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School board to decide facts of district academic program

By LYNN ORR

A pilot program for academically talented students may be extended district-wide if the Farmington Board of Education approves the proposal at its June 7 meeting.

Board members recently heard presentations from three faculty members involved in the pilot programs at East Junior High, Warner Junior High, and six elementary schools. A K-12 program at all schools may be implemented next fall, whether or not the June 13 millage election passes, school officials say.

Diane Akers, coordinator of the PACE program involving 75 East students; Sharon Higham, coordinator of the WHO (Warner Honors Opportunity) for Warner students; and Jim Nuttle, elementary resource curriculum consultant who coordinated the elementary program at six elementary schools, gave board members a peek into the programs' operations at the individual schools.

"We stressed an interdisciplinary approach at East," explains Ms. Akers. "We stressed self-motivation and responsibility, and projects that would benefit the entire student body." A junior high newspaper was

just one of the options for PACE students at East Junior High.

THE WHO program at Warner was an attempt at a full-time program, says Ms. Higham, who coordinated an acceleration approach placing WHO students in advanced classes with homogeneous grouping.

"When the kids are put together, they stimulate each other, but there's some concern for elitism," The strongest point of the WHO program is the intellectual challenge for the students, she says, but she perceives some problems in overdoing things.

"If you really challenge kids, you're putting them in a position where they may succeed or fail. Students who've succeeded with the least possible effort in the past sometimes feel threatened."

Nuttle's program at the elementary level differs from the junior high approach. Academically gifted students (who were chosen on test scores, creative writing talents and teachers' recommendations) left the assigned classroom at specific times to work on individual projects with reading specialists and media personnel.

These students often work side-by-side with students who need remedial

help," he says. Elitism is avoided at the elementary level since many students leave class throughout the day for such activities as Bucket Brigade and Speech Therapy.

One student contrived a variety of experiments with weather instruments and then took the project back to his classroom.

"These kids spur the others," says Marion Spencer, a teacher at Flanders Elementary School who's particularly pleased with the program results.

"I cannot speak highly enough of the academically talented program," she says.

Board members will be considering a slightly different proposal for K-12 implementation of the program. The proposed criteria for entrance into the program is slightly more stringent than previous methods.

Students will be selected by test scores and teacher recommendations and then individually tested for an IQ of 132, corresponding to the 98th percentile on the Stanford Binet, an individual test administered by a psychologist.

The programs next year will be more individualized and in the hands

of building committees at each school, if the proposed plan is approved, Ms. Higham explains.

"Parents, students and staff will work out an individualized program," she says. One example of how the program might work is through heuristic (learning by doing) experiences or acceleration in classes similar to Warner's WHO program.

Seventh graders, for example, took regular English, social studies, and gym programs. But we had a seventh-grade combined math class where they worked in pre-algebra. They whipped through it so fast they're now in ninth grade algebra."

The selected seventh graders were put in eighth grade physical science and will take ninth grade earth science next year. The typical seventh grade science (life science) can be assimilated in biology in ninth grade, she explains.

Ms. Higham was recently surprised when she took her students to Cranbrook on a field trip and they soon became involved in the various experiments available in the science section.

"They surprised themselves about how much they had learned," she says.



Flanders Elementary School second grader Sonal Ravani is just one of the youngsters who've been able to visit the school's learning center this year as part of the pilot elementary academically able program. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Experts warn of panic in fires

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Panic kills.

Farmington Hills Fire Chief John Van de Voort and Farmington Fire Marshall Norm Madison agree that persons in a burning building have a better chance of survival if they remember to remain calm.

Patrons of the crowded Beverly Hills Supper Club in Kentucky reportedly panicked and packed themselves against exits in an attempt to escape the weekend fire that killed 160 persons.

Farmington's Fire Marshall believes that calm evacuation could have saved lives. But the effort to remain cool saves lives only when the entire room tries to avoid panic.

"You have a problem when the building fills up with smoke rapidly," said Madison. "When there's a large group, people panic and when you get 500-600 people in a room like in that club, and there are two exits, people panic and pile up at the door. When they do that they won't get out."

"It's hard to remain calm and cool when you're life's in danger. But it all revolves around panic," he said.

If the fire is in a windowless room and others panic, that reduces the number of life-saving options available to the person who remains calm.

In an area with a window, breaking the glass and crawling through it safely is a good escape method, according to Madison. Otherwise, per-

sons are advised to stay close to the floor and try to crawl to the exit.

"Smoke rises to the ceiling first. Then it blankets down over the room," explained Madison. "Get low and stay low. If you stand up you'll be overcome by smoke faster."

Smoke inhalation is a danger that is overlooked in the face of flames, Madison says. Persons can be overcome by smoke in a matter of seconds.

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a big maze. It was an obstacle course," Van de Voort said.

Fire in a crowded public building has yet to occur in the Farmington area. One of the reasons that tragedy has been avoided is the area's tough building code and the willingness of developers to cooperate with the fire department recommendations, according to Van de Voort.

Farmington Hills' new skating rink is an example of such cooperation, according to the fire chief.

"In addition to the building code regulations, any place where we recommended a sprinkler, the owners installed one. They have a fire hydrant in front and behind the building. Such cooperation is a credit to the community," he said.

In both cities, public buildings are required to have clearly marked, well lighted exit signs over doorways.

REGULATIONS concerning the location and number of sprinkler systems in a public building depend on the structure's size and use.

Restaurants are required to have sprinkler systems over the hooded range in the kitchen. Sprinklers in the dining area are left to the discretion of the owners.

School buildings and other public buildings are required to keep their exits open in case of fire.

Large, spacious areas are required to have a check point area to stop the easy spread of fire, according to Van de Voort.

Patron calls club maze of hallways

Iris and Mickey Jones' evening at the Beverly Hills Supper Club turned out to be an enjoyable night on the town, even though the placement of the tables in the Cabaret Room left precious little elbow room.

Two weeks later, the Farmington residents are wondering how they would have escaped the fire that ripped through the club, over the Memorial Day holiday, which was overflowing with diners and catered parties.

"We were trying to imagine what it would be like to get out of there. It was chaos," Mrs. Jones said.

To reach the club's rural grounds, the Jones and their companions, on a tour sponsored by the state of Kentucky for travel writers, drove over a narrow road. Once inside, Mrs. Jones estimates the party walked through 200 feet of hallway before reaching the Cabaret Room.

"We walked past a wedding chapel and a reception and a high school graduation. It was like a little city in

itself," she said.

THEIR GROUP OF about seven persons was crowded together at one table in the raised mezzanine area of the room where the fire, two weeks later, caused patrons to pile up against two exits.

The mezzanine area was so crowded the waitress was forced to edge her way through a narrow aisle in the back of the row of tables.

"They were the best seats in the house. You could see the stage directly from them," she said.

During her visit, she was unaware of the two fire exits on either side of the room.

"They probably did have fire exits, but I didn't see them," she said.

The maze-like construction of the building and the poorly visible fire exits could have contributed to the tragedy, she said.

"The main door was the way that most people knew how to get out. That door was blocked with smoke," she said.

"IF SOMETHING develops, then go calmly to an exit," he said.

Once out of a building, always resist the temptation to return, Madison advises.

Some public buildings are constructed like mazes and patrons find it difficult to find alternate exits, according to Van de Voort. In the Kentucky fire, some experts theorize the reason so many people died is that many exits did not lead outside, but rather to the club's cocktail lounge.

"That supper club in Kentucky was

Tom-Becky contest still a challenge

It's been around for a dozen or more years, but the Tom Sawyer-Becky Thatcher look-alike contest is still part of the annual kids fishing derby and still continues to draw interest.

The fishing derby is scheduled for 7 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 18 at Newburgh Lake.

ABOUT 30 boys and girls in the 6-16 age group enter each year, according to Eleanor Chruscial, who works as hard on the contest as does her husband, Hank, who is chairman.

"It gets pretty hard for the judges to pick winners some years," she said, "because the entries are so good."

"Most of the boys wear cutoff jeans and go barefoot. Some have a pail and paintbrush," she said, referring to the chapter in the Mark Twain novel in which Tom cons his friends into paying him to whitewash a fence.

"Some will have a cornob pipe," Mrs. Chruscial added. Actually, Huckleberry Finn was the connoisseur of the cornob; Tom and Joe Harper smoked during the adventure on Jackson's Island, and both got sick.

A LITTLE MORE work goes into the girls' costumes as they mimic Becky Thatcher's lovely daughter Becky.

"During the bicentennial, a lot of mothers made gowns like this from the period. All they have to do is shorten them a bit for their daughters," Mrs. Chruscial said.

"We see lots of hoop dresses, pantaloons and bonnets. Some will carry schoolbooks."

The contest is sponsored by the Wayne County Conservation Association and the parks and recreation departments of Livonia, Dearborn Heights, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Garden City, Northville and Plymouth.

Young anglers can register at the desk on Newburgh Point the morning of the contest, but they are advised to save time by registering in advance. To do so, send a post card with your name, street address, city and telephone number to:

"Fish Derby," 19345 Brentwood, Livonia 48152.

No confirmation response will be sent. Deadline for getting cards into the mail is June 14.



Anne Simer, of the Croatian Kolo Group, Zagreb, will perform with the group at the Farmington Community Center's ethnic festival. A Farmington resident, she has been performing with the group for two years.

Dance, music on tap at ethnic festival

Partake of a musical smorgasbord during the Farmington Community Center's Ethnic Festival, June 5-5. Dances and music from various countries including Greece, the Ukraine, Italy, Finland, Russia, the Mid-East and Germany will be featured during the weekend at the Community Center, 20705 Farmington Road, Farmington.

Admission is \$1 for adults, 50 cents for children and \$3 for a family ticket.

Farmington Hills City Manager, George Majors, State Representative Sandy Brotherton (R-Farmington) and French, Lebanese and Chilean representatives will participate in opening ceremonies, June 3.

That day's program will begin at 5:30 p.m. It will include: Magical Petewitch Pete Drakos, Prentice Scotch Dancers, The Ukrainians, an instrumental group, Armenian Folk Dance Ensemble and Italian Singer Maria Luisa Ellero and her accordionist Dave Lehman. Lebanese Belly Dancers Majdah, Finlandia Male Chorus of Detroit and Mir Dnestri, a Russian folk dance ensemble are featured on June 3 until 9 p.m.

Saturday's festivities will begin at 1 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. INCLUDED IN THE SECOND

DAY'S festivities are: Peter Drakos, Metropolitan Middle Eastern Belkire Revue, Le Comedine Di Casino, an Italian singing group and Sound Express, an American musical group.

The audience is invited to participate in ethnic folk dancing during the afternoon.

During the evening performance, spectators can watch the Carpathia Schuplatler Dancers of Germany, Armenian Folk Dance Ensemble, Spanish Dancers and Guitars with Maria Durante, a German dance group, Oph Ukrainian Dancers and Greek Dancers from the Hellenic Society for the Performing Arts of Metropolitan Detroit.

Festivities wind up on at 9 p.m. Sunday. The day's entertainment begins at 1 p.m. It features Holjakat, a Finnish dance group, Prentice Scotch Dancers, singers from Shaarey Zedek Makhele, a Mexican pianista and the Finlandia Male Chorus.

In the afternoon, dancers from the Polish Women's Alliance Council 3A will entertain. They will be joined by the Ukrainians, the Czech Swedes musical group, and the Croatian Kolo Group Zagreb. Lebanese Dancers, Croatian and American musical groups round out the day.

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