

Superintendent Reviews 1970 School Year

By RODERICK J. SMITH
Superintendent
Farmington Schools

Farmington School District continues to face the dual problem and challenge of serving Farmington's students with an effective educational program.

It is a problem because individual citizens of the Community tend to have a more divergent viewpoint on what is needed and what is acceptable. This varies from both extremes of liberal and conservative positions.

It is a challenge because the professional staff members are dedicated to the task of providing opportunities for instruction, development of personal skills and preparation for the future.

problems under the organization known as the Family Life Education Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee has focused its attention on three main problem areas - minority understanding, substance abuse and human sexuality.

After involving many individuals, making up a cross section of the community, with focus on the specific problems, reports with recommendations were presented to the Board of Education. The board accepted the concepts as presented and turned the reports over to the school administration to develop specific guidelines and materials for proposed programs.

(Dr. Roderick J. Smith, superintendent of schools in Farmington, examines the progress made in 1970 in the Farmington School District and foresees what is in store for 1971.)

The Board of Education will review each proposal before final authorization is given for implementation.

PARALLEL TO the substance abuse study has been another community-school related activity known as FAAC (Farmington Area Advisory Council) dealing directly with the drug problem.

Although some personnel are active in both organizations, the programs are distinctly different. The FAAC

has been widely known as a result of its "Rap Line" telephone assistance program.

Behind the scenes are a large number of individuals helping in personal counseling and follow-up. School personnel have given assistance and the School District has provided a headquarters office.

LONG RANGE plans to provide adequately for the enrollments of the future must be continually updated and implemented.

On the average it takes three to five years to change ideas into a school building ready to be used by students. Attention had been given to the problem of high cost of construction for school buildings.

With this in mind, the Board of Education commissioned two architectural firms to study methods of construction which could be applied to additions at three elementary schools. Various modifications have been studied and contracts have been awarded for two of the projects with the third to follow in 1971.

Planning continues for the fifth junior high school to be constructed near the in-

tersection of 14 Mile and Northwestern Highway.

Economic conditions have changed in the community so that the straight line increase in population and school enrollment has leveled off considerably. This is being studied carefully so that buildings are ready when they are needed, but are constructed only when needed.

SEPTEMBER 1970 heralded the opening of two new schools, each bringing new concepts of educational programs into the community.

Wood Creek Elementary School provides unusual opportunity for various modifications of student grouping

and team teaching. The building is beautiful but exceptionally efficient in its construction.

Harrison High School, although not fully completed until early 1971, was first occupied in September 1970 with an enrollment of 1,100 ninth, 10th, and 11th-grade students.

The construction complements a changing program and allows flexibility in both physical layout of classrooms and the development of future instructional programs.

THE PREPARATION of the 1970-71 operational budget was made more difficult by increased costs of operation,

the extension of contract negotiations into late November, and the State Supreme Court ruling regarding free textbooks and supplies which was not clarified until August.

The cost of the latter was approximately \$250,000. Obviously, it is difficult to provide for expenditures of this magnitude in a budget which has already been restricted to minimum levels.

The total result has been a restriction in a number of programs and activities. Every possible effort has been put forth to maintain a strong basic educational program.

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THE GLANCE at the past must take into consideration the early months of 1970 which encompasses the last half of the 1969-70 year as well as the beginning months of the 1970-71 school year.

The spring months were highlighted by the activities of the citizens of the community who were devoting many hours to the study of community school related

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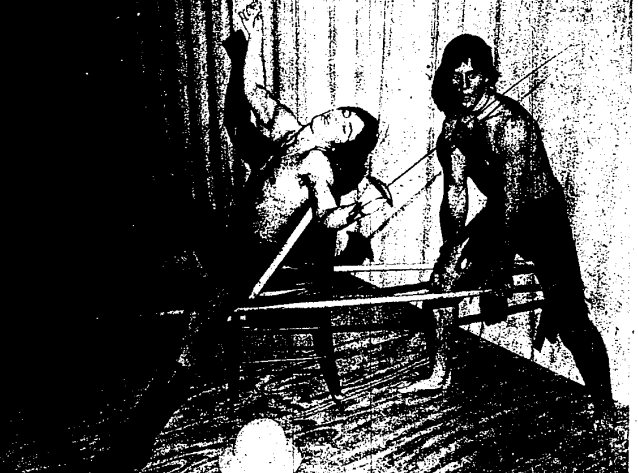
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NORTH'S PREMIER --- The North Farmington Players will present the U.S. premier of the drama "Vatlav" on Thursday, Jan. 7. The play, performed only once in Stratford, Ontario, will also be given on Jan. 9, 15, 16. In this scene, Jeff Osterhage (right) in the role of Vatlav tries to pull the chair out from under Drew Fezey who is snoozing. (Evert photo)

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Dems Will Hear GOP Stader Talk

FARMINGTON A Republican township officeholder will be the featured speaker at the monthly meeting of the Farmington Democratic Club scheduled for 8 p.m., Jan. 7 in the community room of First Farmington Saving Bank, Orchard Lake Rd. near Grand River.

David Stader, newly elected member of the Farmington Township Board of Trustees and planning commissioner, will be the speaker.

Farmington Democratic Club Chairman Mrs. William B. Smith said that Stader was invited to talk about the township master zoning plan and other proposed developments in the Farmington community.

This isn't the first time that the Democratic Club has invited Republicans to participate in its meetings. Farmington Township Supervisor Earl Teeples was the speaker at the November meeting shortly after his election to office.

"We are an open organization interested in the betterment of the Farmington community," Mrs. Smith said. She invited all persons interested in zoning and township progress to attend the meeting.

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