

# C'ville scores disappointing

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STAFF WRITER

On this fall's MEAP test, Clarenceville Middle School seventh graders are the one bright spot. On both the math and reading tests, the seventh graders continued the uphill climb they began in 1992.

It's the fourth graders at Botsford and Grandview elementary schools who force administrators to sit down after the holidays to ferret out what went wrong. Both the math and reading scores for both schools dropped, with the Botsford reading score taking the biggest plunge.

"We thought we were on the way, so we didn't talk about it, we didn't make it a priority," said Superintendent David Kamish. "We'll have to attack it again. It has to be hammered and hammered constantly. Both reading and math have improved, but it's not good enough yet."

Back in 1992, disappointed by low scores, Kamish made beefing up the reading, math and science curriculum the district's top priority. On the 1993 and 1994 MEAP tests, most scores climbed.

On the 1992 math test,

## MEAP RESULTS

Clarenceville Middle School scored 25.0. The score has gone up ever since, to 38.5 in 1993, 41.5 in 1994 and 55.8 in 1995.

On the 1992 reading test, the seventh graders scored 33.1. The score dipped slightly in 1993, to 32.9. It then continued its climb, with 39.8 in 1994 and 43.4 in 1995.

In 1993 and 1994, the scores of both elementary schools rose substantially before this year's fallback.

In math, Botsford scored 43.9 in 1992, 74.55 in 1993, 82.0 in 1994 and 77.8 in 1995. In reading, Botsford scored 42.1 in 1992, 64.7 in 1993, 70.0 in 1994, and 44.9 in 1995.

In math, Grandview scored 35.5 in 1992, 67.0 in 1993, 77.4 in 1994, and 76.0 in 1995. In reading, Grandview scored 35.5 in 1992, 63.5 in 1993, 66.5 in 1994, and 54.7 in 1995.

Jim Lancaster, assistant superintendent for instruction, said he is most disappointed in the fourth grade reading scores. "We'll go back and look at what the kids did. We'll do an item by item analysis."

Low scores on the reading test

may sound like students are poor readers. This is not necessarily true. MEAP tests far beyond just reading.

"It's not just how well you read, but did you comprehend? Can you take inferential reading and be able to generalize, interpret, infer? This is the difficulty area this year."

Lancaster said students fare better on the math tests because it is more specific. Even so, he believes the district's math scores have "plateaued out."

Another bright spot on the MEAP test is the fact that fewer and fewer students are ending up in the lowest score category.

"We're pleased that more kids are out of this low category and into the moderate one." The above percentages are for the number of students who scored in the satisfactory category.

The MEAP scores recently released are for the first round of the 1995 tests. In March, fifth and eighth graders will take new tests in writing and science. High school juniors also will take the state's new proficiency test, which will test math, science, reading and writing.

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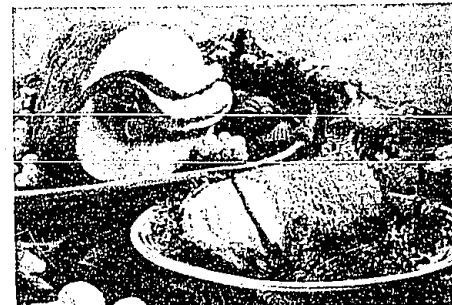
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"Overall, we could see we had a match between what was being tested and what was being taught," White said.

Reading is another matter. Percentage of students hitting the satisfactory mark has fluctuated at the fourth grade level.

This year, 67.4 percent scored satisfactory. That compares favorably to 56.1 percent in 1994.

At the seventh grade level, though, barely half of the students have scored satisfactory in the past four years. Though the 57.2 percent this year is the highest during that time period.

"With our reading, it didn't appear we had as strong of a match (between the MEAP and curriculum)," White said. "We knew we really had to do some solid intervention."

The district offered a summer program for students entering grades 1-3, who needed remedial attention. The district also had training for classroom teachers and developed reading strategies.

Each building had a reading goal as part of its overall improvement plan, White said.

At some schools, satisfactory scores skyrocketed.

The percentage of Larkshire Elementary fourth graders scoring satisfactory jumped from 44.4 percent in 1994 to 84.6 percent this year. Gill Year-Round scores also had a dramatic increase from 25 percent last year to 57.9 percent this year.

One reason for large increases might be because the students might be part of a particularly high achieving group, White said.

"You never get overly exuberant," she said. "What you watch out for is an upward trend."

"If they improve year-to-year, we know we are on the right course."

Another area district officials look at is the percentage of students scoring in the moderate range — above 50 percent — and those in the low category. The percentage of low scores has dwindled in math and reading at both grade levels.

"When you see kids moving from the bottom to the middle, that says we're getting at the equity piece," White said. "That says to me that we're not only dealing with quality, we're dealing with equity."



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