as exemplary, recognized, acceptable or low-performing based, in part, on how their students score on the TAAS.

Educators say there have long been suspicions of TAAS tampering at some campuses. But the rumors were little more than that until last

pering with a govern-

Then last week, a 16-count lawsuit against a dependent and 16 others against the district — first time in Texas to have been filed against a district.

In the meantime, independent School District No. 11, state's largest — had its own investigation of a number of erasures on TAAS tests, with a change from wrong answers to right answers.

The Austin and independent School District No. 11's own examination of the problem, and in an agency asked 11 of the school districts to check campuses that had erasures in 1996-1997.

Three Houston schools, Houston, Fort Bend and Tarrant — reported finding improper administration of TAAS at 11 campuses. The erasures ranged from erased answers to "systematically checked answers from wrong answers."

One fifth-grade teacher at Fort Bend had 185 erasures on only 14 students, including 132 that were wrong to right.

A principal and a teacher resigned in Fort Bend. The principal has demanded the resignation of a principal and the North Forest says a resignation is forthcoming.

Five districts found erasures: Laredo, Pharr, Alamo and San Felipe Consolidated in Starr County and Ector County and El Paso, Texas.

**"Our major complaint is it is such high-stakes testing — careers on the line."**

— Annette Cootes  
TSTA spokesperson

fall, when alleged improprieties within the Austin Independent School District came to light.

The Texas Education Agency lowered the performance ratings of three Austin elementary schools after an audit suggested officials had manipulated TAAS results to make it appear the schools performed better than they did.

The audit said central administrators and principals changed the identification numbers of students who performed poorly on the test, knowing their results would be thrown out because the ID numbers didn't match previously assigned numbers.

A criminal investigation ensued, and in March a former district employee pleaded no contest to tam-

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