How are you doing?

Students get involved in their own academic evaluations

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@oe.homecomm.net

Measuring student success used to be about teachers arbitrarily handing down A's and B's. These days, in Farmington schools, the job is becoming almost as complex as annual corporate employee reviews.

There are portfolios and action plans, not to mention "student-involved conferences" and a technology-driven "reporting tool," all part of a collaborative approach to student evaluation.

The pilot, three-pronged assessment process – partly intended to help children actively learn for themselves how they're doing – was highlighted during a recent multimedia report to the Farmington school board. Presenting the report were Beechview Elementary School principal Norma Jean Sass and Michele Meyers, who teaches 35 students of different ages (grades three-five) and backgrounds.

At least one parent likes the concept.

"I've always been one to want more information," said Sharon McGladdery, whose son, Jacob, attends Wooddale Elementary School. "It makes everybody be in tune and it focuses the children."

McGladdery said the process shouldn't put undue pressure on students and will heighten self-awareness about what's expected of them in school.

"It's much harder for children when things aren't clear," she said. "The increase of communication will go a long way toward helping individuals."

The multicultural/multiage classroom, also taught by Fay Kinaya, was the only one at Beechview to use the process during fall conferences (other schools also are working on the process). But Sass said it probably will be used by all Beechview teachers during spring conferences, "and we hope to share this with other sites in the district."

Here's how it works:

■ In the video example shown to board members, from the fall conferences, Meyers and a student sit side-by-side at a computer, discuss past school performance and how to improve it next time.

■ Comments from both are logged onto a computerized form.

■ Then students "report" to their parents by taking a hard copy of the form home and, similarly, "conference" with their parents about achievements and improvement goals; parents subsequently complete the form for return to Beechview.

Parents and students talk about "strengths and weaknesses and then put (comments) into portfolios," Meyers explained. There also is a chance for parents to keep up-to-date via weekly goal-setting sessions with their kids.

The endeavor promotes assessment "while it's actually happening," Sass said. "It's not something the teacher takes home by herself. It's done with the child, with open communication."

Meyers said the student-involved conference portion takes about 15 minutes and is able to go on while regular learning continues in the classroom.

According to Judy White, assistant superintendent of instruction, one of the district's goals is for student assessment to eventually feature technology-driven portfolios.

The new, interactive assessment system was detailed to the board during an update of the ongoing elementary school restructuring. That restructuring, expected to take five years to complete, began in December 1997, when a comprehensive study with more than 50 recommendations was submitted.

Several board members said they were enthralled with the concept of parents staying involved in the process through the weekly reviews.

Meanwhile, the system won't completely phase out more traditional report cards. Those would still be sent home on alternate marking periods.

Applications available

Applications are available for students in grades seven-12 who plan to compete in Farmington Musicale's Awards for Musical Excellence. This annual competition offers cash awards to further music education.

It is open to students who attend Farmington public or private schools, to children of a Farmington Musicale member and to those whose primary residence is in Farmington or Farmington Hills, but who attend school elsewhere.

Applications are being distributed this week to the music departments in all Farmington-area middle and high schools. They may also be obtained by calling Martha Sutton at 478-7792. Applications must be completed and returned, postmarked by midnight Friday, Feb. 26.

This year, the competition will be Saturday, March 20, at Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills. Categories will be: piano, string/harp/classical guitar; wind/brass/percussion instruments divided into two grade levels, nine-10, 11-12. Cash awards will be given in each grade division.

Two other scholarships will be awarded, including The Strey-McCallum Memorial Piano Award, for the student who is judged to be the "most outstanding pianist" regardless of grade level. The Farmington Community Band will also provide the Barbara Hughes Memorial Award to one outstanding musician in the wind/brass/percussion category, regardless of grade level.

First-place winners will perform their winning compositions in a recital 3 p.m. Sunday, April 18, at Antioch Lutheran Church. Awards will be presented at that time, as will the Strey-McCallum Piano and Barbara Hughes Memorial awards.

For more information, call Martha Sutton at 478-7792 or Jan Smith at 626-3856.

AT&T Stores
Your source for all AT&T services.

Ann Arbor
926 W. Eisenhower Pkwy.
248 372-7901

Birmingham
34200 Woodward Ave.
248 372-7939

Dearborn
22137 Michigan Ave.
248 372-7991

Lathrup Village
27531 Southfield Rd.
248 372-7921

Novi
43267 Crescent Blvd.
248 372-7901

Roseville
31902 Gratiot
248 372-7911

Utica
13307 Hall Rd.
248 372-7931

For more information or to sign up immediately, call 1 800-IMAGINE®

Also available at these authorized retailers and dealers:
Best Buy, Circuit City, Staples, Mickey Shorr, Office Depot
For Staples store locations near you call 1 800 333-3330.

ALLEN PARK
Discover Communications
15870 Southfield
313 294-1400

ANN ARBOR
Activate Cellular
Briarwood Mall
100 Briarwood Cir.
734 669-0929

BELLEVILLE
Metro Paging & Cellular
201 South St.
734 699-9090

CANTON
Mickey Shorr
43729 Ford
313 981-7770

CLINTON TWP.
Allen Electronics
35906 Groesbeck Hwy.
810 792-4466

Aloha Communications
19020 Cass Ave.
810 228-1700

DEARBORN
Adray Appliance
20219 Carlysle
313 274-9500

Camp at Us
6400 Greenfield
313 581-5568

Detroit Wireless
10401 W. Warren Ave.
313 945-5383

DETROIT
A-1 Auto Glass
10046 Connor
313 521-2552

Air-Net Communications
15323 W. Warren Ave.
313 945-6672

Complete Communications & Electronics
12842 Fenkell
313 345-3007

Digital Plus Communications
8607 W. Vernor
313 843-3006

E-Z Link Communications
15945 Harper Ave.
313 417-1960

International Paging & Cellular
20315 W. Eight Mile Rd.
313 538-7474

Interstate Communications
1801 E. Seven Mile Rd.
313 368 7070

Omni Paging Comm.
12420 E. Eight Mile Rd.
313 527-9004

Wireless Communications
14214 E. Jefferson
313 823-1100

Yates Office Supply
18225 W. Eight Mile Rd.
313 538-4444

Yates Office Supply
3011 W. Grand Blvd.
Ste. 118
313 872-1100

EASTPOINTE
Automatic Appliance
23411 Gratiot Ave.
810 775-4532

Audio Trends
2183 Gratiot Ave.
810 774-9900

FARMINGTON
Mickey Shorr
30774 Grand River
248 473-8200

FRASER
Network Alarm & Paging
16853 14 Mile Rd.
810 415-6075

Surge Communications
16000 Fifteen Mile Rd.
810 774-9900

GARDEN CITY
E-Z Page Plus
223 Inkster
734 522-6888

GROSSE POINTE WOODS
Great Lakes Wireless, Inc.
18226 Mack Ave.
313 881-1144

Pointe Electronics
19755 Mack Ave.
313 881-1877

KEEGO HARBOR
Mickey Shorr
3335 Orchard Lake Rd.
248 682-1600

LINCOLN PARK
Mickey Shorr
3377 Fort St.
313 383-6434

LIVONIA
Don-Lars Electronics
31825 W. Eight Mile Rd.
248 477-6402

Mickey Shorr
27819 Plymouth Rd.
313 425-4848

Quantum Electronics
31221 W. Five Mile Rd.
734 513-0380

Street Beat
28735 Plymouth Rd.
734 421-7772

NOVI
Activate Cellular
12 Oaks Mall
27500 Novi Rd.
248 349-6487

Cellular Plus Systems, Inc.
43448 West Oaks Dr.
800 520-7701

Murray's Car Audio
41843 Grand River
248 349-4420

OAK PARK
In Touch Communications
21840 Greenfield Rd.
248 967-0005

PORT HURON
Mickey Shorr
1424 24th Ave.
810 385-4880

REDFORD TWP.
Reach Out Cellular & Paging
23433 W. Eight Mile Rd.
313 538-0115

ROCHESTER HILLS
Cellular Plus Systems, Inc.
2951 S. Rochester Rd.
800 598-8932

ROSEVILLE
Mickey Shorr
29241 Gratiot Ave.
810 777-8660

ROYAL OAK
Mickey Shorr
25920 Woodward Ave.
248 398-7204

SOUTHFIELD
Champion's Cellular Warehouse
24174 Telegraph Rd.
248 356-6665

Headquarters Cellular & Paging
28681 Northwestern Hwy.
248 356-8868

LeVon's
30825 Greenfield Rd.
248 642-4468

ST. CLAIR SHORES
Bell Electronics
27201 Harper
810 777-8232

Mickey Shorr
22500 Harper
810 771-7820

STERLING HEIGHTS
Activate Cellular
Lakeside Mall
1400 Lakeside Cir.
810 566-5882

Digital Plus Communications
35418 Dequindre
810 268-4100

V.I.P. Paging
38373 Dodge Park
810 939-2238

TAYLOR
Phone Care
20142 Ecorse Rd.
313 388-9670

Mickey Shorr
14270 Telegraph Rd.
313 946-4174

TRENTON
Pla Par Market
27000 Fort St.
734 671-6310

TROY
Digital Communications
Oakland Mall
412 W. 14 Mile Rd.
248 588-7181

Mickey Shorr
1010 E. Maple Rd.
248 589-1810

V.I.P. Paging
40 W. Square Lake Rd.
248 828-7676

WARREN
Autoway
32400 Dequindre
810 977-2730

Mickey Shorr
32912 Van Dyke
810 979-6894

WATERFORD
Activate Cellular
Summit Place Mall
315 N. Telegraph Rd.
248 683-9084

Mickey Shorr
5420 Highland Rd.
248 673-4970

WESTLAND
Activate Cellular
Westland Mall
35000 W. Warren
734 513-7321

Mobile Tec
7348 Middlebelt
734 421-0999

AT&T Wireless.
Available in S,M,L, and XXXXL.

Whether you travel across country or across town, we have a plan for you.

AT&T DIGITAL ONE RATE

No roaming or long distance charges in all 50 states. So every call is like a local call, no matter where life takes you.

600 MINUTES	1000 MINUTES	1400 MINUTES
$89.99 a month	$119.99 a month	$149.99 a month

AT&T Advantage Plans℠ Great rates. Lots of included minutes. Now you can take advantage of the power of AT&T Wireless whenever you leave the house.

100 MINUTES	250 MINUTES	500 MINUTES
$24.99 a month	$39.99 a month	$49.99 a month

All Digital Plans work with the lightweight Ericsson LX788 Digital multi-network phone and include Digital PCS features like AT&T VoiceMail, AT&T Caller ID and Text Messaging.

1 800-IMAGINE®
www.att.com/wireless/
PHONES BY ERICSSON

AT&T

Important Information Applicable to ALL AT&T CALLING PLANS: ©1999 AT&T. Require credit approval for service and the purchase of a Digital multi-network phone or Digital PCS phone. Annual service contract may be required and an activation fee of $25. Airtime measured in full minutes and rounded up to the next full minute. Included minutes cannot be carried over to any other month. Coverage available in most areas. Digital PCS features not available in all areas. Full terms and conditions are contained in the AT&T Welcome Guide, Rate Sheet or Calling Plan brochure. AT&T DIGITAL ONE RATE℠: A $25 activation fee, Digital multi-network phone and subscription to AT&T Wireless Services long distance required. Additional minutes 25 cents each. Billing address must be within AT&T Digital PCS Home Calling Area. Rates not available outside the US or when calls require a credit card or operator assistance. Domestic calls only. AT&T ADVANTAGE PLANS℠: Included minutes apply to calls placed monthly any time of day in your Home Calling Area. Airtime in excess of included minutes will be billed at a per-minute rate ranging from 25 cents to 35 cents, as determined by the calling plan. Long distance, taxes and other applicable charges may apply. Available for a limited time. Other restrictions may apply.