

Students improve on college entrance tests

By Mary Klemic
staff writer

Livonia School District scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) have increased over last year, and are substantially higher than state and national averages.

Scores for the American College Test (ACT) in the district also were higher than state and national averages. However, it is "extremely difficult" to compare this year's average to those of other years, because for the first time,

ACT scores of only seniors were reported this year in Livonia, said Peter Moloney, research and evaluation specialist for the district.

In the Farmington Hills, Livonia, and Farmington Hills, SAT and ACT scores were higher than the national average this year.

The district also did better on this year's tests than it did in previous years, according to Senior High School counselor Denis Ringle.

In SAT results for Livonia, the aver-

age verbal score this year was 513 (25 points more than the year before) and the average math score was 595 (a 20-point hike). Michigan's SAT averages were 487 verbal and 517 math. Nationally, scores were 431 for verbal and 475 for math.

This year's average ACT scores in Livonia were 18.6 for English, 20.3 for math, 18.5 for social studies and 23.2 for natural science, a composite score of 20.0. The state's average score was 18.9, while the U.S. average was 18.6.

"It's maintaining a pattern that has been going on for several years: Livonia scored higher than Michigan, and Michigan scored higher than the nation," Moloney said.

LAST YEAR'S ACT composite scores were 19.8 for Livonia, 18.8 for Michigan and 18.5 nationally. Two years ago, the scores were 19.5 for Livonia, 18.6 for Michigan and 18.5 nationally.

Most students take the tests in their junior year, Moloney said. He said one reason for this is application deadlines for the National Merit Scholarship, Ford Foundation grants and service academies.

The SAT is a voluntary test designed to measure academic potential of college-bound students. It is used as an admissions tool by colleges and placement offices. SAT scores are measured against a possible 800 total for each half of the test.

The ACT includes English, math, social studies and natural science, and has a possible 36 points. The state of

Michigan uses the ACT to determine financial aid on the basis of need for potential college students.

"In Michigan, a very small percentage of high school seniors take the SAT," Moloney said. "In Livonia, only about 7 percent of the students (took the test). Ten percent (of the students) across the state (took the test). Most take the ACT."

"SAT is the one that gets the ball-rolling," he said.

In Livonia, males scored higher than females in the SAT verbal test, but females scored higher in the math half. Verbal scores were 521 for males and 506 for females, while math scores were 617 for males and 674 for females. Sixty males and 61 females took the test.

The previous year, 77 males and 51 females took the test. ACT scores for males were 45 verbal and 597 math. Average scores for females were 484 verbal and 543 math.

LIVONIA STUDENTS beat the national SAT scores in other areas, too. Percentages of scores that were more than certain levels were higher in the district than nationwide, sometimes dramatically.

In Livonia, 59 percent of the verbal scores and 52 percent of the math were more than 500, compared to national results of 26 percent verbal and 43 percent math. Also in Livonia, 19 percent in verbal and 53 percent in math scored more than 600 (7 percent in verbal and 17 percent in math nationwide), and 5 percent in verbal and 21

percent in math scored more than 700, compared to 1 percent on the verbal test and 4 percent on the math test nationally.

"We have a sizeable number of very talented graduates coming out of our system taking this test," Moloney said.

On the ACT, Livonia High School students scored the best in English and math (19.4 and 21.0 respectively). Bentley High School students chalked up the highest scores in social studies (19.3) and natural science (22.2). Individual high school breakdowns for the SAT were unavailable.

One thousand Livonia students took

the ACT test. A total 68,800 students in Michigan and approximately 740,000 nationwide took the test. State scores were 18.0 for English, 17.9 for math, 17.5 for social studies and 21.8 for natural science. Nationally, the averages were 18.1, 17.2, 17.4 and 21.3 respectively.

Eight Farmington Hills students took the SAT last June, according to Ringle. The students scored 438 on the verbal and 583 on the math, for a total score of 1,021.

Maria Chestney contributed to this story.

Farmington tops '83-84 scores

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

High school seniors in the Farmington Public Schools have increased their scores on college entrance exams.

Of the district's 895 seniors, 627, or 70 percent, took the American College Test (ACT) — the only test required for college and university admission — when they were juniors in 1984-85, said Lynn Nutter, assistant superintendent. Statewide participation in the ACT stands at about 56 percent.

Participation in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was less with only 417 of the total 895 seniors taking the exam, Nutter said. The statewide average participation rate in the SAT stands at 11 percent.

The ACT, considered a more comprehensive test than the SAT, measures developed reasoning in English, mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.

The SAT, on the other hand, provides an objective estimate of how a student will perform in the first year of college. The SAT tests verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities.

IMPROVEMENT was seen in all testing categories of the ACT. Of a total 35 on a composite score, students scored an average 20.9, up from 20.4 in 1983-84.

Of a total possible score of 33 on the English exam, Farmington students scored an average 19.3 — an increase from 18.9 in 1983-84.

In math, students scored an average 20.8 out of a total 38. That's an improvement over the previous year when students scored 20.5. Students scored an average 19.3 out of a total 34

on the social studies exam. In 1984-85, students scored 20.5.

Scores in the natural sciences jumped the most from the previous year. In 1983-84, students scored an average 23 out of 35. In 1984-85, they scored an average of 23.7.

"It is a significant increase, even though it doesn't seem that way," James Whitledge, a Farmington High School counselor, said of the improved showings. "We compare quite favorably with other districts, the state and the nation."

DISPENSE INCREASES in the ACT scores, Nutter said, college and university officials maintain that a student's school record is still the best evidence of preparation for college.

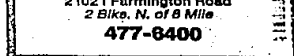
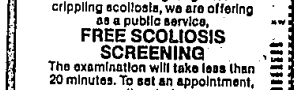
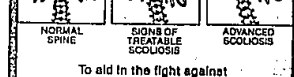
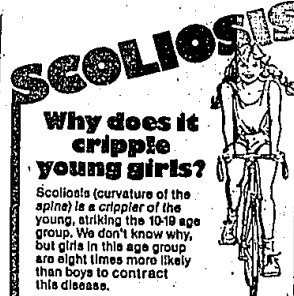
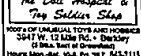
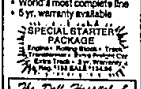
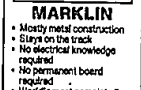
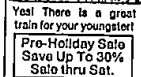
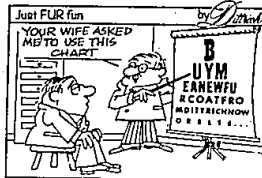
On the SAT, students' verbal scores increased and the math scores decreased. Farmington district students scored 455 out of a possible 800 score on the verbal test. That's compared to the average 448 score the previous year.

In mathematics, students scored an average 518 out of a possible 800 score. The previous year, students had an average score of 523.

Although test scores are best used to work with individual students, school district officials also use them as an indication of what in the curriculum might need beefing up, Nutter said.

A few years ago, officials were concerned with students' overall verbal scores. A comprehensive writing program from grades 5 to 10 was then implemented to improve students' skills.

"The most important thing is the experience youngsters get in taking the exam, plus working with counselors in planning their future," Nutter said.



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