

Japan's education system inspires praise

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parents' homes to confer with parents, he said.

LATE LAST week — one week after the Bennett report was published — a 20-nation study concluded that U.S. mathematics students trail those in Japan and Hong Kong because of unchallenging and repetitious curriculums.

The report is expected to be the main topic at an international math symposium at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., this weekend.

Farmington assistant superintendent for curriculum and staff development Judith White believes the district is on the right track, despite the recent national reports criticizing American education in general.

Her position was created last year, and she said, the district is always looking for ways to update the curriculum.

"In general, I happen to believe in many of our areas, we have to update our curriculum."

ESPECIALLY in math, the subject aim of the recent study, White is confident in Farmington's curriculum trends. "I feel it's very strong," she said. "Students have an opportunity to take some very strong courses."

The district is reviewing more problem-solving courses and the use of computers in the math classes, she added.

Alley said she would agree with the importance of placing emphasis on the educational system in the United States and with continuity in the family structure — something that allows the Japanese to deal with larger class sizes, according to Ben-

nett's report.

Until that is part of the American culture, she said, areas such as larger class sizes cannot be considered here. "That's just not the reality," she added.

Despite Bennett calling for U.S. schools to learn the lessons of the Japanese, an April 1988 report authored by the 25-member Japanese National Council on Educational Reform called Japan's schools "an educational wasteland in a serious state of dilapidation and desolation."

ACCORDING to Frank Sanchez — one of the 18-member commission that wrote the 1983 report "A Nation at Risk," labeling U.S. education as mediocre — the Japanese report was similar in criticizing the entire educational system of that country.

"I've always felt that they have gone to extremes in many areas," Sanchez said. "The competition instilled in kids in Japan is tremendous and therefore the pressure is just fantastic."

The Japanese report calls for con-

sideration of moving away from a six-day school week to a five-day week, relaxing entrance requirements of universities and upper secondary schools, involving parents more in children's education, improving teaching recruitment and certification and gearing education more toward the individual student rather than forcing students to conform to a system.

It also recommends reducing classroom size from the current 45 students to 40.

DESPITE THIS self-criticism from the Japanese, Bennett said he saw far more advantages than disadvantages to the Japanese system. In the area of pay, Bennett reported that in 1984, starting salaries for Japanese teachers were 12 percent higher than the starting salaries of engineers with a bachelor's degree.

The FEA's parent group the Michigan Education Association was seeking more equitable pay for teachers even before the Bennett report. Teachers "are not paid enough

— that is a reality," Alley said, speaking on a statewide basis. "There has certainly been a push from the MEA."

Problems in the Japanese system include "rigidity, excessive uniformity and lack of choice; individual needs and differences that receive little attention in school and signs of student alienation," Bennett added.

Associated Press contributed to this report.

Former North Farmington player dies in crash

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Fire and rescue units from the city of Cedar extinguished the fire and took the two passengers to the hospital.

A FUNERAL mass for Bowen was held Tuesday at St. Fabian Catholic Church, Farmington Hills. Burial was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

Several friends — including some from high school, his college roommate and a player in the Marine program — spoke at the filled church service.

They recalled Bowen from his years as a young altar boy at the church through his high school and college years.

"There's a special kind of closeness out there — a few people everywhere around," said a former North football player, recalling his friendship with Bowen.

"Mike was the one we remember for that. He was just a plain great guy."

HIS COLLEGE roommate talked of Bowen's love of his fraternity brotherhood and how much the Marine program meant to him. A Marine buddy said it best: "He grabbed me and took me under his wing. I knew he was the first one to motivate me. I'll miss him very much."

The Rev. Michael Molnar was invited by the family to offer the funeral mass. "The young who die have not missed out on life," he said during the sermon. "Michael was willing to live life. He wasn't afraid, he took on the challenge."

As part of the service, several items were offered in Bowen's memory, including a North Farmington High School football jersey, a rattle representing his love of children, a Marine blanket and cap, a Detroit Symphony program showing his little brother in a youth orchestra, and a trophy earned with a childhood friend for a Fourth of July bicycle contest.

"There was nothing he wanted to keep just for himself," the priest added. "It was for everybody else."

In addition to these parents, Bowen is survived by three sisters, Kelli Vroom of Portage, Kathleen Bowen of Grand Rapids, Kerri Bowen of

Raleigh, N.C.; one brother, Marine Lt. Kevin Bowen; his grandparents, Hazel Bowen of Champagne, Ill., and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Grabbe of Lovensess, Fla.; and two nephews. Arrangements were made by McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills.

Memorials may be made to the B. Michael Bowen Memorial Fund at North Farmington High School. The memorial will be used to buy something permanent and lasting for the school, dedicated in the name of the former football co-captain, Cowan said.

MetroVision reviews its rates

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Disney channel is \$9.95 a month. Because the new law allows cable companies to market services without restraint and to rely on supply and demand, cable companies are not restricted to increasing rates by a certain percentage, Samouelian said.

In the past, cable companies were required to ask municipalities for permission to increase rates. When the cable industry and municipal representatives reached a compromise over the nation's first cable policy in 1984, cities were able to continue regulating rates until the end of 1986.

IN LATE 1986, MetroVision increased — with the three cities' approval — its Tier III (channels 2-113)

level of service from \$7.25 a month to \$9.95 as the company's installation costs loomed. Last year, MetroVision again increased rates 50 cents, Bjorklund said.

If MetroVision officials decide it's time to increase rates again, subscribers will be the first to know. Bjorklund said he has promised to notify subscribers as well as the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

While the new law allows cable companies to increase rates according to what the market can bear, it also forces companies to continue making good on their franchises, Samouelian said.

Under the law, the cities — through the cable commission —

maintain the right to enforce provisions in the 15-year franchise agreement. Municipalities still maintain the right to grant and renew franchises as well as review cable services.

Municipalities' right to demand that cable firms provide public access programming, grants, equipment and franchise fees is still maintained, Samouelian said.

"The law defined that there was respect for the contract franchise agreement" the three cities entered into with MetroVision in May 1982, Samouelian said.

WITH INCREASED housing growth, particularly in Farmington Hills and Novi, cable subscriptions are again beginning to grow.

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