



School logo: Principal Debbie Clarke (right) talks with North Farmington students Jeff Poissant (left), Heather MacFarland and Pat Dolan. "Expect the best" is the school logo.



Front entrance: Students enter North Farmington High School on 13 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

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erage, Clarke said. They are also taking more than the required math and science classes, she said.

Clarke is proud of many good programs at her school. Some of them are: an award-winning computer aided design program; the math lab which provides enrichment and assists students after school; and the homework hotline by which students who are absent, or their parents, can learn what homework is required.

"We reworked the way we use time in the building," Clarke said. On Wednesday mornings, staffers are involved in planning and enrichment sessions.

Last year, Kenbrook Elementary, also in the Farmington district, was one of 19 public elementary schools in Michigan to earn the "exemplary" label.

The program for secondary schools is held on even years, the elementary school recognition on odd years.

Representatives of the school — including students, staff, parents and Farmington Superintendent Michael Flanagan — will attend an awards ceremony in Lansing on Feb. 9.

The state picks exemplary programs based on a record of solid academics, strong leadership, effective working relationships, an orderly atmosphere, and effective resolution of problems during the average schoolday.

"There were many criteria," said Ellen Carter Cooper, state education consultant for school improvement and professional development. "Basically, we looked at national goals and mathematics and science content-rich programs.

"Student climate has a great deal to do with it as well as the dropout rate and what's being done to address it."

### Many applicants

North Farmington was among 29 applicants this year. Applicants were required to identify goals, show proof of parental involvement and explain how they inspire staff, Cooper said.

Some 15 Michigan schools were honored this year.

North Farmington High officials were required to provide information going back three years. Clarke has been North Farmington principal for almost that length of time. Previously, Clark was assistant principal of Ypsilanti High School.

A further sampling of North Farmington's quality is evident in a student assistance group, study skills help, substance abuse assistance and a newcomers program, school counselor Barry Mussato said.

"We have an excellent school-community partnership," Mussato added.

By consensus with principals from the other Farmington district schools, North Farmington High School was the only secondary-level school to apply.

North Farmington High also recently created "zero hour" which allows students to add an additional hour to their school day beginning at 6:40 a.m.

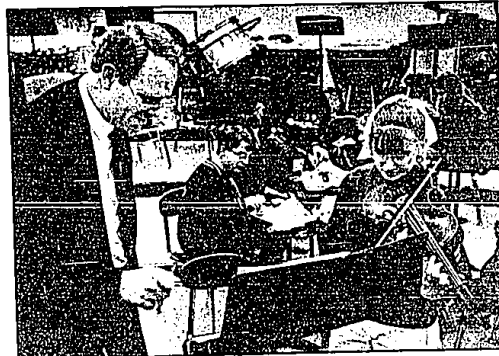
"More than 97 percent of our kids exceed graduation requirements," Clarke said. "Our dropout rate is one percent."

More than 60 percent of North Farmington High students are involved in extracurricular activities, Clarke said.

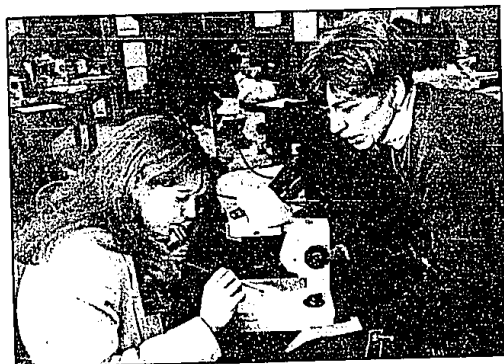
### Classes added

The school continues to add new classes. For example, advanced placement physics, advanced placement English 11, Tech Prep for CAD and medical skills, which earn college credits and Japanese distance learning via a satellite program based in Nebraska have been added in the last three years.

The application meant hours of work over a two-month period beginning in September and filing a 30-plus page form. The process was accomplished by a committee of 30 staff members, students and parents, which in essence helped the school to review itself.



Practice makes perfect: Lisa Stone practices viola straight through her lunch break as teacher Carl Gippert watches. A high percentage of North students participate in activities.



Strong science: Teacher Jenny Lambert (right) watches student Lauren Kaplan sort fruit flies in a biology lab. Good math and science helped North Farmington win the award.



In control: From his control room teacher Dean Cobb instructs students on video production.



Video link: An "interactive" German class links the three public high schools in the Farmington District. The class originates at North, but teacher Frau Schneider is located at Harrison.

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