

C'ville scores disappointing

BY MARIE CHESTNEY
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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 Bataford and Grandview elementary schools who will 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 Bataford reading score taking the biggest hit.

"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 1994 reading test, the seventh graders scored 33.0, 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 the year's falloff.

In math, Bataford scored 43.9 in 1992, 74.55 in 1993, 82.0 in 1994 and 72.8 in 1995. In reading, Bataford scored 42.1 in 1992, 64.7 in 1993, 70.3 in 1994, and 44.9 in 1995.

In math, Grandview scored 35.5 in 1992, 67.6 in 1993, 77.4 in 1994, and 75.0 in 1995. In reading, Grandview scored 35.6 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 informational 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.

"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.

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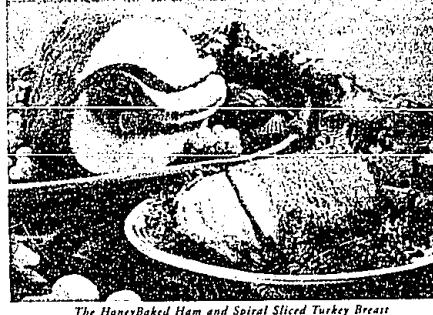
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