## Why Schools Dislike State Assessment Test

As preparations are now being made to give the third annual state assessment tests to every fourth and seventh grader in Michigan's 612 local

grader in Michigan's st2 local school districts next month. Observerland educators are wondering just how valuable the test actually is. Having just received the results from the 1971 tests, Observerland educators are trying to figure out just what the results mean and whether the conclusions drawn from the results are valid con-oridering the questions asked on the tests.

on the tests.

Educators and school board members in Livonia, Clarenceville, Farmington and Garden City school districts have criticized the

"WE'RE JUST wondering if this is a valid way to assess the kids," said Patricia J. Vickery, elementary con-sultant to the Clarenceville

suitant to the Charenceville Schools.
Livonia School District Trustee Dr. A. Edward Katz, who is a professional psychologist, said some of the 1971 test results show a "simple minded view" of the complex functions involved in schuzation.

complex functions involved in education.
Southfield School Supt. John English said that while there were a lot of complaints about the tests last year (1970), the criticism appears to have died out there this year.

Dr. Don Shader, Garden City school superintendent, said, "There is no objection to said, "There is no objection to having a viable state-wide assessment program but we do not think the (present) test itself has proven to be reliable or valid."

THE MICHIGAN Assn. for Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD), a state-wide organization of school curriculum specialists, issued a three-page position

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1971 ASSESSMENT TEST results for Observerland school districts show that they generally ranked at or above the median percentile ranking of other districts in the state. All scores given here are in percentiles (if a school district has a 75 scored percentile, this means its median district score was as high or higher than 75 per cent of the other districts in the state). School districts are abbreviated here as follows: Garden City (GC): Wayne-Westland (WW): Plymouth (PLYM): Farmington (FARM): Clarence-wille (CVLE): Livonia (LIV): South Redford (SR): and Southfield (STHFLD). Footnote 1 signifies an estimate percentile while Footnote 2 denotes a rough evaluation. Figures which could not be obtained were left blank

reliability of the tests are nov-established."

The MASCD said it opposed the assessment program in its present form because the State Department of Education and the Legislature do not use it to actually attempt to change the quality of education.

"There is emphasis only on documenting deficiencies. We

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districts upgrade education. "Clarenceville Board of the first section which is designed to measure the school districts and the school districts. The results of this portion of the test are used in some measure to determine how much state aid will be given to measure to determine how much state aid will be given to determine whether the results drawn from the questions asked on the school district. Questions asked in the first school district.

each district.

Questions asked in the first section include: Does your hather? section include: Does your father? and a dining room outside the kitchen? Who acts as your father? Does your fat

is anonymous, saw the socio

paper on the state assessment tests in June.

"We find that the present assessment program is unsound," the MASCD position said. "The validity and reliability of the tests are not established."

MASCD feel that a much more promising direction lies in a design for helping local. They complained to the stricts upgrade education."

MUCH OF THE criticism of Education, which in turn asked the Michigan Department of the test has centered on the ment of Education about the first section which is designed matter.

THE TESTS were initially drawn up by the Educational Testing Service, a Princeton, N.J. research firm which prepares many educational tests used across the country

prepares many educational tests used across the country including the college entrance exams known as the SAT tests (Student Achievement Tests). The State Board of Education's Bureau of Research, Evaluation and Assessment Services (BREAS) works year-around to extrapolate results from the tests and to evaluate and revise questions for the next year's test.

While the exact content of the 1972 ossessment tests has not been divulged as yet, the preliminary BREAS report indicates several changes have been made from last year's test, which included several changes from the 1870 tests.

several changes from the cyclests.

Katz had criticized the changes between the 1970 and 1971 tests. The questions on the second test were weighted differently than on the first test so the results are no more comparable than "apples and oranges," the Livonia school trustee said.

UNDER STATE law, each Michigan school district with fourth and seventh graders must administer the annual assessment test in accordance with the State Department of





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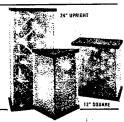
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