



# Farmington Observer

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## Educators stand tough against some testing

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Many Michigan school districts have established proficiency and competency exams for grade promotion and graduation in the aftermath of national reports degrading the quality of American education.

But Farmington school officials remain steadfast in their opposition to the use of such tests.

"We think it's better to deal with the individual," said Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent of instruction.

Nutter isn't sure whether a test that is able to determine a student's exact competency in a particular subject can be designed.

Often a student who is proficient in class founders in a testing situation,

Nutter said. The test then does not accurately gauge a student's abilities, he added.

Last year, for example, Farmington students scored above the statewide average on the annual Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests. That shows that Farmington students are doing well compared to students in other districts, Nutter said.

BUT when Farmington students score low in a particular area, it's sometimes found that the way questions are asked on the MEAP tests is different from the way the school district would ask the questions.

Farmington does not use the results of the MEAP tests to determine whether a student is "good" or "bad" in math or reading, said Superintendent

Lewis Schulman. And certainly such tests are not used by district officials and teachers as a means for punishment, grade promotion or graduation, said Superintendent Lewis Schulman.

The MEAP tests are used as a diagnostic tool with which district officials can determine whether a particular skill is being taught effectively and whether curriculum changes are necessary, Schulman said.

When it comes to deciding whether a student is held back, particularly in the elementary grades, the student's teacher and school principal evaluate what should be done, Nutter said.

"It's based on the student's ability and potential," he said. Although Nutter and Schulman did not have the rate of student failure available, both agreed the problem is not rampant in Farmington.

"We don't have a lot of failures. Each case should be dealt with individually," Schulman said. "I don't believe in competency tests for graduation."

Nutter and Schulman are not alone in their opinions. Ernie Bauer, director of testing for the Oakland Schools, considers the "wave" of competency tests only a reaction to the national reports.

"I'm not sure I see it as strong as it was five-to-six years ago. Then it was exit competency," he said.

MOST OF THE EDUCATIONAL and testing consultants with the Oakland Schools believe tests, such as the MEAP, "should have their sights raised a bit so the tests can show what should be in the curriculum."

The state has allocated money for an assessment service center to help local districts create their own tests. These tests, however, are not competency tests.

"The idea is to not make it punitive," he said, adding the tests should be a method by which the districts can determine what changes, if any, are necessary.

The testing movement is not only a reaction to the national reports, but



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

## Collector's delight

Bill Wolf and his 1937 red Packard are the envy of many an antique motor car buff. To read about Wolf and some other Farmington area auto aficionados turn to page 3A.

## Math stands out as the exception

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington's only "official" proficiency tool is used to gauge high school students' math abilities.

"The official test is in math," said Superintendent Lewis Schulman. "And it's only in high school. If they don't pass, they get a beeping up of the skills."

"With math the students takes algebra and trigonometry but their arithmetic skills get rusty," he said. "Math is a common, necessary skill."

The test is designed to determine what basic math skills students lack so they can be emphasized before graduation. But "even that is sometimes questioned," said Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent of instruction.

The district also tests children who are old enough to start kindergarten. Unlike the math proficiency test, however, the kindergarten test is simply to

determine whether a child is ready for school.

"WE PROVIDE an assessment of every child before kindergarten," said Graham Lewis, assistant superintendent of special education and services. "Every child is assessed, and we try to glean out those who would be high risk."

High risk means that the child needs more time to mature or gain certain basic skills before entering kindergarten.

"We're looking for all the abilities and entry skills that normal 5- and 6-year-olds have to handle kindergarten curriculum," Lewis said. "It gives us an idea of what the kids are able to cope with."

Parents of these children have the option of enrolling them in what is called a developmental kindergarten.

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## Her fight for survival wins over hearts



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

When Angie Glummo arrived by helicopter at Farmington's Oak Hill Nursing Home 15 months ago she was unable to hold up her head or move her arms and a respirator breathed for her.

But the future is looking brighter for the 24-year-old Angie, a quadriplegic who spent the first year of her life in a Toledo hospital.

Today, with the help of therapists and nurses, Angie sits up in her new wheelchair, moves her head and arms and is able to grab small toys in her hands.

"She shows improvement every month," said Martha Cassell, Angie's occupational therapist. "Six to eight months ago she couldn't hold up her head. Look at her now."

Most notable is Angie's improving condition. In fact she is being weaned off her ventilator life-support system. Three or four times a day, Angie spends anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour off the machine.

"We're working toward getting her off the ventilator," said Felicia McCauley, Angie's respiratory therapist. "As she continues to grow we'll have to monitor her."

Angie's progress is considered remarkable since most quadriplegics "don't progress this well," said Chris Thom, coordinator of Oak Hill's relatively new ventilator unit.

WHEN ANGIE was 3 weeks old she was involved in an automobile accident near Norwalk, Ohio, which took the life of her mother, Penny. Angie remained in hospital until her arrival in Farmington. Her father, John Glummo, also moved from northern Ohio to Oakland County when Angie was transferred to Oak Hill.

"She was medically stable. There's no reason to keep her in a hospital," Thom said.

Angie is one of nine respiratory patients at Oak Hill. Although she is the only child there, Angie is part of a program which attempts to treat the old and young in the same setting.

Not only is a nursing home less ex-

pensive than a hospital (Medicaid has recently agreed to help with Angie's care), but at Oak Hill Angie receives a program of respiratory rehabilitation and physical, occupational and speech therapy that's designed specifically for her.

"We've attempted to modify the program," Thom said, adding there's a "strong focus on rehabilitation."

In physical therapy, for example, the goal is to keep Angie's muscles in shape, Thom said. During the day while she is in her wheelchair Angie wears elbow splints to stretch her shortened muscles. At night she wears hand splints for the same purpose.

Besides therapy, the nursing home provides Angie with a quality of life difficult to come by in a hospital, McCauley said. The new wheelchair, nicknamed the "Forsche" complete with a tray which can carry the ventilator, has enabled Angie to get out and see the world she's missed.

"It (Oak Hill) is probably the next

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## Hills wins round over property use

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

By a 2-1 vote, the Michigan Court of Appeals has upheld the city of Farmington Hills' position involving zoning of property owned by the Sisters of Mercy, Province of Detroit.

The court upheld the Farmington Hills zoning plan over objections that it unreasonably blocks the development of the property, which is at 12 Mile and Middlebelt roads.

The court agreed that the single-family residential zoning is consistent with the city's master plan for future land use.

company. The 89-acre parcel of property is at the southeast corner of Middlebelt and 12 Mile roads.

The case was appealed from a July 29, 1983, opinion and order of the Oakland County Circuit Court, which had upheld the reasonableness of the city's zoning of the property.

"The opinion, briefly, goes through some of the facts," including a description of the property, said Paul Bibeau, city attorney for Farmington Hills.

"In effect, I think, it concludes that the Farmington Hills zoning is in fact reasonable, it is not confiscatory. In a nutshell, I think that's basically what the court said."

agree with Gillespie at all." Tyrone Gillespie did not side with his colleagues Glenn S. Allen Jr. and Roman S. Gribbs, in the July 22 Court of Appeals ruling.

Allen and Gribbs wrote that the issue to be decided is whether the zoning of the property (1) reasonably furthers a legitimate governmental interest and is not "confiscatory," and, thus, (2) is not an unconstitutional deprivation of property without due process of law.

Allen and Gribbs wrote that Farmington Hills had followed its master plan consistently, and was "advancing a reasonable governmental interest" in zoning the property for single-family residential use.

"That's why you plan, that's why you implement a plan through your zoning

"I'd like to have had a 3-0. I don't

decisions," said Bibeau, the city attorney. "Again, that's just one of the elements that was tried."

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said he was pleased with the Court of Appeals ruling.

"Basically, from what Paul (Bibeau) has told me, the court ruling upheld the city's master plan," he said. "We have worked hard to be consistent about our master plan and it's gratifying to see the court acknowledge that."

The July 22 Court of Appeals ruling isn't necessarily the last word, Bibeau said.

"They could file a motion for rehearing in the Court of Appeals." An application for hearing in the Michigan Su-

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