

Computers headed to classrooms at Forest

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Fourth-grade teachers at Forest Elementary in Farmington Hills have a special assignment in the coming year: to use computers as a tool for all their classroom teaching.

They're eager to begin.

"This is definitely a team approach, using the computers," said one teacher, Dottie Harris. "We'll be evaluating this all along. We have to really make it work because other schools, and other districts, will be watching us."

Harris, Julie Casillo and Cathy Smith applied to the district for the program, which will pay for 30 computers and software to teach their students science, geography, social studies, math, higher-level thinking skills, keyboarding as well as writing, word processing and to create a

publishing center.

Students will rotate between the computers, with 10 computers to each, as the instructors teach lessons using the computers.

FOREST WAS the sole school awarded money for the Teaching

and Learning with Computers Project, one of five major projects proposed by the district.

Farmington recently allocated \$1.2 million to projects like TLC to begin a technology expansion in the classroom. Harris said she believes Forest was given a chance, because

the fourth-grade teachers already made good use of the individual computers allocated to each room.

Harris said the teachers are already considering how their classrooms will be redesigned, in preparation for the computers, which are expected to arrive early in 1990.

Schools get high-tech equipment, training

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room is not going to do it," acting superintendent Michael Flanagan told the school board Nov. 21. "We're trying to find a way to get it on every teacher's desk."

Flanagan, a member of the technology advisory committee that made the program recommendations, has made technology in the classroom a priority for the district. "We need to realize how important technology advancement is to our kids. We have to be open-minded to the idea that there are some things right in front of us that are

going to literally revolutionize education."

THE PROJECTS and the schools receiving money include:

- Electronic Encyclopedia - information from an updated set of encyclopedias, stored on a computerized disk, will be accessible to students. Beechview, Eagle, Larkshire, Longacre, William Grace, Wood Creek and Wooddale elementary schools, and O.E. Dunkel and Power middle schools will receive them.
- Data Base Informational Retrieval - students can access up-

date information from various resources by using a computer and phone line. This program will be launched at Farmington and North Farmington high schools.

- Multimedia Project - high-tech computer equipment that allows a group of students to combine music, video materials and written documents for a school report. Farmington High, Gill Elementary and Wooddale elementary schools will receive money for these.

- Computer Labs - allow teachers to set up general purpose laboratories for students to learn specific

software sources. Labs were granted to Harrison High School and Power and East middle schools.

- Teaching and Learning with Computers Project (TLC) - Teachers and students develop computer uses together to increase problem solving skills. Forest Elementary received 30 computers to be used by fourth-grade teachers and students for the TLC project.

IN ADDITION to the five projects, 100 teachers in the district will receive Apple IIGS computers, printers, carts and software allowances for work and home use. Teachers

who have little or no access to a computer are most likely to receive a work station, according to school officials; 180 teachers applied for this program.

Thirty-nine applications were received for the five grant programs. Technical advisory committee subcommittee members reviewed the applications before awarding the money. Teachers involved with the grants are already attending training sessions for the programs, expected to begin this winter, said Judith White, assistant superintendent for curriculum and

staff development. The 15-member technical advisory committee was formed in 1986 to provide: modern technological equipment to schools including computer work stations for all faculty members; training for district employees; and training for all students.

As part of a district technology plan, school officials plan to continue the programs, using the program approved this month as a building block.

"It's very needed. We've got to get technology into their hands,"

Board appoints 2 new principals

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Two educators - one from Farmington schools and the other a newcomer - will rise to leadership positions in the Farmington Public Schools during the next few weeks.

The two, Gayle Zimmerer and Susan Johnson, will both become building principals beginning in the winter semester.

Zimmerer is a kindergarten teacher and staff development employee in Farmington. Johnson is an elementary principal from the Wayne-Westland school district.

Each will have one or more weeks to work with her predecessor before beginning regular duties.

ZIMMERER WILL be principal at the Alameda Early Childhood Center, and Johnson principal at Eagle Elementary School. The appointments were approved by the school board Nov. 21.

"I have some dreams and some considerations to think about for the future," said Zimmerer, a West Bloomfield resident who has taught most recently at Alameda, while working on special staff training projects.

There's some new exciting things

we can grab and run with."

Zimmerer was waiting to see how early childhood programs at the new Hillside Elementary would be handled, to see how her school might be affected, she said.

A BRIGHTON resident, Johnson is looking forward to her new challenge at Eagle Elementary, where she will replace the retiring Frank Kasun.

Eagle serves students in Farmington Hills and several neighborhoods in the southeast corner of West Bloomfield Township.

Johnson "likes" challenges and likes diversity," she said.

"I usually approach anything I do with high energy and high expectations," she said. "I place high expectations on myself. And I really feel strongly about kids feeling good about themselves - the same with staff."

"That's kind of a trademark." Johnson has spent her entire 29-year career with the Wayne-Westland schools. She is making a big change in coming to Farmington.

In Westland, she was teacher and principal at both junior high and elementary levels. She has served as principal of Stottmeyer Elementary in Westland for the past three years.

ZIMMERER REPLACES Mary Lou Sommerville, who has moved to the same position at Fairview Early Childhood Center. Former Fairview principal Richard Rutter has been appointed principal at the new Hillside Elementary, scheduled to open next fall.

Zimmerer has worked as a kindergarten teacher most recently at Alameda, but also taught classes at

Fairview and has handled developmental kindergarten classes as well. Since coming to Farmington in 1987, she also taught first graders at Gill Elementary, was a community education preschool teacher and also taught at the fourth grade level.

In addition to kindergarten teaching, Zimmerer has also worked in the staff development/training area, working with other early childhood level teachers.

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