



Teacher Nancy Pantaleo helps 16-year-old Danielle Komer with an economics question. The new alternative school has a much lower teacher-to-student ratio, with the largest class numbering only 15 students and many classes having less. The school is designed to hold 35 students this year. Many say they wouldn't go to a regular high school.



Seventeen-year-old Sara Witkege uses science skills to determine what is in a small, rectangular box. At right, Adam Hilton

works on the same process as part of a science class at Farmington's alternative high school.

photos by SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Special high school entices kids to learn

By Casey Hans
staff writer

FACED WITH a traditional classroom, some Farmington-area high school students had trouble learning or chose not to attend school at all.

At Farmington's newest high school — home to 35 male and female students ages 16-19 at the Farmington Training Center, coming in downtown Farmington — those same students are opening their eyes to what learning is all about.

The new program, with a small teacher-to-student ratio, is designed to offer more personalized instruction.

There is a lot of kids that would be going to school otherwise," said Vanessa Hill, 22, who previously attended North Farmington High School. "I was never going to the alternative high school, but I started this year."

During the first week, students are given a choice of classes. "I was in the science class," Hill said. "I was in the science class, and I was in the science class."

THE SITUATION — The Farmington Training Center, a 100,000-sq-ft facility, is located in downtown Farmington.

The program is designed to offer more personalized instruction. The school is designed to hold 35 students this year. Many say they wouldn't go to a regular high school.

'I think the kids really feel a part of it, because we're just putting it together.'

Terry Klenz
Assistant principal

in how the school operates.

"I think the kids really feel a part of it, because we're just putting it together," said Terry Klenz, supervisor of adult education. "The department through which the alternative high school is run. The program is being funded by the state."

There have been very supportive teachers, and program is still in its infancy. The program is still in its infancy.

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Teachers for the program appear pleased with the progress. "If you could see the change in the kids from the first week to now — in one week they relaxed," said teacher Nancy Pantaleo, who teaches English and journalism. Pantaleo said one of her goals is to bring speakers into the classroom to show the high school students some of the careers they can make.

ing semester in the first year of the new program. "I've had a lot of experience teaching in a traditional program," she said. "I'm really enjoying the experience. It's a lot more of a challenge, but it's a lot more of a challenge."

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Farmington High custodian Grant Riddell — a member of the staff committee which coordinates the district's new alternative high school — talks with student Mike Cheeseman, 17, and other students before class begins. Members

of the committee had visited the school to see how the new program is progressing. Riddell knows some of the students who formerly attended Farmington High. "They're my kids," he said.

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HOUNDSTOOTH
SHOULDER
BAGS

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