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State assessment tests show 4th, 7th graders improving

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington students scored 10 to 15 percent higher than the state average in fourth and seventh grade math and reading tests last fall.

The results of Michigan assessment tests, administered annually in September and graded in January, show that Farmington students improved in all but seventh grade reading since 1977.

In that category, students had the most trouble drawing the best conclusion for a story and matching words with definitions.

The highest jump was made in seventh grade math, where youngsters improved three percent over last year and netted a 15 percent higher average (64 percent) than students across the state.

Seventh grade reading was down less than one percentage point, but was still 10 percent higher than the state average of 67. Despite high marks, Farmington's coordinator of testing, James Nuttle, downplayed comparison with state averages.

"State scores are not that meaningful," he said. "It is impossible to find a district comparable in every way to Farmington, so comparisons are not valid."

"These tests are important to us because they show us how our schools and students are performing. If test objectives are valid and they are not being met, we'll place more emphasis on them."

The extensive exams, which students have five hours to complete, test minimal math and reading competency levels. In the fourth grade, 19 reading and 33 math objectives are tested.

Each objective, like matching a quo-

	Grade 4		Grade 7	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
	Local	State	Local	State
1978	76.6	62.4	77.6	64.2
1977	74.7	60.4	78.2	61.4
1976	74.5	55.4	73.5	53.0
1975	69.4	51.4	77.2	55.7

tion with a speaker or adding mixed numbers, has five questions. The seventh grade exam tests 20 reading and 45 math objectives.

Nuttle has the job of sifting the scores school by school and relaying the information to principals. A graph is drawn for each building listing state, district and school results.

"All the buildings have widespread variance. Even one year can make a big difference," he said.

"Like at Middlebelt Elementary School this year, fourth graders scored 90 percent in reading, as compared to 76 percent last year. You have to con-

sider each child — that's our clientele."

Once a principal knows where weak areas exist, some value judgement is made.

"Seventh graders had problems with decimals, subtraction of fractions, ratio and proportion. The question we ask — are they appropriate test items for students at that level? If they are, more emphasis should be drawn to the area."

Nuttle questioned the validity of metric questions. Fourth grade students scored lowest (29 and 35 percent) on items related to identifying negative numbers on a Celsius thermometer.

"Fourth grade students are really being tested on what they've learned in grades one through three. They are not introduced to negative numbers by the beginning of the fourth grade."

All of Farmington's schools fell into low or moderate need categories. Low need means that 75 percent or more students attained at least 75 percent of the objectives.

Moderate needs means at least half and as much as 74 percent of the students attained 75 percent or more objectives. None of the schools were deemed by the state as high priority need, which indicates less than half the students attained 75 percent or more objectives.

In seventh grade reading, three buildings were termed low need, one moderate. Seventh grade math listed all four schools in the moderate need category.

Fourth grade reading had nine buildings with low need, six with moderate. All 15 fourth grades were termed low need in math.

Nuttle listed every objective with less than 75 percent attainment on a chart. It showed students had trouble in the fourth grade with summary of a reading, matching quotation with a speaker and the metric system.

Students scored 69 percent attainment in math, 76 percent in reading.

Seventh grade problem areas included adding mixed numbers, subtracting fractions from whole numbers and pairing ratios. Attainment was 64 percent in math and 77 percent in reading.

The state has been administering assessment tests for ten years. In Farmington last September, 999 seventh graders and 920 fourth grade students took the exam.



Police have released this artist's rendering of the killer's accomplice. The new picture, say police, is much more life-like than the composite drawing released last week. Persons providing information leading to the arrest and conviction of the two persons involved in the murder case will be eligible for a \$10,000 reward.

Reward set in search for slayer

A \$10,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer of Farmington Great Scott employee Julius Schnoll.

Schnoll, 62, of Southfield, was shot to death on Jan. 27 by a man wearing a blue ski mask with red circles around the eyes. The man was accompanied by another youth. Police have released an artist's rendering of the accomplice based on descriptions given by three employees who were at the scene of the slaying.

Anyone having information about Schnoll's murder should write to the Secret Witness Program, Box 1333, Detroit 48231 or call the secret witness number during business hours at 222-7549.

Information also will be taken by the Farmington Police at 474-4700. Contributing to the reward fund are Allied Supermarkets, the Food Industry Council of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce and the Oakland County Prosecutor's Citizen Reward Fund.

The murder suspect is believed to be a white male, between 18-19 years old, 5 feet 5 inches to 5 feet 6 inches, 125-135 pounds. Witnesses say he had a noticeable "hillybilly" accent.

The accomplice is described as a white male, between 18-19 years old, 5 feet 7 inches to 5 feet 9 inches tall, 135-140 pounds, brown eyes, dark wavy/frizzy shoulder length hair, dark colored sparse mustache, medium complexion, soft spoken.

Originally police had theorized that the two suspects had hidden out in the supermarket, at Ten Mile and Orchard Lake Road, waiting for the employees.

But upon investigation, it was found that the two had entered the supermarket through an airshaft in the roof. The shooting occurred at 4:30 a.m. after Schnoll told the in-

truders that he was unable to open the store's safe.

The newly released drawing of the accomplice is much more life-like than the earlier composite drawing, according to Farmington Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes.

Police believe the intruders are younger and of a lighter weight than earlier suspected because of their entrance through the airshaft.

"The manner by which they entered the building, only a person of the size described could make it by that method," said Byrnes.

"They couldn't have been heavier—say, 180 pounds—and got through that opening," he said.

Police say they did find foot prints on the top of the building. Although having sifted through 300 tips, police remain discouraged in their investigation.

"Frankly, we've run into a dead end. We have no concrete leads. The reward just might aid us," said Byrnes.

Schnoll was appointed as night supervisor at the Farmington Great Scott last September. A Polish immigrant, he had anticipated retiring this year.

He had worked for the Allied Supermarkets Inc. for more than 30 years.

Sterilization favored over pill

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Men and women in Oakland County reflect the findings of a John Hopkins University study which shows a trend toward sterilization being chosen over temporary birth control methods.

People are deciding earlier if they want a family, according to Marlene Brown, director of Women's Center in Livonia, which serves Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and other areas in Oakland County. Some who turn to the agency come from as far away as the Upper Peninsula, Ohio and Canada.

Within the last year, Ms. Brown has noticed an increase in the number of young men who call the center requesting a vasectomy. During January, about 20 men called the center requesting the operation.

While an increasing number of women desire tubal ligation at the center, it's the men who often carry through with their initial request for a vasectomy, according to Ms. Brown.

One of the reasons for this is that doctors are more apt to discourage childless women from sterilization. While they also try to discourage childless men, it's easier for men to tie to physicians and claim they're fathers, according to Ms. Brown.

Another contributing factor is the price of male sterilization. A vasectomy costs about \$175 while a tubal ligation will cost a woman about \$350 and includes a hospital stay.

IN SPITE OF the cost, an increasing number of women are turning to a tubal ligation instead of using other, more temporary birth control methods.

Candidates for sterilization—both men and women—are asked by the center to put in writing their reasons for requesting the surgery, to insure it isn't a spur of the moment decision.

For some men, the prospect of raising a family appears to be economically unfeasible.

"Men in their early 20s without kids or who never married want a vasectomy," said Ms. Brown.

"For some, there are economic reasons for deciding against having children."

If the man is young, the center personnel try to point out that his financial status may change between the present time and the time he believes he would like a family.

For others, it's a question of deciding against a family because they believe they aren't suitable for parenthood.

Women consider sterilization as an alternative to using birth control pills, according to Ms. Brown.

MANY CONSIDER the side effects

of birth control pills to be less desirable than a permanent solution to the problem of contraception.

"A lot of women are worried about birth control side effects," Ms. Brown said.

Other methods are less effective than the pills, so many women decide against having families and request sterilization. Oakland County women who make this decision to forego birth control pills and opt for sterilization are not alone. Nationally, John Hopkins University discovered that the use of oral contraceptives has dropped more than 20 percent since 1977.

In 1975, according to the university study, six million women in the United States were taking birth control pills. In 1977, that figure dropped to more than two million.

Women's increased interest in their bodies and in the harm of side effects has helped to plummet the popularity of birth control pills, according to Ms. Brown.

An increase in the divorce rate and the emphasis on freedom also work against the decision to have a family, she said.

MS. BROWN HAS some reservations

School millage renewal election slated Tuesday

Farmington school administrators say passage of a 1.75 millage renewal next Tuesday is vital because the district stands to lose more than \$1 million in state aid next year.

Assistant Supt. of Finance William Prisk said the renewal would generate

\$1,065,000 in operating funds. The district will lose \$1.5 million in state aid because of declining enrollment, he said.

Voters will be asked to approve the renewal millage for nine years. It will expire jointly with another millage re-

quest at that time.

"Our budget is already at a minimum," said Superintendent Lewis Schulman. "With a \$1.2 million decrease, we would be further hurt."

The board (trustees) has trimmed costs, closed schools and been extremely prudent without cutting programs. We are confident voters will support their renewal. It won't change the basic tax rate but it will insure continued quality education."

The last renewal was passed by a 3-1 margin two years ago. After Tuesday's election, the next millage renewal will be held in 1982, then every year through 1987.

The district levies 35.88 mills which generates \$22 million for total operation. With state, federal aid and funds from other school districts, Farmington has a total school budget of \$28 million.

"The renewal is important to our being able to maintain the types of programs we have in this district," said Board treasurer Michael Shipley.

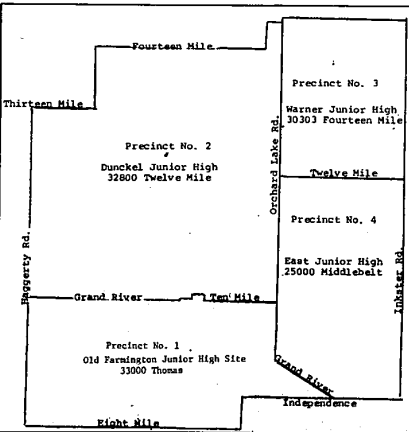
"Test scores indicate education in Farmington is well above the state average. It's going to take money to maintain that."

Farmington has 13,272 students this year. The district includes Farmington, Farmington Hills and a portion of West Bloomfield.

District voters should take note of the precincts where they can cast ballots on Tuesday. The polling system is different from other types of general elections.

The polls at Old Farmington, Dunckel, Warner and East Junior High will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots are available through Saturday at the school administration building, 32500 Shilwassee.

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Voters should take note of the designated polling places for next Tuesday's school millage renewal election—the boundaries are different from other local election polling places. Voting from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. will take place at Old Farmington, Dunckel, Warner and East Junior High schools.

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