

Farmington Observer



hallways

A page of Farmington-area school news

Schools gear up for teacher recruitment

By Casey Hans
staff writer

TEACHER LAYOFFS were an annual necessity for most Michigan school districts in the past.

Today, districts are competing for the best teachers and employees, as a new law allowing earlier retirement takes effect and large numbers of seniority employees make the retirement decision. State legislation passed last summer allows retirement as early as Jan. 1, 1987.

"We will lose some teachers and employees," said Susan Rennels, president of the Farmington school board. "But I don't think it will be detrimental to the district."

"The law now encourages them to retire — it no longer penalizes them. This gives us an opportunity to hire new teachers — we expect to hire quality teachers."

COMPETITION FOR good teachers is the issue at the forefront for many district personnel managers. Farmington has placed itself in a position to compete, using foresight and some recruitment tools, according to officials and school board members.

The district is gearing up to replace 25-30 employees retiring during the coming school year, and is making plans to welcome new employees with new orientation programs, according to Farmington Public Schools Director of Personnel Robert Coleman. He expects about half the retirements to involve elementary school teachers. Over a three-year period, Farmington officials estimate about 100 employees could retire.

Statewide, about 20,500 of 98,000 school teachers could retire by 1988, officials said.

Upon reviewing the legislation and a need to recruit good teachers, the Farmington School board adjusted beginning teaching salaries to \$19,000 immediately, with a rise to \$20,000 during the next school year, Coleman said. As another tool, the district now gives "full experience credit" when a teacher is hired — previously gave a maximum of five years experience credit.

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— Susan Rennels, school board president

ONE OF Coleman's concerns involves employees — especially teachers — leaving mid-year when retirement becomes available Jan. 1. "We hope to get as many teachers as possible to stay through this school year," he said.

He encourages school employees to advise the district if retirement decision is made. "It will allow us to plan," he added.

To help with the transition, Barbara Novatis was recently appointed as intern in the personnel department, where she will spend the remainder of the school year reviving teacher applications and handling working on in-service training and advising new programs to welcome new employees to the district.

An elementary teacher within the district, Novatis is earning a doctorate through Wayne State University, which coordinated the interagency. "We want to give them (new employees) a total district perspective, an want them to know there are people here to help them," she said. "This year will be a 'disruptive year' throughout the state because of staff change, she added.

COMPETITION for teachers in fields already experiencing shortages will intensify, Coleman added.

A 1985 report from the Association for School, College and University Staffing (ASCUS) not "considerable" teacher shortages in areas of math, science, computer programming and data processing.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Robert Coleman, Farmington Public Schools personnel director, and Barbara Novatis, a personnel department intern, review district plans involving a statewide retirement law.

Other areas with less dramatic shortages include special education, industrial arts, bilingual education, library science and the general and biological sciences.

Zan Alley, executive director for the four unions representing Farmington school employees, is heartened by the new law, and said the district will benefit from new people and new ideas.

"I view it as positive," she said. "It's an opportunity for new thought to come

in." She called Farmington "an absolute prized district to work in. People will move from other districts."

DURING FEBRUARY and March, Alley is visiting each school building discussing the new retirement law with each staff group and answering questions.

She said December and January will be months when many staff members

will plan to leave. She encourages them to advise the district.

Under the former retirement program employees took a reduced benefit. The new 80-point plan changes that and may allow more to consider this as an option, Alley said. When an employee has a combined age and years of experience totaling 80, he or she can retire with full benefits.

"It's such an individual decision," Alley

added. The full impact on the district will not be known until the retirements start, she said.

Officials expect experienced teachers and some re-entering the workplace to apply to Farmington. A lag is expected during the next few years in the number of graduating, qualified teachers, which may cause a problem in other districts, but hopefully not in Farmington, they said.



inkwell

Inkwell provides news and information about Farmington-area primary and secondary schools. The column appears monthly throughout the school year as part of the Observer's "School Page." Send news items to: The School Page, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. Include a telephone number where a contact person can be reached during the day.

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The ASSE International Exchange Programs seeks local families to host Scandinavian, German, Swiss, French, Spanish, Dutch and Canadian boys and girls, ages 16-18, for the 1986-87 high school year.

The European and Canadian teen-agers are "eager to learn about our country through living as members of a family, going to high school and sharing their culture with their American family and community." All speak fluent English, are fully insured and have their own spending money, ASSE said.

The students will arrive shortly before school begins in August and return at the end of the school year in June.

ASSE is also looking for local high school students to become ASSE exchange students abroad. They must have a good academic record and be 15 to 18 years old.

Contact Paul and Stephanie Sallowski, 41810 Pierce, Belleville 48111 for more information, or call 699-1273.

'CONSCIENCE' RETIRES

First-grade teacher Marion Spencer, who recently retired, Superintendent Lewis Schuman called the "conscience of the community," will retire from her position at Flanders Elementary this June.

Spencer, who regularly attends school board meetings, is a 30-year teaching veteran with the district. She celebrated her 60th birthday Feb. 19.

Also retiring in June are James Cox, North Farmington High School math teacher who has spent 24 years with the district, and Edna Galbrith, reading specialist at Flanders, who joined the district in 1951.

Joyce Hague, special education aide at Farmington Training Center will retire March 24.

Leaving the district in late January was Denise Allen, paraprofessional at North Farmington High School, who resigned.

NEW EMPLOYEES

The Farmington Board of education appointed three new employees Feb. 11 and two new employees March 4.

Susan Drucker began Feb. 17 as elementary art consultant for Wooddale and Eagle elementaries. She holds a master's degree from Wayne State University and a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University.

Diane Russell will join the staff March 17 as elementary art consultant for Beechview and Graceview elementaries. She has a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University and a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University.

Speech pathologist Deborah Greer began with the district February. She has nine years of experience and holds a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and a master's degree from Wayne State University.

Kari Plasencia started her position as early intervention teacher at Fairview Early Childhood Center February. She has 11 years of experience and holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University and a master's degree from Oakland University.

Ann Jaris Belobradich began her position as program assistant at Cloverdale Training Center Jan. 31.

MUSICIANS HONORED

North Farmington High School instrumental music students received 15 first-place honors at the District Four Solo and Ensemble Festival held recently at Birmingham Seaholm High School.

The festival is sponsored by the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association.

Soloists honored were:

- 9th grader Heather McKinnon, clarinet and Julie Kroy, string bass.

- 10 graders Marianne Leitch, clarinet and piano and Marc Woollard, clarinet.

- 11 graders Gary Brode, trumpet; Teresa Kallz, trombone; Adrienne Dummer, clarinet; Lisa Hart, alto and Howard Collins, trombone.

- 12 graders Autumn Dunbar, cello and Laurie Mannon, flute.

Four ensembles were also honored, including a flute octet with Alka Agrawal and Kim Larson; a violin quartet with Jennifer Litvin and Jane Smith; a flute quartet with Laurie McKinnon and Kim Trubick; and a jazz quartet with Bob Gould, Gary Brode, Teresa Kallz and Howard Collins.

First-place finishers will compete at the state Solo and Ensemble Festival this month.

Receiving second-division ratings in the district competition were soloists Cathryn Johnson, Jane Smith, Alka Agrawal. Honored for duets were Janet Ajdi and Allison Balash, and Lisa Hart and Dan Himes. Others students participating in the district event included Dean Feldpausch and Lisa LaGuardia.

GIRLS ACCEPTED

The Farmington Board of Education accepted gifts from the Lions Club of Farmington and the Girl Elementary Parent Teacher Association March.

The Lions presented two checks totaling \$5,000 to the Cloverdale Training Center. The money will be used for the center's new play area, according to Douglas Smith, special education supervisor.

The PTA approved the purchase of \$5,000 in additional playground equipment for students. It ordered a \$1,000 video camera/recorder with accessories for use by the staff.

RENEW SESSION

The Farmington Board of Education will begin screening applications for the superintendent's position at a special closed meeting of the board Saturday, March 22. Application deadline for the position is Friday, March 21.

Men's Designer Sale: Last 4 days



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