Test from page A1

sters gaining admission to top collegeous getting jobs.
Out of 783 juniors at the districts three high schools, only 141 are taking the MEAP exam, 150 mer; and 141 are taking the MEAP exam, 150 merly called the state's high school proficiency test. The low-est participation is at North Firmington High, where only 25 of 272 attachests (9 percent) are this ing the test - considered a legy measuring stick by local districts in whether they are matching the with the state's core curriculum under of juniors taking the test at the other high schools in only elightly higher. Farmington High, 57 of 272 (21) percent). Hennase of the high percentage

Because of the high percentage of opt-outs, Maxfield said letters will be sent this week to parents, trying to explain the significant need for the former HSPT.

We've got to find a way to con-

vince people."

According to Maxfield, this According to Maxfiold, this year's number of exemptions in the district far exceeds those from last year, with many high-achieving students among them. But he stressed that the situation isn't something that came out of nowhere, Parents started asking questions about the test last aummer, when the state House conducted public hearings.

Schedule switch

Schedule switch
Further muddying matters
was the fact that a tentative
January schedule was
announced in December, only to
be switched to late in the year.
Along the way, more parents
started questioning why their
children needed to take the test.
"People kept challenging us,
"Can we get a waiver?" and
Maxfield. "Well, yes."
But Maxfield and other district administrators had no way

of preparing for the "avalanche" of exemptions that parents filed

of preparing for the "avalanche" of exemptions that parents filed in the past week or so.

"It, for sure, started with respectful but intense dialogue with parents who were saying," I don't want my kids to take the tost, " said Maxfield, "As that dialogue began to unfold, it created some momentum."

The snowball effect was noted by Barbara Cherem, director of assessment. "I would call it opoulist movement."

Because so faw are taking the test, which essentially wasted many hours of planning and preparation by the district, resulta next fall will be "contaminated" and "uscless," administrators any. Comparisons against other districts won't have meaning. The start of the school day was pushed back to 9:50 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, today and tomorrow to enable for the testing.

"What we have now," said

tomorrow to enact.

"What we have now," said
Judith White, the district's assistant superintendent for instruction, "with the number of kids

"thing the test ... is data that is taking the test ... is data that is worthless to us."

worthless to us."
White omphasized that the MEAP, in whatever form, is sulumble for assessing the success or failure of students compared to those across the state.
"Equality and equity are the two pillars we support our educational program on," White

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said. "This (test) allows us to track both. And we lose the abili-ty to do that when we have data that becomes useless."

Opting out

Opting out

At the press conference, Maxfield handed out a list documenting some of the reasons parents gave for allowing their children to opt out, including:

Mapparent confusion about whether state-endorsed transcripts would or wouldn't jeopardize college admission for graduates. The jury is still out on that issue, debated among state educators and legislators for more than a year.

That the ever-changing tests aren't reliable.

That the tosts, and results, are meaningless and won't have an impact on future careers.

Students already have too much on their testing plate at this time of year – with many taking the ACT, SAT and AP tests.

"What's the motivation to take

taking the ACT, SAT and AP
tests.

"What's the motivation to take
it and do well?" asked John Barrett, sesistant principal at Farmington High School.

White said the stance of parents to not have their children
take such a controversial test is
understandable.

"You have a group of parents
that have thinking that's very
valid." I have a history on my
child, I have grade point aver-

Whos, whys of avoiding the test therefore not reliable. **BConcerns about results going on the transcripts, that they may cause problems later. **B College entrance may be icepardized if not endorsed. **E Colleges don't use for entrance, so why bother? **B Time of year is poor. **B Tests and results ara meaningless; won't help caree. **goals.**

Who is opting out? e average grade-point

above average grade-point averages.

Students who are verbal, well-respected.

Friends and peers.
Why are they opting out? (Reasons listed on form)

Tenting time could better be used for study for upcoming Advanced Placement and class tests.

State tests are not valid, not proven, and over-changing.

ages, ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement. Why do I need this piece of information when I already see and know the success of my student? And if I'm feeling I don't need it, and I'm feeling it would do nothing but potentially harm my kid, why do it?"

requirements are enough to measure of achievement.

goals.

Grades and district

risky to take, given the potential black mark and the fact they can legally opt out. Still, both Maxfield and White said that something good could still come out of the MEAP meas. "It actually could turn out to be a positive if we handle it right," White said. "We could see more information about the test

Students taking the test carn proficient, not proficient and novice labels for their high school transcripts. Some parents and students worry that it is too right, white said. We could see more information about the test ... there could be better commu-nication between the school dis-tricts, state department of edu-cation and legislators."

Death from page A1

immediately, but he wasn't breathing, and his face was 'bluish-purple.' Despite CPR and quick response from Farmington Hills and Botsford Hospital omergency personnel, the baby was pronounced dead.

The noxt day, an autlopsy determined the cause of death to be 'positional asphyxia,' something Oakland County Medical Examinor Ljubisa d. Dragovic insists is often preventable.

Deaths by positional asphyxia—caused when the baby's breathing is obstructed, sometimes by bedding or cushions from a couling in the country of the weight of an adult's body—generally happen during a few moments of carelessness, Dragovic said.

"These were not unloving peace."

during a lew moments of corelessness, Dragovic said.

These were not unloving people, "Dragovic said of the
deceased baby's parents. They
were carring parents who loved
their baby, he said. But a few
moments of inattention cost this
baby his life."
The baby's family declined to
be interviewed about the death
But the circumstances surrounding the death should be noted by
parents everywhere, according to
the medical examiner.

The couple, in their 20s, had
gone out that Saturday night,

leaving the baby in the care of his maternal grandmother, according to police reports. When they returned about 12:30 a.m., a friend cume inside, and the parents showed him the baby.

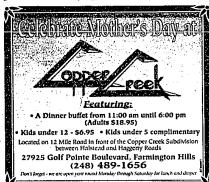
After the friend left, the new father nestled the baby to his chest, and the pair settled into a reclining chair. Both fell asleep. A week earlier the grandmother had cautioned her son-in-language in the way because it was dangerous, according to police.

ngainst sleeping that way because it was dangerous, according to police.

About 4:30 a.m., the baby's mother changed her son's dinpers and gave him a bottle. The father then took his son again and settled back into the recliner. The mother went to sleep on a nearby couch.

The next thing the father remembered, the report said, was waking up to the grand-mother screaming and learning that his son was not breathing.

Police were initially auspicious, according to police Chief William J. Dwyer. But there were no signs of abuse, and neither drugs nor alcohol factored into the tragedy, although the father told police he had one beer at 10:30 p.m. and another about 11:15 p.m.



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