



Developing citizens of integrity who excel in and beyond the classroom

Planning has prepared district to weather budget shortfall

Non-classroom reductions will help cover an expected \$1.2 million gap as budget process begins in January

Like most Minnesota school districts, Farmington Area Public Schools expect to face a budget shortfall in 2009-10 as state funding is projected to remain flat. According to Finance Director Jeff Priess, though, the school district is in position to weather the storm while maintaining programs and

class sizes.

"Relatively, we are in good financial shape," Priess said. "There are things we can do to mitigate any direct impact a state aid freeze would have on programs or staffing."

In a presentation to the School Board

on Jan. 12, Priess said that spending reductions due to renegotiated and reorganized insurance contracts, plans to leave two administrative positions vacant, and the possibility of selling bonds to pay for post-re-

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High honors

Farmington teachers Jack Olwell and Deb Weimelt each were honored for their exceptional work in the classroom



Dedication, love of students place Weimelt as finalist for middle level teacher of the year honors

With the physical and emotional upheavals of the 'tween and early teen years, it's no surprise that not everyone is cut out to be a middle school teacher. Deb Weimelt, a health teacher at Farmington Middle School West, seems not only to be well-suited to the task, but also to have a special knack for reaching students—especially at-risk kids—on a deeper emotional level.

"Students who are struggling gravitate toward

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Olwell named Teacher of the Year; has spent 31 years teaching benefits of fitness to students

How many of us can say our life is like a fairy tale? Probably not many.

But that's just how Jack Olwell, Farmington Education Association Teacher of the Year, describes his job as a physical education teacher at North Trail Elementary.

"I enjoy sharing my passion with others and seeing others enjoy it," said Olwell. "I've been blessed because I found something that I enjoy doing and that's

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Boundary, school name changes conclude busy year for District 192

The 2008 calendar year came to an end with a flurry of activity for Farmington Area Public Schools, but the seeming flood of news was an appropriate conclusion to a year filled with change and preparations.

New Boundaries Set

In September, a committee of parents and principals

was gathered to start the daunting task of recommending new attendance boundaries to reflect the addition of a fifth elementary school in 2009, as well as the first division of middle school students in District 192 history.

Taking a cue from community feedback, the committee developed recommendations that focused on keeping neighborhoods together, while still balancing enrollment for today and the projected future. While changing atten-

dance boundaries can be a contentious issue in communities, the committee received mostly praise from residents who attended presentations and new boundaries were approved by the School Board in November.

School assignment letters were sent to families with students in grades K-8 in January. Boundary maps and

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A year of progress has prepared District 192 for this year's major transitions.

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Superintendent's Message



Brad Meeks,
Superintendent

Year's accomplishments have prepared us for the future

How time flies!!! It has been a year since the levy passed to open the new high school and elementary school, while providing financial stability to the district.

Other issues that were on the horizon a year ago included boundary changes and naming of schools. Through committee processes that included parents, community members and staff, those decisions have been finalized by the school board. In addition, the school board acted to set start and end times for all the schools. Families changing elementary and middle schools next year will be receiving a letter indicating your child's new school.

There are still many decisions and plans yet to be made, but having these major items successfully completed has been a great accomplishment for the district. Thank you to the committee members who worked so hard behind the scenes and at the public meetings. Your involvement was a key to getting this work completed.

With the state of the economy on the minds of everyone, the district began its budget process in January. Through the passage of the levy, past budget reductions, budget efficiencies and enrollment growth, your school district is in a solid position to weather this difficult economic time. Student achievement continues to be the top priority of the school district and every effort will be made to continue our strong academic and extra-curricular programs.

Thank you for entrusting your children's education to our fine staff. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas to share, please feel free to contact my office at (651) 463-5013.

Dr. Brad Meeks

Superintendent of Schools

District 192 Mission Statement

The mission of Farmington Area Public Schools, as a dynamic learning community, is to develop citizens of integrity whose passion for continuous learning ensures they excel in a global society.

School Board Meetings

School Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Meeting dates for the 2008-09 school year are available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us.

The first meeting of the month is a work session beginning at 5 p.m. during which the Board discusses timely issues at length. The second meeting is a business meeting beginning at 7 p.m. during which the Board will take action. An open forum is regularly held prior to the start of business meetings. Meetings are held in the Little Theater at Farmington High School, 800 Denmark Ave. All meetings of the School Board are open to the public. Meeting video, agendas, and the Board Review are available on the District Web site.

School Board

Bob Heman, Chair

John Kampf, Vice-Chair

Julie McKnight, Clerk

Julie Singewald, Treasurer

Tim Burke

Veronica Walter

You can contact board members by e-mail at board@farmington.k12.mn.us.

High School Construction Update

Auxiliary gymnasium, artificial turf projects are bid as school remains on schedule

At its Sept. 10 meeting, the School Board awarded two contracts related to construction of the auxiliary gymnasium at the new Farmington High School. The contract for bleachers was awarded to Seating and Athletic Facilities Enterprises for a total of \$75,519; the contract for athletic equipment was awarded to H&B Specialized Products for \$79,580. Both bids were significantly below budget.

At its Nov. 24 meeting, the School Board awarded the bid for installing artificial turf on the new Farmington High School stadium field to Field Turf in the amount of \$500,201.81 for the company's Duraspine product. The School Board decided to install artificial turf on the new stadium field because of the increased use it will allow. Athletics Director Jon Summer estimated that student use of the stadium field would climb from the current 89 hours on natural grass to nearly 900 hours on an artificial grass surface.

Video Tour

In February, a new video of mini-tours of spaces within the new high school will begin playing on Cable Channel 10. The video features teachers presenting the spaces their programs will use and describing how the new facility will enhance student learning. The video will also be available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/edchannel.

New FHS, other school remodeling is on schedule

Construction of the new Farmington High School continues on schedule for completion later this spring so work to move furniture and equipment from the current school can begin immediately this summer.

In addition, work is on schedule to plan and execute remodeling of the current Farmington Middle School East and the current Farmington High School, which will become Riverview Elementary and Robert Boeckman Middle School next year, respectively.



Follow the progress on the new Farmington High School, including board meeting updates, financial information and photos, all online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us.



Finishing touches are being installed in many places throughout the new Farmington High School. Cabinets and other fixtures are in place in the school's hands-on science labs (top right). Student lockers are in place (right) and many classrooms have whiteboards installed (above)



Strategic Plan update provides glimpse at progress

On Dec. 3-4, more than 30 Farmington Area Public Schools residents, staff members and students gathered to give the District 192 Strategic Plan its annual review. The two-day meeting involved reports on the progress made so far on various initiatives, and also some intense discussion about what Farmington schools face in the future, both the opportunities for and potential obstacles to success.

Throughout the first months of 2009, District staff members are writing articles to review what the District has done and is doing to meet the demands of the Strategic Plan. Those articles will appear weekly in the Farmington Independent, as well as online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us.

In the midst of continuing growth

and unprecedented amounts of transition, some very important work has gone on behind the scenes. Still, those efforts are all important parts of becoming the school district envisioned by the Strategic Plan – a dynamic learning community developing citizens of integrity who excel in and beyond the classroom.

We hope you'll take the time to read about some of the most important initiatives in the Farmington schools community.

There have been very visible components like the new student information system and curriculum mapping software that were launched this fall. But there have also been less-celebrated achievements including efforts to improve volunteer programs

and the creation of a teacher mentoring program. All of it is helping us achieve our mission.

Of course, the plan itself is a living document, so as the community grows and changes, the plan may be altered or expanded. Some parts may even be eliminated. While this series of columns will be expansive, it's not the end of the Strategic Planning work for Farmington Area Public Schools. The process is designed to ensure District 192 is constantly evaluating where it's at, where it wants to be, and what it needs to do to get there.

To see the District 192 Strategic Plan in its entirety, go to www.farmington.k12.mn.us/district/strategicplan.

New members take seats on District 192 School Board

Tim Burke, Julie McKnight, Julie Singewald and Veronica Walter were all sworn in as members of the District 192 School Board at a Jan. 12 meeting. McKnight is starting her third term on the board. Burke and Singewald were elected to four-year terms in November, and Walter was appointed to fill a vacancy left when former board member Terry Donnelly was elected to the Farmington City Council.

At the meeting, Bob Heman was elected to serve as chair for 2009. John Kampf will be vice-chair, Julie McKnight will serve as clerk, and Julie Singewald was elected to be treasurer. More details about committee assignments are available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/district/board.

Board members also agreed not to approve any board salary changes this year. Current salaries are \$5,250 per year for the board chair and \$4,200 per year for all other members. A \$30 stipend is also paid to members for each negotiation, retreat, and non-regularly scheduled meeting.



Tim Burke, Veronica Walter, Julie Singewald and Julie McKnight took the oath of office at the Jan. 12, 2009 school board meeting.

Communications audit report provides insights, recommendations

In November, District 192 received a report on the communications audit conducted by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

The audit, which was approved by the School Board last summer, included a comprehensive review of the district's communications materials, policies and practices. It also featured 10 focus groups of both internal and external audiences, with the purpose of analyzing the current communications program and make recommendations for improvements.

Communications Specialist Aaron Tinklenberg said the audit found many things that were already known to some extent, but it included additional clarity on those topics that will help the district prioritize and effectively address those areas.

In particular, the audit found a continued perception among residents that the relationship between the city of Farmington and District 192 remains sour, and that perception affects opinions about the District in general. NSPRA auditor Bob Noyed noted that participants who were aware of ongoing cooperative work between the city and schools were more likely to have a favorable opinion of Farmington schools, and recommend that the District develop strategies to communicate that increased level of cooperation.

The report also notes that focus group participants appreciated District publications such as this newsletter and the annual printed calendar, but that they also wanted more information, particularly on finances and student/staff achievements.

In general, the report notes a high level of interest in and awareness of the issues facing Farmington Area Public Schools.

Among the report's recommendations, a key point advised the District to continue and improve efforts to engage the community. Tinklenberg said that recent efforts, including the boundary adjustment process, served as good examples of bringing stakeholders into the issue early.

Tinklenberg said he will work with administrators and the District's Communications Advisory Council to determine which recommendations can be carried out soon and which will require more time and planning. The complete NSPRA communications audit report is available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/communications.

Budgetfrom Page 1

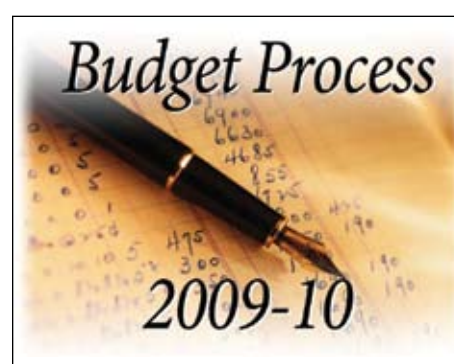
retirement benefits would cover the majority of a projected \$1.2 million shortfall. Transportation efficiencies because of changing school start times, leaving vacant a maintenance office clerical position, moving technology staff salaries into the district's capital fund, and increasing revenue through special state and federal programs were also included in the presentation.

At this point, the School Board has not sold bonds to pay for post-retirement benefits (OPEB), but has authorized a bond sale of up to \$6 million, which would cover OPEB costs through 2021. District 192 cur-

rently pays for those benefits out of its general fund at a cost estimated to be \$400,000 for 2009-10 and growing each year after that. The bond sale would eliminate that expense from the general fund budget and raise annual property taxes by \$31 on a \$250,000 home.

District 192 principals and budget managers will review spending over the next months, and budget assumptions will be refined as the state Legislature continues its work.

Updates will be given at future School Board meetings and public hearings will be scheduled. A final budget must be adopted by June 30.



Residents can follow the budget process online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/budget.

District News & Notes

Finance auditors give District 192 top opinion

Farmington Area Public Schools received an unqualified opinion – the highest opinion possible – from an independent audit firm after a review of the District's 2007-08 financial reports. The District is audited annually according to state Department of Education standards by an independent firm, which presented its findings at the Nov. 10 School Board work session.

The District's general fund spending for 2007-08, which includes most day-to-day operational expenses, was at \$8,311 per student, an increase of 7.5 percent from the previous year. Of this, 81.1 percent was spent on instruction and student support services. About 4.4 percent of spending went toward district and school administration combined, the audit showed.

District 192 financial information, including audit reports and budget documents, is available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/finance.



Ed Channel Online

STREAMING VIDEO

District launches Ed Channel Online

District 192 has launched an online home for streaming videos, including School Board meetings, presentations, tours of the new Farmington High School and more.

Although streaming video has been available on the District 192 Web site for more than a year, residents now have a central location to find those videos. Ed Channel Online includes programs that are currently running on Educational Access Cable Channel 10, and a link to a full archive.

To access the site, go to the Farmington Area Public Schools home page and click on the Ed Channel Online icon, or go directly to www.farmington.k12.mn.us/edchannel.

Stay informed with Schoolhouse E-News

Sign up for Schoolhouse E-News to get everything you need to know about District 192 schools delivered to your computer. School board meeting information, budget updates, special event announcements, volunteer opportunities and much more are included in regular newsletters. Go to www.farmington.k12.mn.us/news/enews.htm to register.

For more District 192 News - www.farmington.k12.mn.us/news

District News

District News & Notes

Third annual Partners in Education Celebration is set for April 17

The third annual Partners in Education Celebration, an evening to honor supporters of Farmington Area Public Schools, is slated for Friday, April 17, 2009.

A fund-raiser for the Farmington Area Education Foundation, the spring event celebrates the efforts of District 192 staff members, volunteers, and community partners with an evening of food and fun.

This year, the Partners in Education Celebration will be held at the newly remodeled American Legion on Highway 3. As in past years, the Foundation will present Community Partner of the Year, School Volunteer of the Year, Distinguished Alumnus/a, and the Bill Patterson Distinguished Staff Member awards.

Tickets are \$35 and include dinner, entertainment, awards program and silent auction. For more information, call (651) 463-9075 or go online to www.farmingtonedfoundation.org.

NWEA testing shows above average performance

Results from District 192's fall Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test, presented at a Nov. 17 School Board work session, show Farmington students continuing to achieve above national averages in both reading and math.

The computerized NWEA is a unique assessment in that it adjusts to the level of the student taking the exam. When a student gets a question right, a more difficult question comes next; when a student answers incorrectly, the questions get easier. Taken at least twice per year by all students in grades 2 through 9, the NWEA test is designed to measure student growth, as well as align to state standards.

Among the most striking results were:

- Farmington students scored above national averages in reading in grades 4-9
- Farmington students scored above national averages in math in grades 3-9
- Fall 2008 scores in reading were mixed compared to Fall 2007 – some grades had higher scores this year, some had lower – which is expected since it's a different group of students at each grade level.
- However, Fall 2008 scores in Math were higher than Fall 2007 in grades 3-9, which may suggest that the new math curriculum and focus on math professional development is having a positive effect.

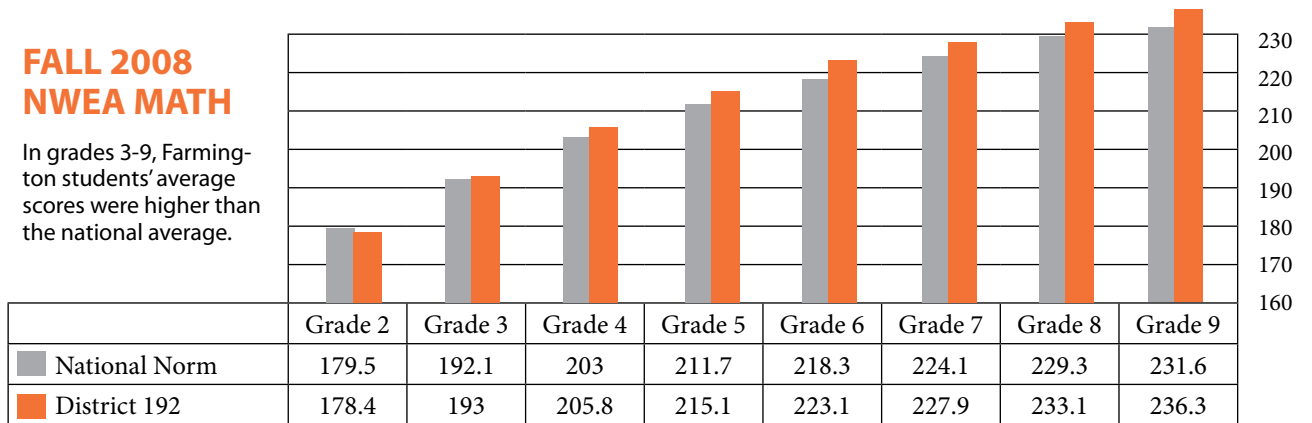
Data coordinator Sharon Davenport, who presented the results to the Board, said one of the biggest advantages of the NWEA test is the immediate availability of results. Teachers can use a student's scores within days to begin addressing that student's individual needs, as well as the needs of the classroom. In addition, district-wide results are used to guide staff development and improve curriculum.

Results from the spring testing window will show student growth over the course of the year, helping teachers and the district assess what strategies had the best impact.

The complete presentation is available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/learning.

FALL 2008 NWEA MATH

In grades 3-9, Farmington students' average scores were higher than the national average.



Busy Year from Page 1

more information are available at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/boundaries.

Honoring past leaders

With three schools being given new purposes next year – the current high school becomes a middle school for grades 6-8, Middle School West also switches to serving grades 6-8, and Middle School East becomes an elementary – those buildings also needed new names.

Based on recommendations from a committee of residents and staff members, the School Board chose to name the new middle schools in honor of school leaders from the past. The current high school building will become Robert Boeckman Middle School in recognition of the long-time District 192 superintendent who oversaw that building's construction in the early 1970s. The other middle school was named Levi P. Dodge Middle School, recognizing the man who served on the School Board for 27 years in the late 1800s, established the first public library in Dakota County, and was among the first to insist that all school teachers have a college education.

The School Board also selected Riverview Elementary School as the name for District 192's fifth elementary, which will be at the current Farmington Middle School East building. The name reflects the school's proximity to the Vermillion River.

New schedule, start times

Along with being at a new building next fall, Farmington High School students will also be operating on a new schedule that starts a little later in the day. After more than a year of research and public discussion, the District chose to implement a "3-by-5 plus Zero Hour" schedule. Students will take five classes per day instead of seven, and the year will be broken into trimesters instead of semesters. An optional "Zero Hour" before the start of school will give students more options and flexibility in pursuing their studies.

Principal Ben Kusch said longer class periods will support more rigorous coursework and stronger relationships between students and teachers, and the trimester

system will provide more flexibility in supporting students who need additional help or are ready for more accelerated learning.

In addition, high school will start later next fall – 8:20 a.m. instead of the current 7:35 a.m. The later start time reflects extensive research showing biological changes in teenagers make learning difficult early in the morning.

Test scores rise

Results from the state standardized Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), released in June, showed improvement at most levels and Farmington scores overall outpaced the state averages in both math and reading. The most dramatic improvements were in 7th grade math, where there was an 11 percent increase in proficiency, and 6th and 7th grade reading, which saw 13 percent and 15 percent improvements, respectively.

Those improvements brought Farmington Middle School East within a hair's breadth of making its way off the "needs improvement" list under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law.

While the trend across Minnesota was for more schools to be cited as not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), two Farmington schools were removed from the "needs improvement" list in 2008. Scores improved enough at Farmington Elementary and Akin Road Elementary for them to join Meadowview and North Trail in making AYP. Overall, the number of Minnesota schools not making AYP rose from 727 schools in 2007 to 937 schools last year, representing nearly half of all schools in the state.

New leadership

Farmington welcomed three new principals in 2008. In March, Ben Kusch was named to succeed Monica Kittock-Sargent, who retired after 12 years leading Farmington High School.

In the summer, MaLie Lee was hired as principal of Farmington Middle School West, replac-



FHS speech coaches Rick Halley (left) and Melanie Hensold (right) had a successful 2008 season, including helping sophomore Sean Strong become the first Tiger to earn a spot at the state speech meet.

ing Dr. Christine Weymouth after she was tapped to lead the Teaching and Learning, Community Education and Special Education departments as assistant superintendent of educational services.



Kim Grengs

Farmington also welcomed back Kim Grengs to be principal of the district's fifth elementary school. Grengs had previously been an elementary and middle school teacher in Farmington for 13 years and was named the district's teacher of the year in 2004-05.

Student achievements

Students in Farmington schools continued to achieve great things. We can't list them all here, but the following is a sampling: Sarah Sixl and Zachary Neitzke scored in the 80th percentile on the German National Exam; sophomore Sean Strong qualified for the state speech tournament; Kristen Reis was one of only 250 American high school students to receive a Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship; Jessica Donnelly, Hayley Sauber, Patrick Shea and Emily Nelson received

recognition at the state level for their History Day projects; Meadowview's Destination Imagination team took 8th place at the Global Finals; senior Nicholas Uchtyl was named a National Merit Scholar semifinalist; 12 Farmington middle school students participated with the State Honor Choirs.

Progress on Strategic Plan

Several initiatives of the District 192 Strategic Plan moved forward this year, including implementation of a new student information system – Infinite Campus – and adoption of a curriculum mapping software program – Rubicon Atlas. The curriculum mapping software allows teachers to layout what students should be able to know or do, assessment plans, strategies for teaching, and match it all up with state standards. Because it's an online system, the curriculum maps can be shared easily from building to building and grade to grade, helping teachers and the district find gaps and overlaps, as well as analyze what's working and what needs work.

Other Strategic Plan-related projects also progressed in 2008, including efforts to better coordinate the district's volunteer program and the creation of a staff induction program. Learn more online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/district/strategic-plan.



MaLie Lee

District News

Later high school start time approved; MVES also changes

2009-10 Start Times

Farmington High School
8:20 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

Middle Schools
7:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.

North Trail & Riverview Elem.
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

MVES, ARES & FES
9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Farmington High School students will start school about 45 minutes later next year under a plan adopted by the School Board at its Nov. 24 meeting. The later start proposal reflects extensive research showing biological changes in teenagers make learning difficult early in the morning.

Specifically, high school classes will start at 8:20 a.m. instead of the current 7:35 a.m. start time. With the exception of Meadowview Elementary, all other schools will keep their start times next year. In order to minimize traffic issues along Flagstaff Avenue and 195th Street after the high

school opens next fall, Meadowview's start time will be moved from 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

"Everything we've seen over the past decade or more points to the fact that a later start time will help students get more sleep and be better prepared for school starting with first hour," FHS Principal Ben Kusch said.

Research about teenager sleeping patterns and how that links to academic performance is available at the Farmington High School Web site – www.farmington.k12.mn.us/schools/fhs.

Family Web Access has 1,500 users

District 192 has a new student information system that includes an extensive Family Web Access component. Parents for whom the District has a valid e-mail address have been sent invitations to register for FWA.

If you have not received an e-mail inviting you to register for FWA, please contact your child's school to check to be sure we have your correct e-mail address.

High Honors

Olwell..... from Page 1

very rewarding. It's fantastic."

After struggling with indecision, he chose a career that reflected his life-long passion for being active and playing physical games. He graduated from Hamline University with a degree in physical education. Over the past 31 years, Olwell has left his mark and a trail of kids who are enthusiastic about fitness at three of four Farmington elementary schools.

Olwell was recently named Teacher of the Year by the Farmington Education Association.

"I was honored and shocked," said Olwell. "Receiving the award was bittersweet. It's humbling to think that my peers feel that I'm representative of my profession. I believe there are others more deserving, so I have mixed emotions."

A reception in Olwell's honor was held at North Trail on Dec. 17.

In April 2008, Olwell also received the Partners in Education Bill Patterson Distinguished Staff Member Award. This award is bestowed by the Farmington Area Education Foundation to a District 192 staff member who has shown exceptional commitment to the Farmington Area Public Schools community, either through service to the district and its schools, or to the community at large.

One way Olwell has demonstrated his commitment to Farmington Area Public Schools is through his ongoing study on the effects of physical activity on literacy. Results of his first study in 2006-07 clearly showed a strong connection between physical activity and a student's ability to learn. The study received national and international recognition.

"I felt a little like Jed Clampett. I was shooting at a squirrel and I hit oil," he said.

Olwell will speak at the Central District American Association of Health,



Olwell regularly has two or three classes of students at once in order to ensure all North Trail students have physical education every day.

Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance convention in Rochester in March.

"He is a pillar for physical education," said Todd Karich, Farmington Education Association president. "Through his efforts he has helped demonstrate how important physical education is in the public school system."

North Trail Elementary is the only elementary school in the district where students take physical education every day. During most sessions, Olwell has two to three classes at a time which translates to 50-80 students at varying grade levels and abilities.

"He challenges them to their level of learning to meet the needs of all students," said Nancy Schmitz, first grade teacher at North Trail. "His creative ideas are amazing. He is a genuine, caring person and has a good balance between discipline and good humor."

Olwell believes that the benefits of physical activity can drive the habits themselves. His goal is to create a pattern of behavior and expectation, and to create kids that are interested in fitness and being active.

"I love that kids come to school each day knowing they will be physically active.

PE is one of their favorite parts, if not their favorite part of the day," he said.

"He is a gift, not only to our students and staff, but to our community," North Trail Principal Steven Geis said. "He is incredible. He is a very giving, caring and compassionate person. He is truly one-of-a-kind."

Olwell lives in Farmington with his wife of 30 years, Marilyn. Olwell has two grown sons and one granddaughter who is a 4th grader at North Trail Elementary. Not surprisingly, he leads a very active lifestyle and is a tournament tennis player. He also enjoys golf, reading, and travel.

Weimelt..... from Page 1

her and thrive when they are with her," said FMSW Principal MaLie Lee. "There is something very special about her."

Weimelt was recently recognized for her contributions when she was named one of two finalists for the Minnesota Middle School Educator of the Year award. "I truly feel honored," she said. "Teaching is not just an occupation for me; it's my reason for being. I feel very fulfilled."

Weimelt made it clear that many people are responsible for her successes. "I've had a lot of support along the way," she said. "There are a lot of different people who share in it and have helped me be the teacher I am today."

"I couldn't think of a better person to be honored in this way," Lee said. "She has a golden touch, and puts her heart and soul into everything she does. She makes a tremendous impact in students' lives."

Weimelt reports that at-risk kids represent a larger portion of the District 192 student population than ever before. "I try to find a way to reach those kids," said Weimelt. "I try to give kids a safe place to talk about sensitive issues. When I meet a road block and can't help a student, it's frustrating, but I enjoy celebrating their successes."

She is always looking for new and different ways to reach and teach students. "Deb decides with students that they are going to be a success and helps them establish patterns and responsibility to achieve that success," said Dr. Christine Weymouth, former FMSW principal and current assistant superintendent. "Kids love her for that."

Community Works, a 9th grade elective course offered first at the Area Learning Center then at FMSW from 2002 to 2007, received national recognition in 2006 under Weimelt's leadership. Students' efforts were included in a publication of the National Crime Prevention Council. The program, which focused on community service, also received the 2002 Action Project Award for Community Works from the National Crime Prevention Council.

Weimelt has taught for 17 years in Farmington schools and is now in her sixth year at West. She has a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Education.

Weimelt plays many other roles at FMSW. She is a mentor and peer coach, serves on the Positive Behavior Committee and is a member of the Building Leadership Team. She is also advisor for the only middle school Red Cross Club in Minnesota.

Deb takes a personal interest in her students and gets



Weimelt with fellow middle school teacher Patti Haberman.

to know their families, but explained that it's a give and take relationship. When Weimelt's dad died four years ago she received many cards and poems, and a lot of empathy from her students.

"They are there for me as much as I'm there for them," she said. "Their capacity to help me heal during that difficult time, I will carry in my heart forever."

School News

Homecoming 2008



Check out more photos from this fall's Homecoming celebration online at

www.farmington.k12.mn.us/schools/fhs

Software bolsters school volunteer programs

Heidi Cunningham, Director of Community Education
Marianne Feely, Youth & Community Service Coordinator

Each year we are fortunate to have parents, grandparents, senior citizens, business people and community members provide a valuable service to our students by volunteering in our schools. We are confident that our students achieve more when positive role models offer encouragement and support in their learning environment.

While we realize the important role volunteers play in our schools, we are also aware of the busy schedules many in our community maintain. In an effort to better organize our volunteer system we researched and purchased a web based volunteer tracking system for use in each of our schools.

This system affords the volunteer coordinators and building secretaries an improved method for communicating volunteer needs, assigning volunteers to events and tracking volunteer hours. Volunteer coordinators can create a list of volunteer opportunities, unique to their building, and send e-mail requests to their volunteers. Volunteers can respond with their availability for events and be assigned accordingly, saving time that might have

otherwise been spent making phone calls or sending notes home. The system also affords us a more reliable method for tracking volunteer hours and recognizing the contributions of our volunteers.

At this time thirteen volunteer coordinators and support staff have been trained on the system and are working on using the program in their buildings.

As we look to the future and ways to improve our volunteer system, it is our hope to develop a directory of community members and resources which can be used by classroom teachers and staff to further engage our community in our schools. We also continue to review and update our volunteer policies and procedures to help ensure that the volunteer connections made in our schools keep the safety and security of our students, staff and volunteers as a priority.

The volunteer tracking software is a direct outcome of the District 192 Strategic Plan, which includes a directive to engage in partnerships that involve all communities in the educational process. To learn more about the District 192 Strategic Plan, go to www.farmington.k12.mn.us/district/strategicplan.

Students learn sweet lesson from science outreach program

On a bright fall day, you are bound to see a few bees flying around. Second graders at Akin Road Elementary this fall got to see a few hundred.

Thanks to a visit by Bell Museum Science Outreach Coordinator Kevin Williams on Oct. 2-3, students learned about how bees make honey, what jobs different bees have, how honey is collected, and the important role bees play in pollinating flowers and crops. Students also got a chance to extract their own honey and take a small jar home.

This is the fifth year Williams has come to Akin Road Elementary, but the first time he's brought honey bees.



Second-grade students Cielo DeCastro, Tanner Stocker, and Olivia Grundman show off golden bottles of honey at Akin Road Elementary on Oct. 2.

Learn more about new FHS schedule at information nights

With the planned change to a later start time at Farmington High School and the school's new 3-by-5 with Zero Hour schedule starting in 2009-10, parents and students who will attend FHS next year may have many questions. To help answer those questions and prepare students to register for next year's classes, guidance counselors and administrators have scheduled information nights in February.

Tuesday, Feb. 10

- 5:30 p.m. - Incoming 11th Grade Parents
- 7 p.m. - Incoming 12th Grade Parents

Tuesday, Feb. 17

- 5:30 p.m. - Incoming 9th Grade Parents
- 7 p.m. - Incoming 10th Grade Parents

More details and additional information, such as sample schedules and frequently asked questions, are available in FHS Principal Ben Kusch's January newsletter. The newsletter is available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/schools/fhs.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact the FHS Guidance Office at (651) 460-1477.

School Notes

FHS senior named National Merit semifinalist

Farmington High School senior Nicolas Uchtyl was named a National Merit Scholar semifinalist in September, an honor given to only 16,000 students out of more than 1 million who enter the competition around the country. He was chosen based on his score on the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, taken during the 2007-08 school year.

Uchtyl will compete for one of about 8,000 scholarships available through the program nationally.

FHS receives robotics competition grant

Farmington High School students will be competing in a regional robotics competition thanks to \$12,000 in grants received this year. FHS pre-engineering teachers Doug

Mead and David Stauffer earned the grants in collaboration with Ken Rosen, an assistant regional director for Minnesota's FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Organization.

The grants will be used to purchase equipment and pay registration fees so the FHS Robotics Team can enter the state's regional competition in April 2009. The competition involves nearly 100 high schools.

Students return to I-35W bridge to see their contribution

On Monday, Sept. 29, a group of Farmington sixth-graders returned to the I-35W bridge to visit their handiwork and see the newly completed structure.

As North Trail Elementary fifth graders last spring, the group participated in

a program to give students an opportunity to learn about the engineering and construction principles involved in rebuilding such a large bridge. While on site in May, students created mosaic tiles that are now permanent parts of the bridge, and they got to see those tiles in place when they went back in September.

Farmington FFA team takes top regional honors

The Farmington High School FFA (Future Farmers of America) earned first place out of 28 teams at the Livestock Evaluation Regional Qualifying contest. Donnie Drewry placed 5th and Dan Donnelly placed 6th individually, out of 127 students in the competition. Other team members were Ashley Schuwerck and Tony Donnelly. The team will advance to the state contest in April.

Community Education

Akin recognized as state's Community Ed Outstanding Advisory Council Member

Farmington resident Kris Akin was recognized by the Minnesota Community Education Association this fall as the 2008 Community Education Outstanding Advisory Council Member. Among the criteria used in the selection process are the nominee's involvement in community education, demonstrated cooperation and teamwork with people, agencies and organizations, and the nominee's impact using leadership skills, creative thinking and citizen involvement.

Ms. Akin has been a strong volunteer for all five directors of Community Education in District 192, supporting a number of efforts including the building of a Community Education wing at Meadowview Elementary School. She is a founding member of the CEEF Enhancement Group, which works to bring residents of Farmington, Castle Rock, Eureka and Empire together for community events, including the Farmington Community EXPO and Rambling River Days. Ms. Akin has also been instrumental in creating and building the Farmington Area Education Foundation, in supporting and promoting downtown Farmington businesses, and as a volunteer for local schools.



Kris Akin

Community EXPO is Jan. 31

Come and meet the businesses, organizations and people that make Farmington a great place to live and work. The annual Farmington Community EXPO is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to noon at Farmington High School. Admission is free.

Open Gyms

Supervised open gym time is scheduled in the Farmington Middle School West gyms on Saturday afternoons throughout the winter. Sponsored jointly with the Farmington Youth Athletics Association, gyms are available from 1-3 p.m. to students in grades K-9 completely free of charge.

Remaining dates are Jan. 24 and 31; Feb. 7, 14 and 28; and March 7, 14, 21 and 28. Bring your own basketballs. Students in grades K-3 must be accompanied by an adult. Call (651) 460-3200 for more information.

Featured Classes

ZAP the ACT!

This five-hour workshop for students in grades 11 and 12 is designed to prepare students for the ACT college admission test. Students will learn general test-taking skills, strategies for handling each type of question, optional essay pointers and suggestions on how to practice for the test. A competitive score on the ACT can open new opportunities for the college bound student. Students may register online for this course offering at www.zaps.com or call 1-877-927-8373. Limit 45

Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.,
FHS Little Theater, \$85

Learn Math Facts The Easy Way

For students in Grades 2-5: Listen carefully and you will have all the memory tricks that will make adding, subtracting and multiplying easy. Parents are welcome at no charge and encouraged to attend with their children. The first night covers adding and subtracting, while the second night covers multiplication. After the class, math facts will be a piece of cake.

Tuesday/Wednesday, Feb. 17 & 18, 6:30-8 p.m.
FMSE Cafetorium, \$32

Mosaic Masterpieces!

Kids in grades 1-3 can learn about Mosaics. Create your own Mosaic Masterpiece from a variety of materials including pasta, beans, torn paper, and egg shells. Your masterpiece can be as simple or as detailed as you imagine.

Tuesdays & Thursdays; March 17-26, 3:05-4:05 p.m.
NTES Room K4, \$28

To register for these or other Community Education classes, go to

www.FarmingtonCE.com

Activities News

Varsity Athletics Calendar

Gymnastics

Jan. 27..... 6:30 p.m.....Red Wing
Jan. 30..... 6:30 p.m.....Prior Lake
Feb. 3..... 6:30 p.m.....@Northfield
Feb. 6..... 6:30 p.m....@New Prague
Feb. 7..... Noon@Minnetonka Invite
Feb. 13..... 7 p.m.....@Red Wing
Feb. 20..... 6:30 p.m..... Section Meet

Boys' Hockey

Jan. 27..... 7 p.m.....@Shakopee
Jan. 29..... 7:15 p.m.....Red Wing
Feb. 3..... 7 p.m.....@Hutchinson
Feb. 5..... 7:15 p.m.....Northfield
Feb. 10..... 7:15 p.m.....Prior Lake
Feb. 13..... 7 p.m.....@New Prague
Feb. 17..... 7:15 p.m.....Holy Angels
Feb. 19..... 7:15 p.m.....Shakopee
Feb. 24-March 9..... Section Tourney

Girls' Hockey

Jan. 27..... 7:15 p.m.....Shakopee
Jan. 29..... 6 p.m.....@Red Wing
Jan. 31..... 1 p.m.....@Owatonna
Feb. 3..... 7:15 p.m.....Hutchinson

Feb. 5..... 7:30 p.m.....@Northfield
Feb. 11-21..... Section Tourney

Boys' Basketball

Jan. 27..... 7:30 p.m.....Hutchinson
Jan. 30..... 7:30 p.m.....Northfield
Feb. 3..... 7:30 p.m.....@Prior Lake
Feb. 6..... 7:30 p.m....@New Prague
Feb. 10..... 7:30 p.m.....Holy Angels
Feb. 13..... 7:30 p.m.....Shakopee
Feb. 17..... 7:30 p.m.....Red Wing
Feb. 20..... 7:30 p.m....@Hutchinson
Feb. 24..... 7:30 p.m.....@Northfield
Feb. 27..... 7:30 p.m.....Prior Lake
March 3..... 7:30 p.m.....New Prague
March 6..... 7:30 p.m....@Holy Angels
March 11-20..... Section Tourney

Girls' Basketball

Jan. 27..... 7:30 p.m....@Hutchinson
Jan. 30..... 7:30 p.m.....@Northfield
Feb. 3..... 7:30 p.m.....Prior Lake
Feb. 5..... 7:30 p.m.....@Hastings
Feb. 6..... 7:30 p.m.....New Prague
Feb. 10..... 7:30 p.m....@Holy Angels

Feb. 13..... 7:30 p.m.....@Shakopee
Feb. 17..... 7:30 p.m.....@Red Wing
Feb. 20..... 7:30 p.m.....Hutchinson
Feb. 24..... 7:30 p.m.....Northfield
Feb. 27..... 7:30 p.m.....@Prior Lake
March 4-13..... Section Tourney

Wrestling

Jan. 29..... 5 p.m.....Northfield
Jan. 29..... 7:30 p.m....Lakeville North
Jan. 31..... 10 a.m.....@SSP Invite
Feb. 5..... 5 p.m.....@Shakopee
Feb. 7..... 10 a.m.....@Cannon Falls
Feb. 12..... 7 p.m.....@Hutchinson
Feb. 21..... Section Team Meet
Feb. 28..... Section Individuals

Boys' Swim & Dive

Jan. 29..... 6 p.m.....Hutchinson
Feb. 5..... 6 p.m.....@Northfield
Feb. 10..... 6 p.m.....@Rochester JM
Feb. 14..... 10 a.m...Missota (FMSW)
Feb. 25..... Section Prelims
Feb. 27..... Section Finals

Sports Registration Night is March 2

The Farmington Athletics Department will hold the 2008-09 Spring Athletics Registration Night on Monday, March 2 at Farmington High School. All Farmington Area Public Schools parents/guardians and their sons and/or daughters in grades 7-12 who are interested in participating in a winter athletics program are encouraged to attend.

The Registration Night will begin at 6 p.m. for 7th and 8th graders interested in participating in the middle school athletics programs. At 7 p.m., Registration Night will continue for students in grades 9-12. It is recommended that the 2008-09 Farmington Athletics Registration Packet be completed prior to attending this event. The 2008-09 Farmington Athletics Registration Packet can be picked up at any of the following locations: Farmington High School, Farmington Middle School West, and Farmington Middle School East, or online at the Farmington Athletics Web site: www.farmington.k12.mn.us/athletics.

Farmington Activities Contact Information

Athletics Director

Jon Summer
(651) 460-1415
jsummer@farmington.k12.mn.us

Athletics Secretary

Karen Donnelly
(651) 460-1414
kdonnelly@farmington.k12.mn.us

Middle School Athletics Coordinator

Colm Griffin
(651) 460-1515
cgriffin@farmington.k12.mn.us

Activities Director

Kerry Timmerman
(651) 460-1403
ktimmerman@farmington.k12.mn.us



District Calendar

January

- 27** Farmington Middle School East PTP meeting, 6:30 p.m., FMSE Media Center
- 30** North Trail Elementary Breakfast with a Book
- 31** Farmington Community EXPO, Farmington High School, 9 a.m.-noon

February

- 5** Meadowview Elementary 3rd grade folk dance performance; Farmington Elementary 3rd grade music program, 7 p.m.
- 6** North Trail Elementary 4th grade music program, 9:30 a.m.
- 9** Farmington High School & Farmington Middle School West Jazz Band concert, FHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- 10** North Trail Elementary PTP meeting, 7:15 a.m.; High School Registration Information Night, 5:30 p.m. for incoming 11th grade parents, 7 p.m. for incoming 12th grade parents
- 13** 2nd Grade Valentine Tea for North Trail, Meadowview and Akin Road elementary schools; Farmington Elementary Family Fun Night
- 16** Presidents Day, NO SCHOOL
- 17** High School Registration Information Night, 5:30 p.m. for incoming 9th grade parents, 7 p.m. for incoming 10th grade parents
- 19** Akin Road Elementary Families in Literacy Night, 6 p.m.;

- Farmington High School Choir Palooza, 7 p.m.
- 21** Farmington High School Speech Tournament, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 23** Farmington Middle School West PTP meeting, 5:45 p.m.; FMSW Choir Concert at FHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- 24** Conferences for all schools
- 26** 2-HOUR EARLY RELEASE and Conferences for all schools, NO KINDERGARTEN
- 27** NO KINDERGARTEN, Kindergarten Conferences; Senior Citizens Night at the FHS boys' basketball game vs. Prior Lake, 7 p.m.

March

- 2** Akin Road Elementary PTP meeting, 6 p.m.; Spring Sports Registration Night, Farmington High School, grades 7-8 at 6 p.m., grades 9-12 at 7 p.m.
- 3** Farmington Middle School West Band Concert, FHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- 4** Farmington Elementary 4th grade band demonstration at FHS, 9:30 a.m.; Tiger Fan Club Board meeting, 7 p.m.

- 5** Farmington Elementary Read Aloud, 6:30 p.m.; Farmington High School winter band concert, 7 p.m.
- 6** District 192 Band Jubilee, FHS Gymnasium, 7 p.m.
- 9** North Trail Elementary PTP meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 10** Meadowview Elementary PTP meeting, 7 p.m.
- 12** Farmington High School choir concert, 7 p.m.
- 17** Farmington Middle School East PTP meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 20** End of Third Quarter
- 26** Akin Road Elementary Families in Literacy Night, 6 p.m.; Farmington Elementary 4th grade music program at FMSW, 6:30 p.m.; North Trail Elementary 5th grade music program, 7 p.m.
- 27** North Trail Elementary Family Fun Night, 6-8 p.m.
- 28** Health and Safety Fair at Farmington High School, 9 a.m.-noon

April

- 2-4** Farmington High School Spring Musical, 7 p.m.



www.fpscalendars.org

Major Upcoming Events

High School registration information nights planned

With the planned change to a later start time at Farmington High School and the school's new 3-by-5 with Zero Hour schedule starting in 2009-10, parents and students who will attend FHS next year may have many questions. To help answer those questions and prepare students to register for next year's classes, guidance counselors and administrators have scheduled information nights in February.

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 - 5:30 p.m. - Incoming 9th Grade Parents
 - 7 p.m. - Incoming 10th Grade Parents

More details and information are included in FHS Principal Ben Kusch's January newsletter, which is available online at the FHS Web site. Call (651) 460-1477 for more.

SWIM AT THE FARMINGTON INDOOR POOL!!!



OPEN SWIM:
Most Saturdays - 1-3 p.m.
Admission - \$3 per person

LESSONS:
\$44 for group lessons
\$88 for semi-private

POOL RENTALS AVAILABLE!!!

Register at
www.FarmingtonCE.com
or (651) 460-3200



Communication

The *School Reporter* is a publication of Farmington Area Public Schools. Contact Aaron Tinklenberg, communications specialist, with questions or comments at (651) 463-5079 or by e-mail at atinklenberg@farmington.k12.mn.us.

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Farmington Area Public Schools are committed to engaging the community in open, two-way communication. We truly believe that our community is at its best when all members are informed and involved.

This district newsletter is just one tool to ensure our residents, students, and staff members have the information they want and need to be contributing members of the Farmington area school system.

The district strives to maintain informative and timely Web pages for all of its schools and departments. Visit us online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us.

To encourage residents to engage School Board members and administrators, the district has adopted an expanded "open forum" policy. Starting prior to regular business meeting of the School Board, which are held at 7 p.m. on the fourth Monday of every month, residents are invited to address Board members and administrators in an informal setting. Residents may speak to any topic they choose.

To help ensure the appropriate people and information are available at the open forum, residents are encouraged to contact the Superintendent's Office at (651) 463-5011 regarding the topic they will be discussing.

A schedule of Board Meetings and open fora is available online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/district/board.

Residents, parents and other concerned citizens can also sign up to the district's Schoolhouse E-News system to receive timely e-mail newsletters about the district as a whole, or just those specific to a particular school building. Register online at www.farmington.k12.mn.us/news.