

# Welcoming the team

## Words, workshops fire up teachers for opening of school year

For three days last week, new teachers in Farmington Public Schools learned about key mission statement goals, such as teamwork and commitment, to doing whatever it takes to help all students excel in the classroom.

### FARMINGTON SCHOOLS

But, just as importantly, the orientation workshop sessions at the Farmington Training Center also reminded the newcomers that it is OK to try innovative educational forays — even if they don't always hit the target at first.

Illustrating that stance, Superintendent Bob Maxfield, on the first day of orientation, handed out business cards with the following message imprinted on them:

"I Blew It! I tried something new and innovative and it didn't work as well as I wanted ... This card entitles me to be free of criticism for my efforts. I'll continue to pursue ways to help our district be successful."

According to newly hired teachers, they appreciate being so encouraged to pursue different teaching paths.

"This card you passed out, 'I Blew It!', just the fact you brought it up and said 'It's OK,' that tends to open the doors" to develop better ways to teach, said Scott Stautler, a new teacher at Beechview Elementary School. Stautler and other teachers gave comments about their first impressions of Farm-



**Pep talk:** During the orientation, Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield and new district teachers got to know more about each other and what is expected of them in the classroom.

ington Public Schools.

Maria Koepfen, one of the estimated 75 new teachers, and who will teach seventh-grade social studies at East Middle School, said the "I Blew It!" philosophy is a good one, "as long as you learn from a small mistake you made."

Maxfield said he likes to distribute the cards to let teachers know the district wants them to "have fun, grow and

take chances."

Being innovative is an important component of the district's mission statement that was highlighted throughout the orientation. But so was commitment to the every-kid-counts covenant and the notion that a top level of instruction is expected from the start.

Covenant

"We make that clear connection for them," said Jerry Fouchey, director of curriculum and staff development. "Working with us is more than a contract. It's a covenant. It's an agreement between folks to do whatever needs to be done so that all kids learn what's important for them to know."

"It's also important that they understand the notion of this team, this family we work with here."

Forest Elementary School principal Lloyd Lewis said there are definite benefits that can be obtained from an orientation "more elaborate than any other district I'm aware of."

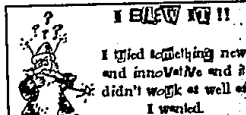
Lewis said the sessions create "an instant support group" as well as the setting of "a very, very common mission" not just for incoming teachers, but all recently hired district employees. For new members of the school district family, the chance to have lunch with immediate supervisors and mingle with other additions to the faculty proved both invaluable and energizing.

More than one mentioned getting even more charged-up about the Monday, Aug. 31, opening of the 1998-99 school year because of the sessions.

**Here's what they say**

Following is a sampling of what teachers were saying about the orientation on the final day:

■ Linda Kurpiński, Forest Elementary School: "These three days have really served to empower all of us ... You have said very clearly that we're important, or we wouldn't be here. And that each child is valued, that each



**Keep trying:** This card, handed out to teachers during orientation, entitles them to take risks without worry of criticism.

employee is valued. That's a real comfortable feeling walking into the classroom."

■ Alisha Hill, Harrison High School: "Our jobs are (among) the most important in society. If we are to be expected to do them with knowledge and skill, then we need to be prepared adequately. And this just fits right in with that."

■ Myra Anderson, East Middle School: "It was very informative and gave us a chance to bond with people in our school so we're not walking in feeling we don't know anybody ... Just to know (that) all the support and resources are here, it was very, very nice."

■ Benjamin Knapp, who is moving over from a Detroit-based charter school to teach music at Beechview Elementary School: "It's nice to be in a system where you have a whole building for teacher training. (At the charter school) we didn't even have mentors."

■ Camille Jackson, Longacre Elementary School: "This is great, I'm ready to go."

## School board begins search for successor

Now that Farmington Board of Education Secretary Joseph Svoke has stepped down from the panel, work begins immediately on finding his successor.

Svoke announced Tuesday night that he was resigning from the school board, effective at the end of the meeting, to avoid the potential for conflict of interest between the school district and his new employer, RCI Electric of Farmington Hills.

The company, later in Tuesday's meeting and with Svoke abstaining, was awarded a \$1 million bid for electrical work for phase two of bond issue-related construction at Farmington High School.

Board President Cathy Webb said the board is planning to select a successor at a special meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 2, following two days of interviews with candidates. If a choice cannot be made before Sept. 7, the process will be taken over by Oakland Schools.

"As he resigns tonight, the clock starts running tomorrow" on the 20-day deadline, Webb said.

Applications will be available at the district offices, located at 32500 Shiloh, until 4:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 31. The first round of interviews will take place 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday,

Sept. 1, with a second round scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, and conclude whenever a decision is made.

Whoever gets the nod will serve until the June 1999 school board election. At that time, voters will elect someone to serve the final year of Svoke's term, which expires in 2000.

Maxfield said there "is no one profile" the board will be looking at for the successor to Svoke. Candidates could include those who have previously run for school board, those who "maybe thought about" running in the past but didn't want to make a long-term commitment and others who merely have a strong interest in education.

"If there's a message, there is no one profile," Maxfield said. "I'm sure the board is going to look for a commitment to the community, an interest in the future of the school system."

Application forms and procedure sheets for those interested in the position will be posted in every school district building, both branches of the Farmington Community Library, on the district Web site and on cable TV-10. For more information, call (248) 489-3331.

## Svoke from page A1

nation. The mutual respect was evident.

"Joe is wearing a tie with stars on it," noted veteran trustee Jack Inch. "And that's appropriate. He's been a star on this board."

Earlier Tuesday, Webb described Svoke as a "class act ... We are really sad to see him go."

According to Svoke, who will remain a leader with Farmington Youth Assistance, he fretted for weeks about whether or not it would be appropriate for him to continue his term.

He decided it wasn't worth the worry, even though RCI and a legal counsel assured him that there would not be any conflict of interest — with proper steps in place to keep Svoke from being involved in any company matter related to Farmington Public Schools.

Taking time to double check items over and above the normal course of action, just to prevent any appearance of impropriety, is a waste," Svoke continued. "... This time can be better spent on making this school district the best in the nation."

Svoke based his resignation speech on themes of the district's mission statement, including being a team player, lifelong learner and responsible citizen. He emphasized the importance that board members be role models for young people by following these same guidelines.

Being a "lifelong learner" was one reason he decided to leave the manufacturing field after 30 years.

"The challenge is great and the excitement is extremely high with his new job as a project man-

ager," Svoke said. "These are two elements I greatly needed at this time of my life and are two elements I was willing to accept even though it meant starting over."

Before concluding, Svoke thanked the community for its support during his six-year tenure.

"Over the years, your words have stuck with me," Svoke said. "Sincere, caring, from the heart, down to earth, (asking) tough questions." You deserve the best. I don't feel you'd be getting the best if you spent time wondering or doubting my actions as a board member."

As Svoke starts over, so will the school

board. With state law requiring the district make an appointment within 20 days or else pass that decision over to Oakland Schools, a 20-day search for a successor began Wednesday.

Webb said an appointment is expected to be made the first week of September, following public interviews, with that person serving until the June 1999 school election. At that time, someone will be elected to serve the final year of Svoke's term.

Just before Tuesday's meeting concluded, Linda Enberg was named to immediately take over Svoke's job as board secretary for the rest of 1998-99.

## Walled Lake hires new assistant superintendent

Walled Lake Schools has a new assistant superintendent.

Michael Beauchamp has been recommended to replace Steven Gaynor, who became superintendent of Royal Oak Schools in July.

Though formal approval of the position wasn't expected until this week, Beauchamp began work Aug. 10.

Beauchamp was one of 54 candidates to apply and nine to be interviewed for the position. His pay, which has yet to be determined, will range from \$89,385 to \$103,061.

Since 1993, Beauchamp has been an elementary school principal in Royal Oak. He was also a junior assistant principal and coordinator for Royal Oak's alternative high school.

"He had experience in all three levels — elementary, middle school and high school," said Lois Lango, district spokeswoman, "and that is a definite plus since this position requires his supervision of all the principals K-12."

"He can hit the ground running with all the issues facing Oakland County," she added. Beauchamp has a bachelor's degree in liberal science and arts from the University of Michigan, a master of arts degree in curriculum and instruction from Michigan State University and a doctorate of education degree from Wayne State University.

**Other hires**

Also on the scheduled for hire this week regular meeting were additional assistant principals at both district high schools. Central and Western high schools already have two assistant principals. A third will be added to each this fall.

"We added an additional assistant principal at each high school because they're getting bigger," Lange said.

District officials chose to expand the schools rather than build new ones.

"The population there has been steadily growing," Lange said.

From February, 1997, to February, 1998, enrollment at the schools increased by a total of 119 students with 1,465 at Central and 1,732 at Western.

Robert Bull, an assistant principal at Howell High School in Howell, was recommended for the Central position and Donald Learmont, an assistant principal at Wayne Memorial High School in Wayne, was recommended for the Western position. The two were selected from 64 applicants across the state. Their salaries will range from \$72,752 to \$83,519.

Also at least 27 new teacher hires were before the board partly to fill the vacancies created by two new district middle schools which open this fall.

Seventeen teachers were hired by the Walled Lake schools including eight elementary teachers, three middle school instructors, four high school teachers and two special services instructors at the previous board meeting in July at an average salary of \$32,544 each.



Now through Monday, August 31

## august mink sale

mahogany mink coat

\$3,675

ranch mink coat

\$2,350

ranch mink bomber jacket

\$1,675

mink short coat

\$1,675

Imported furs labeled to show country of origin.

Complimentary monogramming and basic alterations.

enjoy the advantages

Ask about our Outerwear Payment Advantage and Extended Payment Account.

celebrating 130 years

# Jacobson's

Birmingham • (248) 644-6900 Livonia • (734) 591-7696 Rochester • (248) 651-6000

SHOPPING HOURS • MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON

Gift Certificates Complimentary Silver Gift box Jacobson's Charge