



Frank Kasun is decorated as a Christmas tree by fourth graders. All this student effort on his behalf brought tears to the retiring principal's eyes.

## Principal gets rousing goodbye

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

**A** TEARY-EYED Frank Kasun said goodbye last week to 38 years of education — the last 2½ years as the principal at Eagle Elementary.

"I'd like to first thank everyone. This is a very special place," Kasun told a gymnasium filled with his students, from kindergarten through the fifth grade. "We think you are very special people and we love you. I'm proud of you."

Kasun encouraged students to always "be their best."

Students and staff dedicated their winter assembly — on the last day of school before the holiday break — to the retiring principal, who has worked in the Farmington Public Schools for 24 years. They also welcomed new principal Sue Johnson, who officially takes over in January.

The program included several special segments, including one involving student Erica Smith, who sang a

song about friendship and love while the entire school around her used sign language as she sang the words. Fourth graders sang as they dressed their principal as a Christmas tree. Staff members, also known as the Ding-a-Ling Singers, sang a few numbers to entertain students and many guests.

Students also presented Kasun with a book, with their interpretations of how "Mr. Kasun is special because..."

In addition to Friday's assembly, the Eagle Elementary community enjoyed a "Frank Kasun Day" earlier in the month, and held an evening reception where people could visit and offer their best wishes.

Kasun said he plans to remain in Farmington, using it as his base from which to travel. "We're going to stay in the area, but we want to travel some and become fluent in French and German," Kasun said. He said he also plans to join a health club to stay in shape.



photos by SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Eagle kindergartners sing "Wrap Myself Up and Send Myself to You," as part of their holiday performance at the school. Tracy Singer (right) adds the appropriate hand gestures to the melody. Just behind her is Laura Azzo.



Vocal music teacher Kathy Seremet accompanies Eagle Elementary students as they perform.

## Local students boost scores on state tests

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

There was an overall improvement this year in state mandated assessment tests for Farmington students.

But testing procedures for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program in science, and especially reading, have changed. This affects the way results should be viewed, say educators. Only in mathematics was the test the same. It was given to the same representative group of fourth, seventh and 10th graders.

"We continue to gain in basic skills, and we've established data for essential skills," said superintendent Michael Flanagan. "Next year the comparisons we will be able to make will be positive."

The MEAP has always tested basic skills in reading and math. Last year, the state added science tests, and this year moved the testing to fifth, eighth and 11th graders — the same students who took the test last year. Reading and mathematics tests are still given to fourth, seventh and 10th graders.

In reading, the entire testing method has changed, making this year's scores a baseline for future tests. Both local and state educators warn communities not to compare past reading tests, which tested basic skill, with the current tests, which test reading comprehension.

Basic test results are scored by what percent of students scored 75 percent or better. For Farmington scores in 1988:

• Mathematics — fourth graders went from 90 percent in 1988 to 92.3 percent in 1989. Seventh graders went from 82.5 percent in 1988 to 82.1 percent in 1989 — a minimal decrease. Tenth graders went from 82.5 percent in 1988 to 87.5 percent in 1989.

• Reading (basic skills only) — fourth graders went from 91.6 percent in 1988 to 95 percent in 1989.

### MEAP Scores - Farmington Public Schools

Grade	1989	1988	Net Change
<b>Math</b>			
4th	92.3	90.0	+2.3
7th	82.1	82.5	-.4
10th	87.5	82.5	+5.0
<b>Reading</b>			
4th	48.3		
7th	47.5		
10th	47.4		

Numbers are percent of students scoring 75% or better on tests

Seventh graders went from 92.9 percent in 1988 to 95.7 in 1989. Tenth graders went from 89.4 percent in 1988 to 94.5 percent in 1989. Only a portion of this test was given this year for comparison purposes.

• Science — fourth graders taking the test scored 57.2 percent in 1988, compared with the same students now in the fifth grade who scored 65.5 percent in 1989. This year's eighth graders scored 72.8 percent compared with 50.8 percent in 1988. This year's 11th graders scored 53.5 percent in 1989 compared with 38 percent in 1988.

With the new reading tests, Farmington students fared better in reading comprehension after reading an entertaining story selection, than they did in reading an informational piece from a textbook. Both these items were tested separately, and used a different scoring method than that of the basic skills.

On a scaled score, using a score of 300 or better as "satisfactory," students achieved as follows:

• Fourth graders — 77 percent performed satisfactorily on the story portion, while only 50.8 performed

satisfactorily on the informational reading portion. A total of 48.3 percent reached state standards on both.

• Seventh graders — 73.9 performed satisfactorily on the story portion, while only 53.7 performed satisfactorily on the informational reading portion. A total of 47.5 percent reached state standards on both.

• Tenth graders — 68.3 percent performed satisfactorily on the story portion, while only 54.1 percent performed satisfactorily on the informational reading portion. A total of 47.4 percent reached state standards on both.

Assistant superintendent Judith White attributes the lower scores at the high school level to students being interested in other tests, such as college entrance exams on which their future depends.

"The kids in general don't take the test as seriously," she said. "It doesn't tie to grades, it doesn't tie to college. It's always a challenge at the secondary level to get them to take this seriously."

## Flanagan responds to criticism

Michael Flanagan, newly appointed Farmington superintendent of schools, defended himself last week against critics who believe he lacks a sufficient teaching background.

"I do believe I meet those (North Central Association of Secondary Schools) requirements," said the former deputy superintendent, appointed to the top post in early December.

Flanagan has several years of college-level teaching experience, but none in elementary or secondary grades. North Central, an Ann Arbor-based regional accreditation agency, requires a minimum of two years of teaching experience for superintendents.

Some community members were concerned about Flanagan's lack of

grade school and secondary school teaching experience. They feared it may affect the district's accreditation.

Flanagan said he had received many calls from people concerned about the situation. "I would never do anything to jeopardize this district," he said.

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