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year from 1,047 to 1,098. In the Farmington district, the addition hours will be spread among the school year's 185 days.

Actually, Gaughan's older sons, Farmington High School students Brian and Eric, will begin school during 2000-01 at 7:30 a.m. — exactly 10 minutes earlier this year. The school day will conclude eight minutes later, at 2:23 p.m.

Meanwhile, her youngest son, Gill Elementary School student Andrew, next year will start school six minutes earlier, at 8:15 a.m., and end it 10 minutes later, at 3:23 p.m.

Because the Gaughan family puts so much value on extracurriculars, as do many families in the district, the later end of the day likely will make the job of shuttling kids from activity to activity even more harrowing than it already is. Brian is involved in the theater and drama program at FHS, while Eric is on the soccer and track teams and is involved in music and band. Andrew already is playing soccer at the elementary school level, too.

She isn't complaining, though. "I really don't have a problem with kids having more instruction in their day," Gaughan continued. "But there's more to learning than (class time). They learn a lot in extracurriculars like student council, sports and music."

According to Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield, because education unions aren't anxious to add days onto the school year,

It was decided to split the extra minutes by beginning school days sooner and ending them later, although the actual amounts differ from building to building.

increasing the length of the day is the only real alternative.

But Maxfield understands why parents, and students, might be hesitant to embrace the schedule changes.

Earlier starts for everybody

"It's not popular," Maxfield said. "... When do you fit in the kid's orthodontal appointment?" Maxfield and other school officials knew last year what was coming down the pike. A committee was formed to look into how the added hours could best be spread over the district. Comprising the committee were assistant superintendents, department directors and association leaders, who identified all possible options and gathered data regarding the feasibility, acceptability and cost of the options.

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The district announced the new schedule in May, rather than August, "because this could have some implications on child care," Maxfield said.

One area where the changes will have an impact is transportation, but Farmington schools Transportation Supervisor Bill Tousey does not foresee any major difficulties.

All elementary school students are required to be at their bus stops six minutes before they are picked up; middle and high school students must be at bus stops 10 minutes earlier than pick-up times. Those requirements will not change.

Tousey also said there probably won't be any additional routes or drivers (74 each during 1999-2000), but he added that employees will log about 18 minutes more per day. "The district is projecting that the extra minutes will cost nearly \$71,000 in hourly wages."

"We just have to adjust the drivers' times," Tousey explained. "... They'll just have to start their runs earlier. We worked it out with the contract. We'll just pay them for the time they work."

The transportation department has staggered times for routes to elementary, middle and high schools.

"It's all within the framework of what we have now," Tousey said.

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as one of the filthiest, most cluttered places they have ever seen. The documentation is typical of an obsessive, preferential molester, Mackie said. It won't all be used in the on-going investigation, which she expects to continue for at least a year.

"We won't listen to the audio tapes because there's no way to determine who the boys are," Mackie said. "He geared the conversations so they would talk about ways they would torture someone."

The video tapes show Thompson with young men who appear to be in their upper teens or early 20s.

"The fantasy is always one of two things," Mackie said. "It lands him in a position where he loses a bet, and he has to be tortured. On the video, you'll actually see him give out \$200, \$300 or \$400. He scripts the whole thing."

Payment

The torture scenes involved Thompson being tickled, hit in the groin and burned with cigarettes or hot wax, while he was tied down. Assistant Police Chief Chuck Nebus, who oversees the Investigative Bureau, said because Thompson paid young boys and men to torture him, the victims often don't see themselves as having been sexually abused.

That will likely hamper the on-going investigation, and according to Mackie, may have kept Thompson from being charged in the past decade's numerous contacts with other police agencies. She was told by officers in neighboring departments no victims ever came forward.

And hanging around kids, being disturbing, isn't criminal behavior.

Kids might also not think of themselves as victims because they were paid, Mackie said. One man continued to role play with Thompson until he was in his 30s, whenever he needed cash.

"Some of the adult survivors feel responsible and that they should have done something," she said. "But they were convinced he was just into being tortured."

One of Thompson's victims is now in prison for a sexual assault, Nebus said. According to Mackie, others have reported being in counseling, and investigators are concerned some may now be victimizing children as well.

Abused

During 25 hours of interviews, Thompson told Mackie he was abused as a child. While she has some sympathy for the man she describes as "very lonely" with no friends except for children, she also believes he belongs in jail.

An FBI "profiler," called in to determine whether Thompson might have been or may potentially be a serial rapist or murderer, said the best evidence shows he has been doing the same thing for decades and probably will continue to be obsessed the rest of his life. The profiler also indicated it's likely Thompson will eventually commit suicide.

"I don't want to say I like him, but he's wired, too," Mackie said. "He's very addicted to this behavior. I have sympathy for him, but he's had choices, too. I don't feel sorry for him being in jail."

Mackie calls the boys who came forward "heroes," and she has high praise for Schedules Liaison Officer Pat Sidje and a school counselor, who encouraged and supported the victims. Without their testimony, she said, a judge would not have issued the warrant that uncovered their past decade's predatory sexual behavior.

Mackie said because he never physically hurt, penetrated or forced a child to torture him, Thompson doesn't think of himself as an abuser. He has also told her because police released him on previous occasions, he doesn't feel he's done anything wrong.

"For him, it's totally normal," Mackie said.

Daunting task

Not so for the people who have spent countless hours observing the darkest side of Thompson's life. Even for a veteran investigator, the task of unraveling it all seems daunting.

"I've been doing this for 12

years, and this is the largest case I've ever worked on, just in sheer volume," she said. "We took two truckloads of evidence from his apartment. It's exhausting."

Nebus said the investigation has had a dramatic impact on everyone involved. The staff resources required to sift through the evidence mounts daily and will for some time to come. Hundreds of rolls of film found in Thompson's apartment have yet to be developed.

Investigators want to see additional charges filed. They know the victims are out there, but it won't be easy to get them to come forward.

Some of the kids they've seen pictured live in Farmington and Farmington Hills, Mackie said.

Along with the time and expense, the most troublesome impact has been the emotional toll of watching countless hours of torturous sex acts involving children.

"It's not easy. The few times I've watched any of these tapes, it's just sickening," Nebus said. "It doesn't just leave your mind when you go home to dinner. I really admire all of the people who have been involved in this investigation. It's a very dark side of the world to have to be tied with for so long."

At Mackie's desk, the VCR never stops for long. Not far away, a desk drawer is open, revealing a bright, color photograph of two smiling, apple-cheeked little boys.

Her boys. Her life, she says.

Other cases have bothered her more — rape with an unknown assailant or a parent physically abusing a child. The overtime on this one has taken a toll, and Mackie admits the intensity and sheer volume of the work has been exhausting.

Still, it has given her a sense of personal satisfaction to have led the investigation that finally put Jim Thompson behind bars. "I don't think there's anything more satisfying than locking up a child molester or an abuser," she said. "They victimize the innocent."

Anyone who has information about this case or who believes he may have been victimized, should call Mackie at 473-9600.

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Harris to the students, mostly 10th graders. "Hopefully, what you guys have done here will bring awareness to other schools."

The check, for \$620, will probably be used for spinal cord injury research, said Harris, a Westland resident. He didn't serve in Vietnam, but did spend four years with the U.S. Marines (1975-79) before sustaining his spinal cord injury.

According to Smith, who is in her first year at FHS, the penny project was launched to try and gain some perspective on an abstract statistic.

"That's one of the problems whenever you're dealing with history and making the abstract seem real," Smith said. "Especially with numbers. And 58,000 is inconceivable to me, let alone to kids in high school."

Both Kate and Harris agreed with her. "When you think of every penny (symbolizing) a body, it really makes you think about it," Kate said. "What a waste, what a tragedy."

Harris said that, for students learning about 20th century American history, seeing the number 58,000 in a textbook

The two businesses generating the most pennies were Ram's Horn on Grand River, and Starbucks Coffee in the Downtown Farmington Center.

probably isn't nearly as effective as "seeing 58,000 pennies on a table or seeing the Vietnam wall," a reference to the memorial in Washington, D.C.

After it was decided to collect the pennies, however, a decision needed to be made about to whom to donate the money. But Smith was aware of Paralyzed Veterans of America, having worked with the non-profit organization in the past. Many members of her family also served in that war.

"It's a wonderful cause," said Smith, adding that she is one of the lucky ones. Her close relatives came home from Vietnam alive.

There were so many pennies on that table that Smith estimated it will take nearly one week for the students to roll them for deposit into the bank.

"I'm pretty pleased," Elizabeth said about the students' collective accomplishment. "I raised some awareness in myself, too. I knew a lot of people died, but this was huge."

The two businesses generating the most pennies were Ram's Horn on Grand River, and Starbucks Coffee in the Downtown Farmington Center.

Also contributing to the cause were the following businesses: A&W (on Farmington Road), ACO Hardware, Beaum Blonds, Big Boy, Civic Theatre, Dimitri's restaurant, Evans Family Dining, Farmington Bakery, Farmington Florist, Grace Insurance, Grand Cafe, Jo Anne Fabrica, Kent's Tae Kwon Do, Metro Koney Island and Subway (on Grand River).

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