



Thursday, April 5, 1990 (143)

# Superintendent: Education a balancing act

By Amy Rauch  
staff writer

**T**HERE'S A fine line between letting kids be kids and preparing them for the future, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Michael Flanagan told parents and teachers Saturday.

Farmington area parents and teachers gathered at Warner Middle School to discuss how they could work together to improve education.

The spring symposium, "Make The Difference" was hosted by the Farmington PTA Council.

Flanagan was among the presenters for the daylong series of workshops.

"There's a balance and that balance is letting kids play with sleds . . . but also preparing them for a very tough world," he said. "One of the things I struggle with day in and day out is trying to find that balance. "Not allowing kids to be kids is a big worry for me. It's not either/or. You can do both."

Flanagan advocates better communication between children and elderly people as well as an accent on parental interaction.

"Bringing older generations and young kids together at the same time is a tremendous resource not only from the family point of view, but from the learning point of view," Flanagan said.

"It's living history. My son couldn't believe my father was in World War II."

FLANAGAN SAID a child's interaction with a grandparent personalizes history. His son Mike became very interested in American history after a talk with his grandmother.

"I couldn't have planned that motivation as she did accidentally," he said. "I know that we can structure things to do that in the schools."

He suggested a possible early childhood center that serves as a daily senior citizens center, providing an opportunity for interaction between the young and old.

"Teachers are wonderful, but that's not what we should be hanging our hat on," Flanagan said. "Don't count on (teachers) alone."

"Think about your role in education. You, as a parent, are the vital link."

Parents had a positive reaction to the seminar.

"It reinforces my belief that parents should be involved with their kids," said Molly Vittar, who has two children in Farmington schools.

"Kids look at education as more important when parents are involved."

"It's a real shot in the arm to realize that self-esteem is the important thing for your child's success," said Sue Leonard, who had just attended the self-esteem awareness session, "Hooray for Me." The PTA member said she would bring home a lot more hugs for her children.

"I'm here to learn how to learn easier approaches to parenting . . . how to bring the PTA into the secondary schools," said Debbie Cornwell, PTA president at Longacre Elementary.

**EDUCATORS FROM** around the state brought their ideas to Farmington as well.

"We say that parents are important, but we don't always include them," said Herbert Moyer, superintendent of Education for Bedford Schools and education commission chairman for the Michigan PTA.

"We want to promote a stronger parent bond with the system and the PTA is the best road for that."

The symposium's keynote speaker, psychologist Louise Reid Ritchie, said by being sensitive to our own needs, parents can help children be sensitive to their needs and to those of others.

Gerald Kaplan, DELTA coordinator for the Farmington Public Schools Achievement Project, discussed children who are at high risk for underachievement and how to predict underachievement in preschoolers.

Suzanne Dreon of the Farmington Area Advisory Council discussed parenting as well as the challenge of encouraging children and guiding them in a healthy direction, with love and humor.

Sherry Samson of Michigan Metro Girl Scouts discussed human sexuality and prevention of teenage pregnancy.



Michael Flanagan



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Gerald Kaplan, Farmington schools DELTA coordinator, talks about children who are at a high risk for underachievement.



RANDY BORSI/staff photographer

Suzanne Dreon of the Farmington Area Advisory Council talks about parenting and the challenge of encouraging children and guiding them in a healthy direction, with love and humor.

## inkwell

**Inkwell** provides news about Farmington-area primary and secondary students and education issues. The column appears monthly as part of the Observer's "School Page." Send news items to The School Page, Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024. Include a telephone number where a contact person can be reached during the day. Items will not be taken over the phone.

● **Farmington High ranks**  
Farmington High students have taken four of six top spots in the Stock Market Game, a statewide contest for secondary schools sponsored by Eastern Michigan and Central Michigan universities and several businesses.

Farmington teams took first, second, fourth and sixth places in the contest in which 105 teams competed. A North Farmington High team took third place.

● **student anchors**  
Victor Creech, a fourth grade student at Forest Elementary, and Jodie Klein, a sixth grader at Warner Middle School, appeared as news anchors on the Channel 50 Newbreak program recently.

Renee Scholchit, a fourth grader at Highmeadow, will appear later this year. These Farmington Public Schools students were selected to represent their schools on the basis of their award-winning essays on the topic, "Why It's Important to Know the News."

● **special paintings**  
A special education scouting troop at William Grace Elementary in Farmington Hills painted spring scenes on the windows at Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers on Orchard Lake Road near 10 Mile recently.

The activity was a step toward the scouts' goal of earning a Wolf Badge by performing a community service.

● **money raised**  
Students from Thomas Beahan Junior High in Farmington participated in the Math-A-Thon to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, raising \$3,509.

Seven students will win tote bags and t-shirts for bringing in \$100 or more. Fifty-one students will be awarded t-shirts for contributing donations of \$25 or more.

Also at Beahan, students in grades seven and eight participated in the

Michigan Mathematics League Contest recently. Fourteen Beahan students received superior ratings for their performance in the band competition held Feb. 27.

● **historical visit**  
Time travelers from historical Greenfield Village visited Eagle Elementary School March 12-13, providing an exciting way for first, second and third graders to travel back in time without ever leaving their classrooms.

The Farmington Public Schools students were given the opportunity to experience and investigate people of the past through various artifacts and tools of the time.

● **chess club**  
Fourth and fifth graders at Wood Creek Elementary in Farmington Hills have formed a Wood Creek Chess Club, giving students a positive experience each Monday before school.

● **German festival**  
The combined Harrison, Farmington and North Farmington German classes had a successful day at the German Festival in Ann Arbor in March. Students won a total of seven prizes for first, second and third place in several events.

Jennifer Bonmarito from Farmington won first prize for painting; Kelvin Chou of North Farmington won a third place in Level IV speaking. Jeff Sung of North Farmington won a second place in Level III poetry. Gary Kunzer of Farmington won a first place in Level IV reading. Ashish Panchal of Farmington won a second place in Level II poetry, and Jeff Glen of Harrison won a first place in Level II poetry.

North Farmington students Chou, Sung, Brent Novak, Scott Billecke, Phil Blonden and Chris Chung won a first place for their Level III commercial.

● **students lauded**  
The Eagle Elementary staff hosted a breakfast March 23, to honor students receiving Certificates of Recognition for their performance on state skill tests in math, reading and science.

Eighteen fourth and fifth grade students received written letters of congratulations; certificates will be presented during the annual awards assembly.

● **Amazon studies**  
Fourth graders in Susan Barch's class at Gill Elementary in Farmington Hills became inspired to save the rain forests through their recent study of the Amazon region. A white Elephant Sale on March 9 raised \$305 which students are sending to help the effort.

Each \$30 raised means one acre of rain forest is added to a preserve where it will be protected," Barch said. "We never dreamed we would raise as much as we did."

Students promoted the White Elephant Sale themselves, and made maps of the Amazon to better understand the problem.

● **Ports nominated**  
Power Middle School teacher Marty Ports has been nominated by the Farmington Education Association to receive the state Elizabeth Sidel Award and national AppleGate-Dorros Award.

The awards are offered by the FEA's state and national associations for activities leading to improvement in the area of peace and international understanding.

● **special lesson**  
In March, students and staff at Longacre Elementary in Farmington enjoyed "Kids on the Block," a puppet presentation designed to introduce the community to people with a variety of handicaps.

The puppeteers from Clarkston schools introduced Longacre to Renaldo, who is blind, Mandi, who is deaf, and Jennifer, who has a learning disability and difficulty in writing. Through the puppets, students learned how people can overcome disabilities.

● **art lauded**  
Paintings by William Grace Elementary students Michael Clemons and Nicholas Hall were selected recently to be in a statewide elementary art display. The pictures were exhibited in the new Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing before being moved to the Department of Education building for the month of April.

William Grace, in Farmington Hills, also worked on art displays at both branches of the Farmington Community Library to celebrate March as Youth Art Month.

● **cultural visit**  
Japanese mothers from the Farmington community made a presentation of their culture to Elaine Palmer's fifth grade students recently. Students saw a video of a day in a Japanese school, learned about food, and studied Japanese writing and other traditions.

### MEET ARTIST MANUELLA YATES

Saturday, April 7, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Livonia And, at 3-6 p.m., Store for the Home, Birmingham

Manuella, a member of the John Beswick Studio of Royal Doulton, will demonstrate the delicate brush strokes employed by their skilled artisans to create the unique character and expressions of the creatures portrayed. She will also personalize/sign your purchases of Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck, Bunykins, Brambly Hedge and other figurines and dining pieces.

## Jacobson's

We welcome Jacobson's Charge, MasterCard, VISA and American Express. Shop until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.