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an opportunity for tutorial... Talk to (kids) about the choices they made for SMART time, about using that time wisely.

Chance for discussion between students and teachers also exists in the core group period, which ends SMART blocks on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Barrett detailed a possible scenario, in which a teacher approached a student who failed biology, but who didn't attend SMART blocks on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"We're encouraging responsibility on part of the student, to find out, seek out," Barrett said. "We offer these opportunities. Come and take advantage of them."

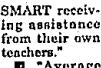
According to Judy White, assistant superintendent of instruction, focus groups discovered that same trend between students at both ends of the achievement scale. "Perhaps they are lower achieving because they do not seek assistance and prefer not to work hard."

White added that: SMART is "an experiment in student managed time, and not all students are equally good" at that; that the program is constantly being "tweaked," and that not all faculty "are worried about the benefits" of the concept. "Some really love it."

Barrett said any inconsistent use of SMART time is decreasing as the program becomes more entrenched, however.

Besides, using SMART wisely is a graduation prerequisite: to earn a diploma, students must fulfill a mandate - 75 percent and completely analyze it.

"High-achieving students generally prefer to spend



SMART receiving assistance from their own teachers."

"Average and below-average students tend to resist an eighth period requiring extensive effort. More passive and entertaining sessions, such as movies and speakers, are generally most appealing."

"The teacher could say, 'I'd like you to go to that tutorial, do the biology makeup work next time.' Teachers and parents need to encourage good decisions, too."

Music teacher Norm Logan said more students are increasingly making better academic choices for SMART slots, rather than opting for "fluff stuff" such as movies.

"You know what you need to do, so go do it," Logan said.

In GreenTree's report, however, SMART isn't yet perfect.

Some of Axelrad-Lenz's findings included the following:

■ "Students most in need of using SMART to obtain extra help are least likely to use it for this purpose."

■ "SMART's use for enrichment purposes has some problems... it is time-consuming for faculty to prepare quality open enrichment sessions."

■ "High-achieving students

the time must be in activities with an academic link; there is a carrot of free time for the remaining 25 percent.

Students who "fail" SMART must attend summer sessions, but only to make up time to reach the 75-percent minimum, "as opposed to failing it for academic reasons," Barrett explained.

"We're encouraging responsibility on part of the student, to find out, seek out," Barrett said. "We offer these opportunities. Come and take advantage of them."

"Some students choose to take drugs. They choose to skip school. They choose not to avail themselves of the help you have to offer. Do you drag them as 16-year-olds to the table and say, 'You must do this, or do you allow them to make those choices? We need to let them learn from their mistakes."

GreenTree will do another evaluation of teachers and students at FHS this year. But White guarded against people making premature judgments about the effectiveness of block scheduling and SMART time, because the district wants to collect hard data over several years and completely analyze it.

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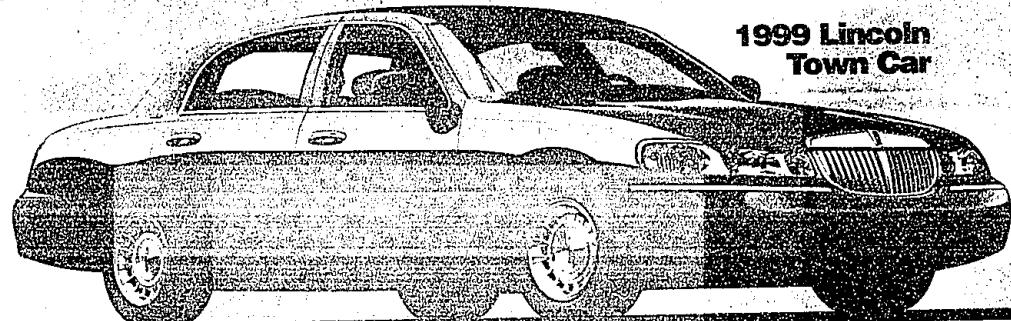
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