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The new Farmington Exchange Club officers were sworn in recently. They are (from left) Edmond Dodson, first vice president; Robert Deadman, president; and James Wibby, outgoing president. (Staff photo)

How district will attack reading problem dilemma

By SUSAN AVERILL

Elementary students who are far ahead of their class in reading skills usually never see a reading specialist. But this is about to change in the Farmington School District.

A new reading program will allow all students to have their skills assessed, problems diagnosed and remedied or challenges prescribed.

"We'll have tests to measure skills and specialists to make prescriptions, almost like a physician," said Larry Freedman, assistant superintendent of elementary schools.

Reading specialists will teach more than remedial skills, with the added help of the teacher.

"The reading specialist will be there to see that we meet the needs of each student in the building," Freedman said. "Whereas before reading specialists zeroed in on the students who had problems and emphasized the remedial, they will now also take a look at that kid at the top of the ladder who needs to be challenged. The talent of the specialists will be shared, and all the students will benefit."

Freedman, who doesn't like "labelling," said that the traditional approach identified reading skills on grade levels without putting the information to effective use.

"LABELLING IS A FALLACY. Forget about labelling. Look at a child and find out what it is he needs to help him grow. You can use the analogy of a doctor.

"You can go to a doctor who will say you're in good health, reasonable health or poor health. But he won't tell you what you should do to regain good health or to maintain it."

Reading specialists would meet a child at his present skill level and help him to improve, whether he's far ahead, far behind or anywhere in between the average reading level for his age.

Remediation will be done when it

Library hours are announced

The Farmington Community Library will resume its winter hours beginning the week of Sept. 1. Both branches of the library will be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Program activities will also begin, including juvenile programs featuring story hours and preschool classes in art and creative dramatics.

Both branches will begin a Junior Great Books discussion this fall.

Program facilities at the new branch library at State and Liberty Streets will begin in January. The new library will have an auditorium for community use, with a 150 person seating capacity.

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