

Clarenceville students make the grade

Clarenceville officials are satisfied with the results of the district's first competency tests.

The basic skills tests in reading, math and writing were given to all ninth- and 10th-grade students in the district in October, November and December 1985. Results were presented to the Clarenceville Board of Education at its last meeting. The district

takes in parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township.

"I was not surprised," Superintendent Michael Shiller said. "I knew that the kids would do comparatively well."

"They (the tests) did what they were supposed to do," he said. "They identified some weaknesses and the skill level of our students."

"I think they did show what they were supposed to show," said DeWayne Nutter, Clarenceville High School principal.

THE HIGHEST scores were recorded in reading and the lowest in math, both in the fall and in pilot tests given to a random sampling of students last spring. Seventy percent was set as the

passing score after the pilot tests were given.

"I knew math would be the most difficult," Shiller said. "There were story problems and thinking-type problems. They gave some of our algebra students a little bit of a challenge as well."

"The students could do the computation, but when they had to read the problem and put together the information in a certain form, they had difficulty," Nutter said.

Beginning with the Class of 1988, Clarenceville students must pass the three tests, as well as meet all other graduation requirements, before they can receive a high school diploma. The tests are the result of a district survey that indicated that 88 percent of the 1,200 respondents wanted them.

The tests measure eighth-grade-level skills. Students who fail any one of the three tests in the first semester of each school year must take remedial classes in the second semester. The tests will be repeated each year, and are given to seniors twice. Parents will be notified of the results after each test is taken.

NINTH AND 10th graders who took the reading test in October had almost identical results. Ninety-two percent of the ninth graders (103 out of 112), and 91 percent of the 10th graders (100 out of 110), who took the test, passed it.

The math test was given to 108 ninth-grade and 113 10th-grade students in November. Thirty-six percent (39 students) of the ninth graders and 62 percent (70 students) of the 10th graders passed it.

One-hundred ninth graders and 116 10th graders took the writing test in December. This test included grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Sixty-five percent of the ninth-grade students passed it, as did 75 percent (87 total) of the 10th-grade students.

THE PILOT reading tests were given to 44 eighth-grade and 52 ninth-grade students. Seventy-five percent of

the eighth graders (33 total) passed the pilot test. Of the 11 students who failed it, four failed it again in October. Ninety percent of the ninth graders (47 total) passed the pilot test. Of the five who failed it, three failed it again in October.

A total 48 eighth-grade and 45 ninth-grade students took the pilot math tests. Of these, 54 percent (26 students) of the eighth graders and 71 percent (32 students) of the ninth graders passed it. Ten eighth-grade students and 13 ninth-grade students who failed the pilot test failed it again in November.

Forty-nine eighth-grade and 43 ninth-grade students took the pilot writing tests. Sixty-three percent of the eighth graders and 74 percent of the ninth graders passed it. Ten of the 14 eighth graders, and five of the 11 ninth graders who failed the pilot test failed it again in December.

Schools eye tax earnings

By Mary Klemic
Staff writer

The Clarenceville School District wants its member communities to pay back the amount the communities have earned in interest on school tax collections from the past six years.

At its meeting Thursday, the Clarenceville Board of Education directed the administration to send a letter to the subject to the city of Livonia and continue pursuing it from there. The district includes parts of Livonia, Redford Township and Farmington Hills.

Livonia earned approximately \$5,396.93 in interest on the 1985 summer tax collection for Clarenceville, according to the district.

"We really haven't done any real calculations on it," said Edward Salisz, assistant superintendent of school business affairs. "All I'm asking the board for is permission to sit down with the cities and talk to them about it and see if we come to a mutual agreement. We want to do it in a fair way. As employees of taxpayers, we should follow our obligations."

The Livonia Public Schools district is waiting for a legal opinion on the issue from its attorney, said James Carl, Livonia's assistant superintendent for operations.

Depending on the opinion, "We will begin to have some dialogue with both our cities (Livonia and Westland)," Carl said.

MUNICIPAL governments collect taxes for school districts and can hold onto the money for 15 days, accumulating the sum in bank accounts, before distributing it to the districts. Municipalities had been keeping the interest earned on these short-term accounts.

But districts claimed in recent years that the interest belongs to them because it is earned from the investment of their tax money. Last November, the Court of Appeals agreed with the schools when it ruled in a case on the matter involving the Grand Rapids School District and the city of Grand Rapids.

"I was asking for it five years ago, but nothing was being done about it," Salisz said.

"It went to court. All the school districts said yeah, that the interest must follow the principal," he said.

THE COURT concluded that state law doesn't address the issue of who gets the interest earnings. In December 1985, state Rep. Willis Bullard, R-Nowi, introduced a bill that would specify that the municipalities should keep the interest. The bill was still in committee as of last week.

A similar bill, introduced by state Sen. Norman Shinkle, R-Monroe, went before the Senate Finance Committee Wednesday. This bill would allow the cities to keep all of the interest but would return the money to the schools after five business days.

The committee adjourned until after the Easter recess, Bullard said. He said a compromise between school and city groups may be reached in the meantime.

Livonia receives an agreed fee of about \$11,000 from Clarenceville for collection of the summer tax levy, or \$3.60 per statement, according to Salisz.

"We want to be cooperative but we want them to know we're not sleeping here," he said.

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