

Building blocks

FHS kids adjust to college-style schedule

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Their daily planners are dripping ink, but Farmington High students and staff are well filled with knowledge of navigating around the block.

The high school instituted a new collegiate-style block schedule this year. Each class is covered in one 47-minute meeting on Mondays and 84-minute sessions over two days.

That frees up time to take seven instead of six classes and participate in Student Managed Academic Resource Time (SMART), which offers twice-a-week enrichment courses.

Students say they like spending more time on subjects. Teachers add the reconfiguration makes kids — as well as themselves — manage time more effectively.

"When we started, I thought 84 minutes was a

long time to sit down and learn," said junior Megan Lewis. "Now I like it."

"I thought the teacher would lecture for 84 minutes, but you have the opportunity to do other things."

The run on throat lozenges in the teacher's lounge has been limited, though. Educators revel in the fact their instruction isn't a five-days a week 55-minute dash before the bell.

'I thought 84 minutes was a long time to sit down and learn. . . Now I like it.'

Megan Lewis
—Farmington High junior



though the concept is not entirely new. Birmingham Groves and Monroe High have similar scheduling programs.

A consultant Susan Lentz has been hired to monitor this year and offer suggestions if there are any bugs, said Mary Brown, a high school adminis-

trative assistant. There have been a few snafus.

For instance, some kids are waiting until the last minute to sign up for SMART courses.

SMART time is used on tutoring, academic club meetings, physical fitness, and special presentations. Recent special attractions included a play about divorce and separation and a seminar on the history of the automobile.

SMART is a graduate requirement. "You can't expect a major institutional change and everything to go *la de da*," Brown said.

"I think there are a few kids we haven't reached with this. . . When we walk through the halls, though, we see kids getting help."

That's one selling point for freshman Kara Varilone, who fits in SMART on Tuesday and Thursday.

Varilone turns in her blue slip to Callahan to validate her SMART participation during a 14-minute core session. The freshman is joined by

'I can't believe I taught like that (before block scheduling).'

Caryn Callanan
—Farmington High Spanish teacher



No mental block here: Farmington High freshman Kara Varilone does schoolwork during Student Managed Academic Resource Time (SMART). The new block program allows students to take seven classes instead of six.

STAFF PHOTO BY BRADLEY LEMISTE

sophomores, juniors and seniors during the abbreviated period.

She takes regular subjects English, French I, Biology, and World History on Wednesdays and Fridays while

Health, Geometry and Art are dealt with on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"It lowers stress," Varilone said. "If you need help in a particular subject, you can get it."

Another student agrees. Megan Lewis and others said they plan a week in advance.

"It teaches you to take advantage of situations you wouldn't normally have," Lewis said.

Success of the program will be measured by test scores. As far as student attitudes, though, the staff sought answers by rummaging through trash bins.

At the beginning of the year, each student was given a planner to write in assignments.

"We didn't see 150 of them thrown in the trash can at the end of the week," Brown said. "Kids are using them."

Knollenberg advisor returns to consulting

Welday joins Mich. firm as a vice president

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Paul Welday will no longer be U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg's top advisor, but he won't be far away.

Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, announced Jan. 14 that his top political advisor and chief of staff is leaving his office to join the Michigan-based Republican political consulting firm, Market Strategies, Inc.

Welday, 38, who recently served as campaign director for Ronne Romney's bid for the U.S. Senate and has managed many campaigns across the country at all levels, will join the nationally renowned survey research and consulting firm as vice president of politics and public policy.

"We focus quite a bit on candidates," Welday said from his Farmington Hills home. "What I bring to the firm is someone who has used research and applied strategy to achieve an outcome. Congressman Knollenberg's campaign committee will be one of my main clients."

Welday served as Knollenberg's chief of staff for three years and managed the congressman's Capitol Hill and district offices.

He also served as a campaign consultant in Knollenberg's first successful run for Congress in 1992 when Knollenberg shocked the political establishment by defeated two well-known, well-financed opponents (then state Sen. David Honigman and ex-Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert) in the GOP primary before winning the general election against Walter O. Briggs IV.

"Paul Welday has been an outstanding public servant for the people of the 11th District," Knollenberg said. "He is a great policy and political advisor whose counsel has been instru-



Paul Welday

'He is a great policy and political advisor whose counsel has been instrumental to me.'

Joe Knollenberg
—U.S. Congressman, R-Bloomfield Township

mental to me. I will miss his day-to-day advice and leadership in our office, but I am pleased to know he will continue to work closely with me on political matters."

Welday plans to remain involved with Knollenberg by playing a key role in future campaigns.

Welday has done political consulting before with his own firm. He graduated from Farmington High School in 1976 and Michigan State University in 1981. He was an intern to former U.S. Rep. Jack Kemp, worked for Dick Headlee's gubernatorial

campaign and has lived in Farmington and Farmington Hills for more than 30 years.

He also ran unsuccessfully for the 37th District State House seat in 1990.

Welday lives with his wife, Rhonda, and son, Nicholas, 3, in Farmington Hills.

Logistically, he said the new job will work out well because he will work for the most part out of the Southfield offices of Market Strategies, Inc.

"This was a nice blend with about 40 percent of my time being in Washington and 60 percent in Michigan," he said. "That was the beautiful thing for me. My primary office is just 10 minutes away."

Knollenberg also announced that Trent Wisecup, 26, is returning to his staff following a stint as communications director to Ronne Romney's senate campaign.

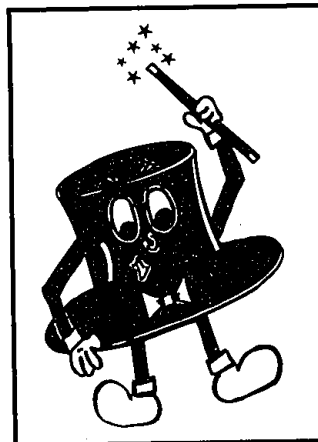
Wisecup, who previously served as a legislative assistant and press secretary in Knollenberg's Capitol Hill office, will now become a special projects coordinator in the congressman's Farmington Hills office.

Wisecup is a Michigan native and Michigan State University graduate.

Knollenberg has also hired Birmingham-native Amanda Barnett, 26, to handle issues relating to his foreign operations appropriations sub panel.

A graduate of Bloomfield Hills Andover High and the University of Michigan, Barnett moves over from Michigan Congressman Dave Camp's office.

Barnett, who served with the Republican Committee of Oakland County in 1992, also has a master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University.



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