

Schools seek improved staff training

By Casey Hans
staff writer

After several months of planning and assessing, they're ready for Friday's big event.

Farmington Public Schools' staff development team, hired this year, is helping to coordinate the district's annual employee in-service training day, scheduled for Friday afternoon at Harrison High School. Up to 1,300 employees are expected to attend.

The half-day event is part of contractual agreements between the employees and district.

In-service has traditionally been a one-shot attempt at training, which members of the new department thought could be enhanced. With the new concept of staff development on-going professional and personal training — the district's three trainers hope this year's in-service will be the start of something bigger for Farmington schools.

"Districts wondered why, in the past, they offered an in-service, when the day didn't have much impact," said trainer Jan Colliton. This year, she said, "there are going to be opportunities beyond the original workshop."

THE FARMINGTON Board of Education made a commitment to staff development last year, when they hired assistant superintendent Judith White and created a new department. Staff development employees are now in place, and preparing not only for Friday's in-service, but for a full-year of staff training beginning this fall.

Planning for the in-service involved all employees. In January, the department began by conducting a "needs assessment" of all Farmington Public Schools employees, and based workshop offerings on the most popular items, according to trainer Norm Luebke, a

former math teacher, who analyzed the numbers.

Surprisingly, a class in cardiopulmonary resuscitation training was first on the list for non-teaching personnel and within the top 10 for teachers, he said. Other workshops employees can choose from including new tax laws, classroom management, stress and burnout in education, motivating students, introduction to computers, multicultural survival and heart healthy living.

"We collated the needs on computer," Luebke explained. "Patterns emerged and from there, we selected topics."

Also helping for Friday's event was the district's 18-member Professional Development Policy Board — the group that has coordinated past in-service days. It was the forerunner of staff development in Farmington schools, the trainers said.

THE IN-SERVICE day is important to these trainers, because it will guide them toward what the employees need. The in-service "could develop an interest and awareness in a topic that could turn into a staff development opportunity," Colliton added.

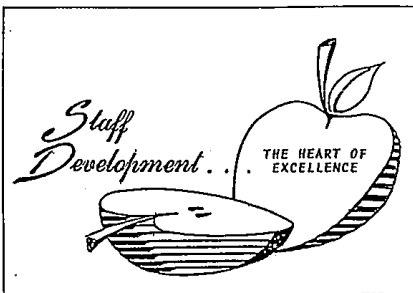
As the team completes the workshops this Friday, members will look towards September when a full year of staff development will get under way. They hope to utilize other professionals in the district for training in specialized fields such as reading and writing.

"We're the nucleus, but I really see us tapping the potential of others in the district," Colliton said.

IN FRIDAY'S program, for instance, only 80 percent of the speakers will be from the outside — the remainder are Farmington school employees.

Trainer Marilyn Carlson compared the district's staff development program with similar programs being used in the business community. "A lot of their programs really line up with what we're trying to do," she said, "and teach children to do."

The staff development program uses more than the core group of trainers.



This new logo — designed by Superintendent Graham Lewis — will be used with all future staff development department materials.

A staff development committee comprised of a teaching representative in each building will funnel training ideas to the team. Members of the staff development department are working with committee mem-

bers to draft an overall statement of purpose for the department.

Their overall goal is to "improve education for all Farmington students," according to an initial draft.

Youth Corps eyes employers

This summer the Michigan Youth Corps is getting down to business.

Its aim, to help participants move from the public sector Corps program to jobs in private business as soon as they are ready, will be accomplished through the MYC Employer Honor Roll.

Created in 1986, the honor roll is composed of employers from all over the state who guarantee job interviews to all interested MYC workers who have successfully completed their summer jobs with the Corps.

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What's in it for Youth Corps workers? Simply put, access to employers who realize the value of the Youth Corps experience.

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The Michigan Youth Corps is a state-funded summer employment program for 18- to 21-year-olds.

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