

## Wm. Grace to pilot all-day K

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William Grace Elementary School will pilot all-day kindergarten in 2001-02 in order to study whether increasing the level of educational services is beneficial in the long run.

National research and support from the school community are key factors in the decision to pilot the program, said Judith White, assistant superintendent of instruction for Farmington Public Schools.

Piloting all-day kindergarten also is one of the recommendations of the district's recently unveiled Early Childhood Study.

"Overall, it's got good potential for being a pretty powerful early intervention strategy," said White, adding that all schools were considered for the pilot.

Kindergartners will have more time to be included in a wide variety of student support services, such as those for reading recovery, bilingual education and "gifted" children.

The district will monitor how well students do in the expanded setting and look at "the number of kids experiencing the need for extra support" no matter where they fall on the achievement scale, White said.

The concept apparently is a winning one with William Grace parents, said Principal Mark Morawski, who sent out letters about the announcement to homes on Thursday. He estimated that about 75 to 80 percent of those parents surveyed during 1999-2000 about all-day kindergarten said they would welcome it into their school.

Morawski said there will be a parent information meeting in the William Grace media center, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28. That week (beginning 8 a.m. Monday, Feb. 26) is kindergarten roundup.

"The reaction has been very positive," Morawski continued. "But a few people have been questioning whether that's good for their kids. They'll still have a choice."

### Parent meeting Feb. 28

Parents will also be able to enroll kids in a traditional half-day program at Alameda Early Childhood Center. The immediate goal is to have enough enrollment for two all-day sessions in 2001-02.

Many of the 40 kindergartners enrolled at William Grace this year already stay at the school for the entire day, in the half-day tuition-based enrichment program, Educare.

White stressed the need for the pilot program to take root, so that meaningful data can be generated.

Kindergarten registration throughout the district will be held 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, Feb. 26, through Friday, March 2. Morawski can be reached at (248) 489-3747.

## Race from A4

post. "It's a lot easier to bring a videotape into a courtroom than to sit on the stand and try to explain what happened," Goss said.

Police are also finding the tapes to be of use when a motorist claims to have been singled out based on race.

"The majority of evidence for this is anecdotal," Goss said. "And oftentimes we find it had nothing to do with race."

Farmington Hills training officer Brian Bastianelli said "racial profiling becomes alleged when somebody feels singled out." Officers are trained to be ultra-professional and courteous when making traffic stops, Bastianelli said. "We teach officers not to get baited into arguments."

Goss said suburban officers, having less serious crime to attend to than Detroit officers, can afford to be stricter in traffic enforcement. Consequently, Detroit residents may well be stopped in the suburbs for something they routinely get away with in Detroit.

When that happens "there's an inclination there to believe they were pulled over for their race or creed," Goss said.

Dwyer and Goss want to be sure that doesn't happen in their departments.

"We're a community-oriented police department," Dwyer said. "We don't stop people just to stop people."

## Forest Elementary parents pan platooning, teaming of 4th, 5th graders

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Forest Elementary School parents publicly criticized the system of fourth-fifth grade "platooning," or "teaming" as one that is failing their children.

The concerns are being seriously examined, said Forest Principal Lloyd Lewis, adding that such criticism of the system, in its 10th year, has been more the exception than the rule. Lewis wants to meet with the parents soon.

"We will respond," Lewis said.

"What the resolution will be, we don't know yet."

Several parents, during the Farmington school board study session on Feb. 6, criticized the system -- where 110 students in fourth and fifth grade make the rounds to five classrooms, rather than remaining with a single teacher all day. They said the system is faulty because it leads to "constant mental gear-switching" and a loss in valuable instruction time due to numerous class changes.

One parent said he worried

about students being "shuffled around at that teaching moment," while several indicated Forest students are suffering in their development of language arts skills such as writing and spelling because of the system.

What is clear from the board meeting is that some parents are not satisfied. "If this system is so great, why isn't it being taught in our other schools?" parent Bob Stulberg asked school board members.

Stulberg said many parents of current fourth and fifth graders would like to see the system changed. And even third-grade parents are looking for answers.

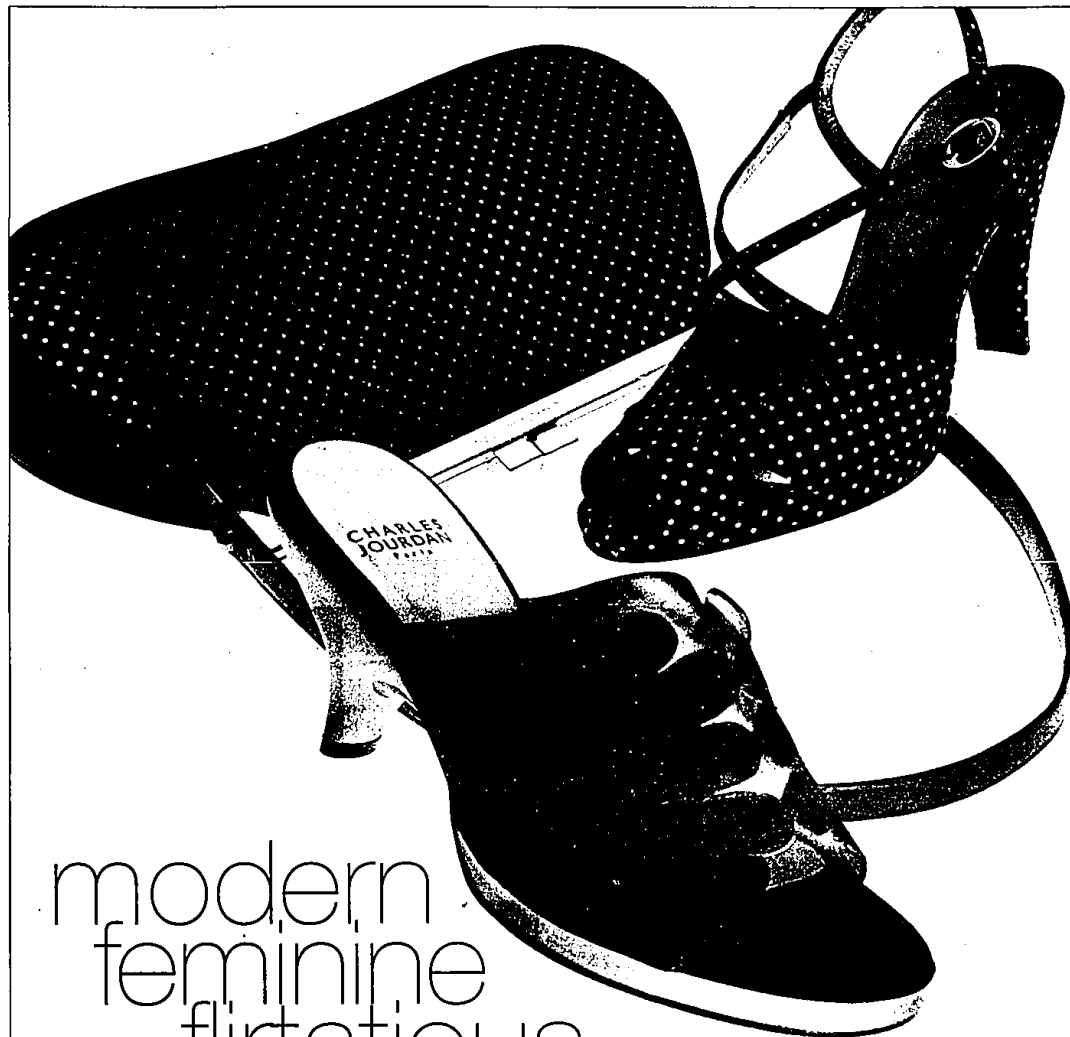
Sue Brusa's daughter has had an exceptional learning experience at Forest so far but worries about next year, when she joins the so-called teaming system.

"I don't want what we've had to end after this year," Brusa, a former teacher, told the board. "I don't want my child to be a guinea pig for a program I don't understand."

During a presentation by parent Linda Stulberg, she said her son has a nightmarish schedule and switches classes seven times a day, more than an older child who attends North Farmington High School.

Lewis became principal at Forest after the system was implemented. He said it has been "generally very, very highly supported" by teachers and parents over the years.

Superintendent Bob Maxfield told parents: "This is a school problem; it's going to be solved at the school by Lloyd and the teachers."



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