

Why Schools Dislike State Assessment Test

An Observer Roundup
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 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 considering the questions asked on the tests.

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

"WE'RE JUST wondering if this is a valid way to assess the kids," said Patricia J. Vickery, elementary consultant to the Clarenceville 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 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 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 (MASC), a state-wide organization of school curriculum specialists, issued a three-page position

SCHOOL DISTRICT* (see footnotes)	GC	WW	PLYM	FARM	CYLE	LIV	SR	STHFLD
pupil-teacher ratio	27.4	70	50 ₁		57		23	
state equalized valuation	10w ₂	40 ₁			53		92	
local revenue	10w ₂	75 ₁	high ₂		83		97	
state aid	high ₂	60 ₁	low ₂		49		7	
operating expense	med ₂	85 ₁			87		97	
socio-economic status	50	48.8			37	93	88	90
pupil attitude towards school								
grade 4	48.7	49.5		45	9	35	68	54
grade 7	49.3	50.5		65	33	20	57	28
vocabulary								
grade 4	50.7	49	83	91	71	60	82	82
grade 7	51.2	50.5	83	95	79	80	93	92
reading								
grade 4	50	47.7	74	75	10	93	73	75
grade 7	50.5	49.7	83	90	46	72	93	86
English mechanics								
grade 4	51.1	48.8		78	29	69	89	85
grade 7	51.1	49.0	74	83	51	75	93	83
mathematics								
grade 4	51.3	48.8		82	19	70	69	78
grade 7	51.1	49.6	74	89	41	75	93	74
COMPOSITE SCORE								
grade 4	50.8	49.5		79	17	65	80	82
grade 7	50.9	49.5		88	45	75	93	83

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); Clarenceville (CYLE); 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.

paper on the state assessment tests in June.

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

The MASC 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

in MASC feel that a much more promising direction lies in a design for helping local districts upgrade education."

MUCH OF the criticism of the test has centered on the first section which is designed to measure the school districts socio-economic status and pupil attitude toward school. The results of this portion of the test are used in some measure to determine how much state aid will be given to each district.

Questions asked in the first section include: Does your house or apartment have a dining room outside the kitchen? Who acts as your father? Does your family have a dishwashing machine? Is being a good student important?

The questions also ask students about the educational level their parents achieved, the size of their family, whether both parents work and how the students like reading. English, mathematics, their school and their classmates.

"THIS (SECTION of the test) is particularly difficult for fourth graders," Mrs. Vickery said. "They didn't know the answers to some of the questions."

Mrs. Vickery said the Clarenceville fourth-graders' difficulties with some of the questions on the socio-economic status part of the test last year led to a minor furor when the students went home and asked their parents the answers to some of the questions they didn't know.

The parents, many of whom did not know that the first section of the assessment test is anonymous, saw the socio-

economic status questions as an invasion of their privacy. They complained to the Clarenceville Board of Education, which in turn asked the Michigan Department of Education about the matter.

The state told the board to tell students not to answer any questions about their socio-economic status that they didn't want to.

Mrs. Vickery questioned whether the results drawn from the questions asked on that portion of the test were valid. "Frankly, I think there are some better questions they could ask," she said.

KATZ ALSO criticized the number of questions used by the test to determine attitudes toward school and self evaluation as too small to provide reliable results.

Dr. English said most of the criticisms on the assessment tests in Southfield last year had centered on the questions on the socio-economic status.

The second portion of the test is designed to measure the fourth and seventh graders achievement in vocabulary reading, English and mathematics.

But educators have also questioned this part of the test. The mathematics questions asked of fourth graders have been called too difficult and more appropriate for sixth graders.

"The reading test doesn't test reading as much as it does speed," Mrs. Vickery said. She also criticized the varied subject matters covered in the reading test.

"Girls are not motivated to read about race cars, and boys aren't motivated to read about dolls."

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 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 (BRES) 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 assessment tests has not been divulged as yet, the preliminary BRES report indicates several changes have been made from last year's test, which included several changes from the 1970 tests.

Katz had criticized the changes between the 1970 and 1971 tests. The questions on the second test were weighed 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 Education guidelines.

ALLIED RADIO SHACK
FARMINGTON PLAZA
ASSOCIATE STORE

SANYO
AM-FM-FM STEREO RECEIVER
AUTOMATIC RECORD CHANGER
STEREO SPEAKER SYSTEM

The sound of music never sounded better. Full fidelity music from AM, FM or FM Stereo Broadcasts and Stereo Records. All together, this is a great value. A three component solid state home entertainment system. (Designed for 4 channel stereo) Includes dust cover.

\$139⁹⁵

VISIT SANTA . . . at the Farmington Plaza in the ALLIED TRAILER UNDER THE PLAZA SIGN

FREE CANDY CANES!
Christmas Carol's there too!

SANYO
AM-FM-FM STEREO RECEIVER
AUTOMATIC RECORD CHANGER
STEREO SPEAKER SYSTEM

The sound of music never sounded better. Full fidelity music from AM, FM or FM Stereo Broadcasts and Stereo Records. All together, this is a great value. A three component solid state home entertainment system. (Designed for 4 channel stereo) Includes dust cover.

\$139⁹⁵

DENON QX 1040
PRODUCTS OF NIPPON COLUMBIA CO., LTD.

A COMPACT STEREO WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE. SOLID STATE AM-FM-FM STEREO RECEIVER. FULL SIZE AUTOMATIC RECORD CHANGER. DELUXE STEREO SPEAKER SYSTEM.

The QX-1040 is a new and exciting stereo compact elegantly styled of a walnut finished wood cabinet incorporating features to satisfy the most discerning listener. It offers 40 watt peak music power, for full range stereo, and is ready for conversion to four channel. Includes dust cover.

\$179⁹⁵

CASSETTE PLAYER-RECORDER with AM-FM RADIO

Wollensak Model 4410 complete with AM/FM radio, telescoping antenna, remote control microphone. Scotch C-60 blank cassette.

Ideal for the home, office or school. Records and plays monophonic cassettes. Or plays stereo cassettes monophonic. Battery or A/C operation. 4-Position function switch controls all operating modes. Automatic Record Level. Magnified cassette window. Built-in storage compartment for microphone and power cord.

\$59⁸⁸
Reg. 79.95 SAVE \$20.07

MOONLIGHT® THE LIGHT OF ROMANCE!

These psychedelic luminaries constantly changing color and pattern to music from your stereo or radio, complements any mood, bringing a new appreciation of the art of complete relaxation.

24" UPRIGHT **\$29⁸⁸**
Reg. 39.95 SAVE \$10.07

12" SQUARE **\$19⁸⁸**
Reg. 29.95 SAVE \$10.07

ANES ELECTRONICS
"The first name in Psychedelic Lights"

RANDOM BLINKER 6"x10" **\$4⁸⁸**
Reg. 7.95 SAVE \$3.07

CUBE CLOCK RADIO **\$12⁸⁸**
Reg. \$14.95 SAVE \$2.07

AM DICE CUBE RADIO **\$10.95**

All the GAMBLE is out of Gift Giving. The Sanyo 7-11 is a miniature, solid state battery operated radio cleverly concealed in a 3 inch cube. A perfect replica of dice from international casinos. In Las Vegas Red!

— VALUABLE COUPONS —
Great Gifts — Perfect STOCKING STUFFERS

FM/AM PORTABLE
• FULL SIZE
• DELUXE CARRY CASE
• SLIDE RULE DIAL
• AUTOMATIC AFC
• BATTERY **\$9⁸⁸**
Reg. \$15.95 SAVE \$6.07

MICRO SIZE AM POCKET RADIO
• ONLY 3 1/2"x2 1/4"
• SOLID STATE
• HI-IMPACT PLASTIC CASE
• EARPHONES
• BATTERIES **\$5⁸⁸**
Reg. \$9.95 SAVE \$4.07

AM POCKET RADIO
• SOLID STATE
• CARRY STRAP
• BATTERY
• HI-IMPACT PLASTIC CASE **\$2⁸⁸**
Reg. \$4.95 SAVE \$2.07

DELUXE 8 TRACK CARRYING CASE **\$7⁸⁸**
HOLDS 24 TAPES
Reg. 11.95 SAVE \$5.07

FREE RECORD CLEANING CLOTH
Specially Treated with ANTI-STATIC SOLUTION
Reg. 49¢

SHRINK MACHINE
Watch the fantastic shrinking process
NOW ONLY \$2⁹⁹

STEREO HEADPHONE SECTION
• FISHER • AKAI • SUPREX • RMS

TOY DEPARTMENT
STOCKED WITH KITS & PROJECTS FOR DAD & BROTHER

HI-FI STUDIO
FULL FIVE YEAR WARRANTY ON ALL COMPONENTS PLUS SYSTEM PRICES

RECORD & TAPE DEPT
COMPLETE SELECTION OF RECORDS, 8 TRK. CASSETTE & REEL TAPES AT DISCOUNT PRICES!

ALLIED RADIO SHACK
FARMINGTON PLAZA ASSOCIATE STORE

Available only at **THE FARMINGTON PLAZA STORE**

Grand River near Orchard Lake Road
1/4 Mile N. of 9 Mile
Open Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sunday Noon to 5 p.m.
Phone 477-1700

Save Christmas with a Sony. A Christmas Gift never sounded so good!

MAIL-A-TAPE WRITE A LIVE LETTER THIS CHRISTMAS

Use Our Christmas Layaway Plan
Some Quantities Limited • We reserve the right to limit quantities.

FACTORY APPROVED SERVICE ON NO VENT HEATERS

Our factory-trained mechanics are expert service technicians on through-the-wall automatic gas heaters. All work is 100% guaranteed — anywhere in Metro Detroit.

New Suburban Dyna Vent replacement models also available to fit existing openings.

Doll Heating & Air Conditioning 366-4102
17633 STRASBURG, DETROIT

Sales and Service **Dyna Vent**

R.C.A. COLOR TELEVISIONS '72 MODELS ON SALE

ASK OUR SALESMAN FOR SPECIAL TRADE-IN VALUE

SAVE 50% ON ALL RECEIVING TUBES

TV SERVICE FREE ESTIMATES IN OUR SHOP OR YOUR HOME ON ALL COLOR, BLACK & WHITE TVs, STEREOS, HI-Fi, etc.

NO COST — NO OBLIGATION
• ALWAYS PROMPT, COURTEOUS SERVICE
• ALL WORK GUARANTEED

RCA HIGHEST QUALITY ALL CHANNEL ANTENNA **\$114⁹⁵**

Starlit
TELEVISION SERVICE CENTER, INC.
"You Get More Service for Less Money at Starlit!"
Open Daily 9-7 — Closed Sunday at Starlit!