

# Farmington Observer



## hallways

A page of Farmington-area school news

# Teaching tots

## Centralized kindergarten format studied

**'The key is that this is an alternative — an option for parents to consider.'**

— Mary Lou Somerville  
Alameda principal

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

**F**ARMINGTON SCHOOL officials tread lightly when they look at the future of kindergarten — a priority for both educators and parents this year.

As members of a study group prepared recommendations for the school board earlier this year, several hundred parents arrived at a

school board meeting protesting the centralizing of elementary kindergarten classrooms to early childhood centers, an option offered by the group.

Stepping in a different direction, the district has offered an optional centralized kindergarten program at Fairview and Alameda early childhood centers to begin this fall.

More than 92 children from across the district are registered for the option, according to Mary Lou Somerville, early childhood coordinator at Alameda and chairwoman of the study group. The program is full and no further registrations are being accepted, she said. Other children will attend kindergarten at their local elementary schools.

Parents of those children qualifying for kindergarten were surveyed to see how they felt about sending their children to a program at the two early childhood centers. The registration was the response.

"WE FEEL really positive about the whole thing," Somerville said. "There will be a controlled environment, with a hands-on curriculum approach. The key is that this is an alternative — an option for parents to consider."

The parents whose children will attend kindergarten at either Alameda or Fairview met with school officials Monday night. Somerville said most registered at the centers because they were familiar with the programs. Many parents said they preferred the early childhood setting instead of the traditional elementary kindergartens, she said.

Districts across the country appear to be offering optional centralized programs, some even at elementary-level grades, as permanent options, Somerville said. Such a choice would allow a child to attend either the centralized early childhood center or the traditional local elementary school.

Each Farmington early childhood center will have a new kindergarten teacher to handle the two sessions per school this fall.

Meanwhile, other area districts that have used the centralized kindergarten concept to alleviate overcrowding — something Farmington officials say is not the case — decide whether to continue their programs



photos by RANDY BORSY/staff photographer

**Ealy student James Moran learns more about dinosaurs by listening to a tape and following along in a picture book.**

or return to elementary kindergarten classrooms.

Others such as Livonia have centralized only specialized programs, such as developmental kindergarten or day care, and left kindergarten at the elementary.

AND IN the Ypsilanti district, voters recently approved a bond issue to build a school to house kindergartners permanently at a centralized location because of its success, according to Farmington's assistant superintendent Judith White, who formerly worked at Ypsilanti.

The West Bloomfield schools moved smoothly into a centralized

kindergarten program at Ealy School because of overcrowding in the district's south end. According to Judy Pendergrass, the school's principal and director of staff development for the district, parents reacted differently to the change than those in Farmington.

"There was some concern, but not that kind of a public outcry," she said. "People were happy to see it open again."

The school was closed for three years due to declining enrollment. West Bloomfield trustee Sharon Lipton said centralizing the kinder-

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Wendy Elsenhardt concentrates during a morning activity at Ealy School. Students from throughout West Bloomfield Schools

will attend Ealy this year and next year until the centralized kindergarten program is again reviewed.

## inkwell

Inkwell provides primary and secondary school news and information about Farmington-area students. The column appears monthly throughout the 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.

### ● THEY RETIRE

Several Farmington school employees, including assistant superintendent Lawrence Freedman, will retire at the end of this school year. Freedman's retirement, and that of seven others, were approved by the Farmington school board April 7. Freedman has served the district in various capacities since 1981 and has been an assistant superintendent since 1971.

Other retiring employees include: Mary Briolat, teacher's aide at Forest Elementary; Elizabeth Looke, fourth grade teacher at William Grace Elementary; Janet Hummon, sixth grade teacher at Duncle Middle School; Donald Kulick, English teacher at North Farmington High School; Marjorie Murphy, resource room teacher at Forest Elementary; Gertrude Mater, third grade teacher at William Grace Elementary; and Joyce Sterling, third grade teacher at Larkshire.

### ● 5 RESIGN

Five Farmington Public Schools employees have resigned their positions.

They include: Bonnie Brown, special education teacher aide at Warner Middle School; Sam Shivers, special education teacher aide at Farmington Training Center; Carol Tucker, special education teacher aide at Cloverdale; Cheryl Turns, first grade teacher on leave; and Mary Walden, a half-time shared leave teacher.

### ● ON TOUR

Farmington Hills resident Aliza McCormick, a student at Interlochen Arts Academy, toured the state as part of the Michigan Council for the Arts Outreach program April 26-30. McCormick is a member of the academy's choir and chorale.

### ● HE GRADUATES

Farmington Hills resident Glenn MacDonald graduated from the State Technical Institute and Rehabilitation Center in Lansing. He received his diploma in the area of food services. MacDonald was one of 63 students

to graduate from the program during ceremonies in Lansing April 1.

The State Technical Institute, established by the state Legislature in 1944, is a residential training facility for handicapped adults. Programs provide skills in 59 occupational areas. The school is a division of the Michigan State Board of Education.

### ● SHE'S SELECTED

Farmington Hills resident Trudy Papler is among 23 high school seniors — two from Oakland County — selected to participate in Alma College's Early Decision Program. Papler is a student at Farmington High School.

Introduced this academic year, the program awards qualified high school seniors up to \$1,000 in additional scholarship awards for making a commitment to attend Alma College this fall.

To be eligible to apply for Alma's Early Decision Program, seniors must have a cumulative high school grade point of 3.25 or above in academic subjects.

Papler is secretary of the forensics team, vice president of both the Student Council and French Club, and a National Honor Society executive officer. In her junior year she was in Farmington High's production of "The Skin of our Teeth."

A FHS honor roll student in the Academic Hall of Fame, Papler received last year the Madame Curie Award from the Society of Women Engineers.

She plans to study pre-engineering at Alma.

### ● EDUCATORS ATTEND

Several Farmington Public Schools educators were among the 13,000 science teachers attending the National Science Teachers Association conference in Washington, D.C., March 26-29.

Area teachers attending were: Lois Kluever, Ginny Lambert, June Lieb, Kathy McAdams, Carolyn McQuiggan and Gloria Tweedy.

### ● A FINALIST

North Farmington High School student Todd Rohak was named a finalist in the Detroit section of the International Chemistry Olympiad to be held in Veszprem, Hungary.

He participated April 22 in the national examination, which will determine who makes the international trip.

Rohak was one of 137 students from 38 high schools participating in the local exam. Seven students — four from Oakland County — were among the local finalists.

### ● 3 LAUDED

Three students at Farmington Public Schools' Power Middle School received certificates of commendation from the Detroit Free Press Educational Services Department for outstanding achievement.

Chris Kretler, Julie Godwin and Kristin Urevig each received the certificates following entry into the paper's editorial cartoon and letters to the editor contests. Their entries were chosen from 1,750 received from 179 schools throughout the state.

### ● DONATION ACCEPTED

The Farmington Community Lions Club donated \$5,000 to be used in the second phase of the play area at Cloverdale Center. Part of the gift was from the W.R. Angell Foundation.

### ● FUNDS FOR FOOD

The St. John Lutheran Church of Farmington Hills gave \$376 to the Farmington Public Schools' Head Start program.

The money will be used to purchase food for those in need.

### ● NEW EMPLOYEES

Eleven new employees were put on the payroll of Farmington Public Schools through appointments approved April 7.

They include:

- Kelly Fischer, special education teacher at Farmington Training Center,

- Kathleen Garland, program assistant at Cloverdale Center,

- Susan Gardstrom, music therapist for special education preschool,

- Bridget Gross, special education aide at Cloverdale,

- Patricia Hammonds, program assistant at Cloverdale,

- Genevieve Hoyt, teachers aide at Gill Elementary,

- Bonita James, special education aide at Warner Middle School,

- Peter Mastyla, teacher at Farmington Training Center

- Mary Philbin, program assistant at Cloverdale,

- Sandra Strauss, resource room teacher at Power Middle School,

- Gayle Zolbert, paraprofessional at Farmington High School.

### ● KINDERGARTEN INFO

Cranbrook Educational Community Brookside School faculty member Sandra Slavik of Farmington Hills gave a display presentation on full-day kindergarten at the Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children's annual conference April 4 at the Westin Hotel in Detroit.



## PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Marilyn Miglin presents her creation, Pheromone perfume. Friday, May 15, 1-3 p.m. Birmingham

Come in and visit with her at our Fragrance Counter and discover for yourself the magic of Pheromone, one of the world's most precious perfumes.



## Jacobson's

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