

PROJECT

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able to fit into their already tight schedules," Colliton said.
The Farmington Public School Board will hear an update at its 7:30 p.m. May 6 meeting at the school administration building on Shiawassee.
The senior project is a concept not familiar to the community, Colliton said.
Only a few Michigan school districts have senior project requirements that are called "graduation by exhibition." It's a belief that students should demonstrate skills and knowledge gained during high school. The process is lengthy and spans several months.
Districts with a senior proj-

ect include Avondale, Saginaw and some districts in the western part of the state, Colliton said.
Henry Ford Academy Charter School in Dearborn won a 2001 Real World Connections award for its senior project, said Barbara Cheron, director of evaluation assessment and special projects.
"There's a lot more places which have them under different names."
The senior project gives students insight and experience with possible career choices and pathways. It develops goal-setting, time-management skills and student confidence and adds potential lead-

ership opportunities.
Some Farmington district parents have opposed the idea of a mandated graduation requirement from the start because they believe it adds to a student's already busy schedule with school and outside activities.
Educators say the project, unlike more simple projects during the senior year, can extend and deepen the connection between the school and community, promote student responsibility and accountability and add meaning, rigor and purpose to the end of the senior year.
Some critics charge that seniors often "blow off" their last year. Supporters say a senior

project, which expands a student's interest in a subject and includes research and interviews with people in the student's chosen field of study, prepares students for college and/or work.
Students give a presentation before a school/community panel of judges held near the end of the year, but early enough to redo work, if necessary.
Colliton suggests that juniors who want this elective next year should contact their counselors now.
"While the elective is going on, the course will be evaluated," Colliton said. "It allows us to watch what happens budget-wise. It puts it off and

allows us to look at it on all these issues. It's either going to prove its worth or it's not."
There's no extra expense to do the elective, Colliton said.
Though it is expected to be offered only as an elective now, Colliton isn't willing to discount it ever becoming more in the future.
This is the second stage in the process. The decision of whether or not it becomes a graduation requirement for every student has an indefinite timeline for now. The date of that decision hasn't been made.
Though the community may have concerns, Colliton believes the district can never get into a situation where it

isn't allowed to look at what potential opportunities are out there for students. "We have the responsibility of looking at viable options for our kids and shut this down."
The Farmington School Board approved some changes in graduation requirements last year.
There are two sets of graduation requirements for student graduates through the class of 2005 and for the class of 2006 and beyond. The senior project requirement isn't listed in either.
To obtain a list, call Colliton at (248) 489-3327.
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MEAP

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answer sheets were for Crystal Lake," said Barb Church, executive director for curriculum and instruction. "We had to make arrangements to ship it to them.
Botsford Elementary had to wait for someone to open its box. "Botsford's was in Benzie County," Church said. "Botsford's arrived Tuesday. We finally have everything. All schools got the materials later than planned. We planned to start Monday."
The problem stems from a decision last year by the office of educational assessment to print student answer folders in a new pre-identifiable system in order to get a quicker turnaround for return of the materials, said Terry Stanton, a media spokesman for the Michigan Department of Treasury.
The old computer readable sheets led to many errors that required substantial effort to correct in the reporting process.
Under the old system, students "bubbled in" their identification information by filling in the circles provided. "There was a fairly high error rate," Stanton said.
His department notified schools late last week of possibly delays and told them they could request a one-week extension.
The original three-week window was from Jan. 20 to Feb. 14. At the school's request, the deadline could be extended to Feb. 21, Stanton said.
In the Botsford Elementary case, Stanton acknowledged there may have been a problem with shipping.
"All of our shipments are out," Stanton said. "Schools were encouraged to contact us last week and request an extension. Schools have been pretty willing to work through the situation. The first time you try something, there may be a bump in the road."
The vendors who preprint the materials have a multi-year contract, Stanton said.
In the Farmington Public School District, Kris Gekiere, an administrator in the school improvement and accreditation office, said some testing materials came in four shipments.
"This hasn't happened in the past," Gekiere said.
Some answer folders were in duplicate and some answer folders were torn, she said.
Warner Middle School, located at 30303 W. 1 1/2 Mile in Farmington Hills, started testing Wednesday, she said.
MEAP coordinators are speaking out.
"This adds one more stress to our already stressful situation," Church said. "The state of Michigan has had to make changes because of the 'No Child Left Behind' legislation. It's a tight timeline. The people in the MEAP office — people in charge of MEAP — are trying hard to make this work."
The new mandate in the federal "No Child Left Behind" program calls for 95 percent or more student participation, Gekiere added. "State accreditation depends on that figure."
Makeup tests are possible. Some students are out with the flu, she said.
MEAP coordinators in different school districts are also in contact with each other, comparing notes and making sure they have the same understanding of instructions, Church said.
Overall, Church said she is more concerned with the use of the test results.
"I'm alarmed at this high stakes testing," Church said. "One test in one day does not tell you what is going on. You can't classify a school with one test on one day."

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