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ed to release what it has now because it wasn't affected by the error, she noted. The state figures are to be released Thursday or Friday, but this is the second time a date's been set, she said.

Oakland County results also have been delayed.

However, Cheren said, it is anticipated that Farmington district students will continue to exceed state averages.

In September

Results of the social studies tests, added to the MEAP this year, will be released in September.

The district said overall, students continue to maintain stable levels of satisfactory performance in mathematics at both the fourth- and seventh-grade levels, while decreasing the number scoring in the low category.

Among the other highlights:

■ Fourth-grade satisfactory reading increased slightly while students in the lowest category decreased.

■ Informational reading scores continued to improve, chiefly due to "dramatic increases" by the Forest, Gill Year-Round, Hillside, Kenbrook and William Grace schools.

■ Science performance was essentially unchanged in fifth grade and somewhat declined in the highest category in the eighth grade.

■ Seventh-grade reading declined slightly. While story-reading remained stable, informational reading declined by 7 percent.

However, it was noted the reading categories are a combined score.

■ Writing at both the fifth- and



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL HANCOCK

Bye: Carolyn Mahalak is retiring as assessment coordinator.

eight-grade levels experienced a decline, but this appears to parallel other districts in the area and the state performance.

Those districts include West Bloomfield, Troy, Novi and Northville.

If anything, "the tests have been harder" than in the past, said Carolyn Mahalak, retiring coordinator of the dis-

trict's assessment department.

Kenbrook's fourth-grade class improved its "Satisfactory" reading level by 9.1 percent, going from 61.6 percent of the students scoring in that category in 1996 to 70.7 percent this year. It also saw a 6.4 percent decrease in the "Low" category.

Fewer students

However, it was noted this year's fourth-grade had 58 students, compared to last year's unusually large enrollment of 86.

Kenbrook's good showing reflects a two-year effort by the teaching staff, said Margaret McKinley, principal.

"Our goal has been to have every student be a strategic reader of informational text," she said, noting teachers have been training the past two years "to support critical reading skills" among the students.

"The kids have been using strategies to pull out information from the text they're reading" such as "looking at the whole page for clues, including the pictures and captions, the subtitles," she said.

William Grace Elementary, located in the southeast corner of Farmington, also showed dramatic improvement in fourth-grade reading.

The class-size, which grew from 37 students to 43, showed a 13.3 percent increase in "satisfactory" scoring compared to last year, going from 64.1 percent of the students to 67.4 percent.

The "low" category dropped 1.9 percent, from 13.5 percent of the students to 11.6 percent.

Principal Katy Hill could not be

reached for comment.

At Power Middle School, students showed an 11.4-percent gain in "satisfactory" mathematics scores, with 34.1 percent in that group compared to 22.7 percent in 1998.

Power also decreased its "low" category by 2.9 percent, dropping from 6.7 percent of students to 3.8. Class enrollment was 208, 14 students more than in 1998.

Laura Minor, Power principal, said she was "real pleased" with all the MEAP scores, calling it the result of "a more concerted effort" by teachers and administrators than five years ago, when the school had its last significant jump.

The effort included making sure all the teachers, not just the language arts teachers, knew that reading for information was one of the shared goals.

Parents of students were "embraced and engaged" during testing weeks via newsletters urging them to make sure their children "got plenty of rest, good food and the importance of it all," Minor said.

The testing schedule was changed to mornings "when they are fresh," she added.

"We have smart kids here. They are very, very talented," she said. It was a question of "how can we best showcase our students?"



Waiting: Barbara Cheren, district director of assessment and evaluation, says county and state results aren't available.

"As a staff, we have taken a serious look at letting the kids know what our expectations are" and having that "become more of a shared vision."

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