

# Superintendent Eddie West Reports

By DR. EDDIE WEST

Last spring each child in the Edenton-Chowan Schools was issued a battery of tests in order to measure his or her aptitude and achievement growth from the prior year. The purpose of this week's column is to share some general thoughts about testing, as well as the general test results.

### General Thoughts Regarding Testing

There are probably more ways to misinterpret a test score than ways to interpret one correctly. There are many myths about test scores that school districts have historically been hesitant to release scores. In fact, the number of school systems who have made test results public has been small.

There are probably several reasons for this. There is no single one that will say definitely how a child is doing in school, or at exactly what level a child is reading. Mainly because it is naive to think that any child will perform the same exact way on any given day. There are just too many outside factors to rely solely on test scores alone to analyze a child's success in school.

Consider for a moment that a child may bring to the classroom an upset stomach, a fight between parents, a psychological complex because of a child's height or weight, or being in a neighborhood where he has no friends. Consider also other factors: school attendance record, family background, mobility and motivation of family. All of these factors must be taken into consideration when examining test scores.

Even though a pattern may be gained by studying the test results at each school, great reliance must also be placed on the observations of teachers and principals.

Teachers must study the complete record of a child and are slow to draw any tentative conclusions until the evidence is overwhelming.

We would urge individuals to avoid trying to read too much into the base scores, or trying to generalize too much. It is well to remember that standardized tests are not precise instruments and that only a general validity exists, with some conditions even attached to that. Testing conditions alone vary. Just how hard could you concentrate if that day you happened to be wearing right shoes?

We do believe, however, that release of information about tests results will be helpful in the long run. We think parents and the general public will be better equipped to deal with, and help correct, school problems.

Test scores, along with other information from the school system, should offer citizens means of helping in the educational process. Such information should not be used as a club to beat with, but as a method for finding out how we can help more effectively.

**How Are Tests Used?**  
Tests are one tool of evaluating a child's progress in school and in aiding his teachers and counselors to better meet his individual needs. In addition, of course, the teachers judgement and professional evaluation of the child in exceeding or failing to meet the demands of his school work. A combination of these standardized, very objective tests and the subjective opinion of a teacher all serve to provide insights.

In other words, tests serve to round out the total picture and help present a full scholastic view of a student for his parents and teachers.

Test scores are also used on a system and school wide basis as an aid in curriculum planning. For example, if the test results showed low grades, a re-evaluation of course content to alleviate academic deficiencies would be in order. Also, pilot programs are objectively analyzed through test results.

On the high school level, test results are used extensively by guidance counselors in aiding a student in choosing his curriculum and in making any career choices.

Lastly, and equally if not more important, test or assessment results enable the school system's management objectives to be analyzed in order to determine if they have been successfully met. In other words, it is a means of insuring accountability for results and of evaluating the school systems progress, strengths and weaknesses.

**Analysis of Test Results**  
Any analysis or assessment of the accomplishments of the past school year with regard to pupil growth must be made with regard to the objectives which have been set for the school system.

Essentially, the basic achievement objectives to which the school system was committed was to provide each child, on the average, a minimum of six months growth. Compared with the previous year naturally, scores vary from grade to grade, but on the whole the school system surpassed its objective in grades 1-5 and 7-9. In grades 6 and 10-12, this objective was not met. Scores are reported in averages. However, it should be pointed out that some scores are higher and some lower than the average.

In examining scores on the averages, the gains or losses for the school system are as follows:

- Grade 1, 1971-72;
- Grade 2, 1972-73, 6.5 months gain;
- Grade 2, 1971-72;
- Grade 3, 1972-73, 9.0 months gain;
- Grade 3, 1971-72;
- Grade 4, 1972-73, 1 yr. 6 months gain;
- Grade 4, 1971-72;
- Grade 5, 1972-73, 7.5 months gain;

- Grade 5, 1971-72;
- Grade 6, 1972-73, 4.5 months gain;
- Grade 6, 1971-72;
- Grade 7, 1972-73, 9.0 months gain;
- Grade 7, 1971-72;
- Grade 8, 1972-73, 1 yr. 3 months gain;
- Grade 8, 1971-72;
- Grade 9, 1972-73, 2 months gain;
- Grade 9, 1971-72;
- Grade 10, 1972-73, 6 percentage points loss;
- Grade 10, 1971-72;
- Grade 11, 1972-73, 6 percentage points loss;
- Grade 11, 1971-72;
- Grade 12, 1972-73, 8 percentage points loss.

The gains, indeed, are most gratifying. The losses are of great concern. At least the first step has been taken. Changes which are needed can and will be made.

As can be seen from these figures, its just like the National Football League season. We

have an awful lot, and probably will have an awful lot of "Monday Morning Quarterbacks" and those who have a background in statistics can take any statistics and play with it. The thing which should be emphasized is that there are many factors which are not known, such as some of those mentioned earlier in this article.

On the whole, however, it can be said that significant academic progress, on the average, was made last year in the aforementioned grades. While the school system and northeastern region still falls behind the national average, we have every reason to believe that should we continue to achieve, and indeed, surpass the academic objective for the school system, as has been done this past year. The long term results will reveal that the pupils in Edenton-Chowan Schools will be achieving commensurate with their skills and abilities.

## New Club Requires Joining by Accident

A new club has been formed, which everyone hopes that they will not be eligible to join, yet may appreciate the fact they are able to do so.

Irvin Industries Inc., of Greenwich, Conn. has inaugurated the "Cocoon Club" for people avoiding death or serious injury through the successful deployment of automotive air bags during auto accidents.

It is modeled after the company's famous "Caterpillar Club" whose members saved their lives by parachuting from disabled aircraft. While "Caterpillar Club" members wear a gold pin in the form of a caterpillar, the "Cocoon Club" members will receive a pin in the form of a cocoon. Both receive official membership documents.

Accidents are preventable but most Americans act otherwise.

## Around Farms In Chowan

By R. M. THOMPSON, County Extension Chairman

It is a very good time to be getting soil samples for the coming year. The weather is excellent for taking samples and you can get the reports back real quick after they are sent off. This will also give you an opportunity to get your lime applied and this might become very important next spring as it appears that due to lack of freight cars, lime could become a scarce commodity. Along the same line, we suggest that you order your fertilizer early so that you will have it on hand when you need it.

This fall has really been one in which the need for additional storage space to store grain on the farm has been emphasized. Most farmers could have realized a real good increase in price if they could have had a place just to store corn. We would like for you to consider more grain storage on the farm

for next year and it is not too early at the present time to be making plans. Grain storage equipment is like everything else, even if you want to buy it, it is not any sure thing that you will get it delivered in time to do you any good if you wait until next summer to start. We have always believed that on the farm storage, which gives you a choice whether to sell or hold, is becoming more necessary every year. If you are interested in grain storage, we suggest that you contact your local A.S.C.S. office and see what their arrangements might be. We certainly do hope if you do not have adequate storage at the present time, that you will consider the need and if you do have a need for storage, begin in time so that you will be ready at the next harvest.

The oil industry spent \$4.4 billion over the past seven years to protect the U. S. environment, according to the American Petroleum Institute.

## Industry Research Targeted to Increase Supply of Energy

The petroleum industry is spending approximately \$660 million a year for basic research and development, twice as much as ten years ago, according to Dr. Philip C. White, general manager of research for the Standard Oil Company of Indiana.

He pointed out that this amount covers basic research, development, and testing at the laboratory level and does not include the \$1 to \$1.5 billion which the petroleum industry spends yearly for field testing and development and to bring new technology to routine commercial usage. It also excludes heavy spending on research and development by other firms related to the petroleum industry such as equipment manufacturers.

Little town society boils down to money in many cases.

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