

# Elementary pilot labeled a success

By Casey Hans  
Staff writer

An elementary pilot program for students who need help, but don't qualify for special education, was labeled a success by a Farmington school consultant.

During a June 3 presentation to the school board, consultant Eric Gordon suggested the specialized program — being piloted at two schools — be expanded to the other elementary schools, and possibly into the middle and high schools.

The pilot, which supports individualized reading and mathematics

help, was initiated at Wooddale and William Grace elementaries and was the brainchild of former assistant superintendent for special education services and current superintendent, Graham Lewis.

Following Gordon's 1984 evaluation of the district's special education and gifted programs, Lewis said many children were found to be "falling through the cracks" and considered "marginal" learners.

This prompted the elementary pilot, written and implemented by reading and math specialists Debra McCall at Wooddale and Sybil Winters at William Grace.

GORDON SAID the affected children "fall behind more and more and more each year. It's a snowballing effect."

MaryLou Ankele, supervisor for special education, said "these children may have been referred to special education, but didn't qualify."

"These are students who function 2-3 years below grade level," she added. "Then the gap widens. They never really catch up, because they're always running behind." The widening problems begin to surface in about the second grade.

The key to the program is its individualization, according to Gordon's presentation. The reading and math specialists work with each student a half hour per day out of regular class time. Individual student records are maintained to monitor program results.

Although the pilot is a pull-out program — taking students from other classroom — teachers work with the specialists to be sure no key class lessons are missed. "Being pulled out is not going to be detrimental — it's going to be helpful," William Grace Principal Richard Close added.

THE PROGRAM is designed to help students who are "not picking up as much as we would want them to," Gordon said. The pilot is presently working on about a 6/1 ratio of students to teacher. Officials estimate the program could touch 20-25 percent of students in each schooling level.

Gordon suggested additional instruction on oral and written language — in mathematics would be needed for the specialists, who presently concentrate more on reading skills. He also suggested the district continue student testing, which is "intrinsically linked with this process" and working with parents on "specific needs."

Although Gordon suggested a full-scale implementation throughout the district, Lewis said he would not advocate it, although he believes the introduction of math remediation is important in the elementary levels.

Lewis favors leaving the program at the elementary level, then studying student progress at the middle schools.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS will study Gordon's report and bring their recommendations with financial considerations before the board before a decision is made about the program.

If implemented on an elementary level, a total of 11 reading and math specialists — one per elementary building — would be required, a doubling of the present staff, according to Lewis.

Board members voiced positive response to the program report. "It makes so much sense," trustee Helen Ditzhazy said. "There's a group that's always behind. If you start earlier, it just makes sense."

"Everything sounds beautiful," trustee James Abernethy added, saying he would like some "hard data to see its working."

## Record retirements

### School employees receive awards at banquet

A record 54 employees who retired from Farmington Public Schools during the 1985-86 school year were honored June 5 for their combined 1,196 years of service to the district.

A total of 350 people attended the Employee Recognition Dinner held at Madonnas in Farmington Hills, where the group received certificates and plaques for their years of service to the district, according to the Farmington Director of Personnel Robert Coleman.

Guest speakers were former superintendent Lewis Schulman, who

retired this year, and newly appointed Superintendent of Schools Graham Lewis.

Lewis, Farmington Board of Education President Susan Rennels, and Tom Chruszowski, kindergarten teacher and president of the Farmington Education Association, gave the awards.

TWO TEACHERS who died during the school year — bilingual therapist Shashi Gupta and Farmington High School mathematics teacher Daniel Soave — were also honored during the dinner for their special contributions to the students of the district.

Gupta was killed during an Air India plane crash, and Soave died of complications during hospitalization.

Twenty-five of the employees retiring were teachers, which Coleman said doubled the amount normally retiring. Three administrators, including Schulman, Beechview Elementary principal Norman Langen and East Middle School principal Alton Bennett, also retired.

In the past, about 6-10 employees per year retired, he added. Coleman said officials were not surprised with the number of retirements to date. "It was what we expected," he added.

THE RECORD retirements are attributed to a new school employee retirement law passed last summer, which allows many employees to retire earlier with full benefits.

Under the new law, when an employee has a combined age and years of experience totaling 80, he or she can retire with full benefits.

"This is an on-going process," Coleman said of the retirements and recruitment for new employees. "We're taking it a step at a time."

Recent approval was given for hiring an additional administrative employee in the personnel department to aid with the needed recruitment process.

EMPLOYEES HONORED at the dinner, plus their years of service to the district include: Frances Aaron, 10; Beverly Bain, 19; Harold Beardsley, 16; Ethel Begian, 17; Robert

Benjamin, 36; Alton Bennett, 21; Milton Berger, 19; Mary Biggar, 19½; Lorraine Bretter, 8; Diana Carr, 15; Jean Courville, 20½; James Cox, 24; Marjorie Cramer, 29; Jean Crawford, 17½; Marion DuPre, 13; Joyce Edens, 29; Eddy Ellegood, 29; Beverly Ellis, 26; Donna Fliehm, 22; Edna Galbraith, 25; Robert Gedeon, 21; Pauline Green, 17; Joyce Hague, 13; Edward Hahn, 13; Ethel Heaton, 25; Clarence Haus, 21; and Beverly Johnson, 23.

Others honored included: Lorna Kaechle, 23; Rita Kaine, 18; Marion Kilka, 16; Irene Langen, 15; Norman Langen, 22; Carlin Lapinski, 19; Ruth Levine, 17½; Noreen Lingner, 25; Kathleen Longtime, 16; Dorthea McInally, 26½; Carolyn McMahon, 12½; Margery Nash, 16½; Kay Otten, 17; Rita Piron, 30; Rose Pisan, 17; Robert Potter, 19; Julia Rapnicki, 8; Nancy Reynolds, 27; Lewis Schulman, 16; Muriel Schultz, 17; Dorothy Schwechow, 20; Carol Smith, 17; Marion Spencer, 30½; Nina Toffanetti, 16; Margaret Vaughan, 19; Margaret Weber, 20; and Mary Youles, 26.

Nine district employees planned and coordinated the retirement dinner. They included: Robert Coleman, Loretta Carney, Barbara Novatis and Marge Young of the district's personnel department; Deputy Superintendent Michael Flanagan, Carmen Jodginski and Sharon McConaghe of East Middle School; Bill Martin of Warner Middle School; and Tom McConaghe of William Grace Elementary.

## School budget adopted

The Farmington school district will begin its districtwide building repair program this fall, spending \$2.5 million of the \$56 million in revenues budgeted for the coming year.

Trustees for Farmington Public Schools adopted the district's 1986-87 budget on June 3 with a 6-0 vote.

The district will continue to levy 32.5 operating mills and 1.3 mills for debt retirement. A mill in the Farmington district equals about \$1.4 million. The budget includes \$56 million in revenues, \$53.5 million in expenses and \$2.5 million for building repair. The district previously spent about \$1 million each year to keep buildings maintained, according to officials.

Preliminary figures assume a balanced budget and state equalized property value increases of 7.8 percent in Farmington, 10.8 percent in

Farmington Hills and 7 percent in West Bloomfield Township.

The budget represents a \$5.26 million increase from the previous year, officials reported. The increase is due to the inclusion of food service and athletic budgets — noted as line items for the first time this year — plus equalization of the district's bus transportation system and increases in elementary and special education staffs due to projected growth in these areas.

According to a preliminary study done by school officials, more than \$10 million in building repairs are needed. Deputy Superintendent Michael Flanagan suggested a summer board meeting where priorities could be set for a multiyear repair plan.

School taxes will continue to be collected twice each year.



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