Flanagan from page 13A

since then, though Flanagan said he spends even more time on the job than he did in Farmington where 14-hour days weren't unusual.

The intermediate school district in Wayne addresses educational issues for a half-million students and 30,000 teachers, including those in such disparate school systems as Detroit and Grosse Pointe. Wayne County RESA also operates its own Head Start and special education programs.

Flanagan has become the agency's focal point.

The clout of the position allows him bountiful access in Washington D.C. and in Lansing, where he also enjoyed the state political scene as the Farmington superintendent.

Flanagan's already been appointed to a federal task force dealing with health care for children, the only kindergarten through 12th grade administrator on the committee.

He's set an ambitious agenda for himself.

Already, he's planned visits to the agency's special education and Head Start centers. And, similar to what he did in Farmington, he intends to stop in for a full day at all 34 school districts in Wayne County.

One is paramount on his list — the Detroit Public Schools.

"Some of it is symbolic," he said. "I think it's my job to be proactive and reach out to Detroit."

Though immersed in his new position, there's a part of Flanagan that hasn't left Farmington. He talks to new superintendent C. Robert Maxfield occasionally.

He also keeps tabs on the latest rumblings. He's aware Farmington High principal Jim Myers and district employee relations director Sue Zurvalec are being considered for superintendent jobs in Chelsea and Ferndale, respectively.

Flanagan is also proud of the state of the district when he left in December, especially the fact Farmington will not have to ask taxpayers for a millage as in Southfield.

He has a few regrets, though.

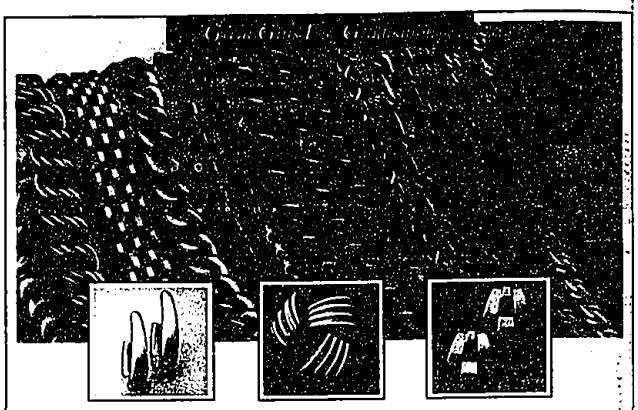
One is that he didn't attend Maxfield's appointment, seeing it as a chance to pass the torch. Flanagan said he was discouraged from doing so.

Michael Flanagan

"In hindsight, I would've gone to Bob's appointment night," Flanagan said. "I wasn't told I couldn't go. I think it was well-intentioned . . . ."

He also wished he'd been able to stick around a little longer.

"I regret this (job) didn't open up a few years later," he said.



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