

# Farmington Observer

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## At next meeting

# Board decides fate of Ten Mile School

Parents and students in Farmington will learn if their schools will be closed within the next two years during Tuesday night's school board meeting at Farmington High School.

The closing of Ten Mile and the appointment of another task force to look into the possible uses of schools in the northern end of the district will be discussed at the meeting.

Persons who want to read the force's report before the meeting can obtain a copy at the School District's Administration Building, 2500 Shawwassee. There are 100 copies available.

That report was favorably received by members of the board who believe that the force did a thorough job. "It's absolutely more thorough than the citizen's report we received last year," said School Board President Anne Struble.

"With Dr. Stanley Hecker as part of the group, it is probably the most thorough study we've had."

"We've attempted to look ahead. We've tried to look ahead at least into the next few years," she said.

Mrs. Struble admitted that the task force looked into a new phenomena in the district.

"THE TASK FORCE DEALT with things for which we had no precedent," she said.

"If we were a developing school district there would be plenty of precedents. But we're experiencing declining enrollments. It's new to us. It's new to the whole country," she said.

The task force recommendation is that Farmington's solution to a nation-

**"If we were a developing school district, there would be plenty of precedents. But we're experiencing declining enrollments. It's new to us. It's new to the whole country."**

—School Board President Anne Struble

wide problem should be to close two schools within the next two years.

The first school to be considered for closing should be Ten Mile, according to the force.

The condition of the school building at Ten Mile, and its location, were among the reasons the school is being considered for closing at the end of the 1976-77 year.

"There's just a feeling about the whole building," Dr. Stanley Hecker, non-voting chairman of the task force told a group of parents. "It needs repair."

"The school is near a major road. It's near a ravine. The playground is too small," said Mrs. Struble.

Ten Mile has had its defenders, too. Leon Egrin, a member of the task force, has fought to keep the school open, even though this is the second time a group has recommended its closing.

"THE WORST TEN MILE HAS IS a leaky pipe," he told members of the force.

He thought that the last committee

was being pushed into closing Ten Mile.

If the school is closed, boundaries will be realigned to accommodate the extra students in the remaining schools.

Students would be transferred to Middle Belt, Larkshire, Flanders and Alameda, according to the force report.

Under the arrangement, special education classes would be transferred from Flanders to another school to accommodate the overflow student population.

In addition to the closing of Ten Mile, the force considered closing another school during the 1978-79 school year.

Originally, Eagle Elementary School was excluded from consideration because it housed orthopedic rooms for the district. Instead, Fairview Elementary, also in the northern portion of the district, was considered by the force.

However, the force came to include Eagle in its deliberations when it was pointed out that the school's Fourteen Mile location might have commercial or school district uses beyond that of Fairview, which is located in the rear of a subdivision.

BECAUSE THE TASK FORCE decided that the feasibility of closing Eagle rested upon finding alternate use for the building, and involved the transfer of its five orthopedic rooms to William Grace Elementary School.

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## Patterns in the snow

Another winter has brought slippery roads, icy winds and gray skies to Farmington. But for all its disadvantages, winter also brings a

beauty with it, creating its own version of our world. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

# Four mills face renewal in April

April will find Farmington area voters again going to the polls. This time, residents will get a chance to decide if four mills of the school tax merit renewal.

The election, tentatively scheduled for April 5, will be a topic of discussion at Tuesday's Farmington school board meeting.

Persons concerned about the schools are trying to think positively about this millage election, after last year's rejection of a 2.5 mill increase. "I don't think that there will be any strong opposition to the four mills," said school board president Anne Struble.

"Farmington voters support their schools. They tend to be well informed. I don't foresee that they will cut four mills from our budget," she said.

"I don't anticipate that people will stop their support of the schools as long as the board acts responsibly and gets its information out to the public."

Bud Pickett, a member of the 1975 millage committee, agreed with Mrs. Struble that the millage was a necessary part of the school budget.

"The four mills have to be renewed," he insisted.

"IT WILL BE a very sorry situation for the school district if they are not renewed. Four mills is a lot of money."

Pickett said the renewal involves about eight or nine per cent of the total school budget for the upcoming year. One mill is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 of a assessed value.

The district has been slowly gearing up for the election, starting with an informal meeting of last year's millage committee on Dec. 15.

The committee decided to recommend a Tuesday election so the district could use that Monday to remind residents of the upcoming day at the polls.

# Task force member crusades against Ten Mile closing

Parents and students at Ten Mile Elementary School have found a champion in Leon Egrin of West Bloomfield.

Egrin is the only member of Farmington School District's Task Force on Declining Enrollment who voted against the closing of Ten Mile.

As the sole dissident, he has submitted to the Farmington School Board a minority report which advo-

cates the closing of Alameda Elementary School.

Ten Mile's size and location were among the reasons Egrin cited to keep the school open.

"Alameda has 13 classrooms and Ten Mile has 21," he said. "There is only one unused room in Alameda and that's a storage room. There are five rooms available in Ten Mile."

Extra rooms in Ten Mile give the school more flexibility to absorb a few extra students in the future, he noted.

Among the rooms available at Ten Mile, there is a library, a reading consultation room and two reading services rooms, he said.

IF THESE ROOMS ARE removed from the district, it will affect the level of education in Farmington, according to Egrin's report.

"They want to maintain the level of instruction in the schools by closing some of the facilities. I agree with this. But if they close Ten Mile, they'll be losing five rooms for which there are no facilities at Alameda. They will not be maintaining the same level of instruction," he said.

Ten Mile's extra rooms also mean that Alameda would have to absorb a larger student population, Egrin said. Of the four schools which would take in Ten Mile students, only Alameda would remain over capacity for two years after the move.

With a capacity of 280 students, Alameda would find itself with 285 students during the 1977-78 school year and 276 pupils in 1978-79.

"If the district chose to close another school, and indications are that we may have to, with declining enrollments, then Alameda will be overcrowded," he said.

"It's a disservice. We know that the schools in the north section of the district are faced with declining enrollments. The decline is somewhat slower in the southern portion of the district."

"THOUGHT MUST BE given to the fact that we will be faced with closing another school," he said. "And Ten Mile has more room."

Besides affording the district more space, the closing of Alameda would be easier on Farmington, he reasons.

"The building is within easy access of the school buses," he said. "The buses end their route near Ten Mile. Therefore, it's obvious that Ten Mile is centrally located."

The closing of Ten Mile would affect more students because the school is centrally located.

Five school boundaries would be changed if Ten Mile were shut down.

The closing would affect the boundaries of Flanders, Larkshire, Alameda and Middle Belt schools.

Alameda's closing would affect only three of the boundaries.

"The closing of Ten Mile would include the re-assigning of the special education facilities which are now at Flanders," Egrin said.

The location of Ten Mile may be a vital factor to Egrin in its continuation as a school building but others see its location as a liability.

TEN MILE'S LOCATION on a

major street has raised some concern.

"There's a lot of traffic in front of the school," said School Board President Anne Struble. "It has a small playground, too."

She was concerned about the ravine near the school, fearing that it could be a danger to Ten Mile students.

On the other hand, Alameda is located in a neighborhood setting, according to Mrs. Struble.

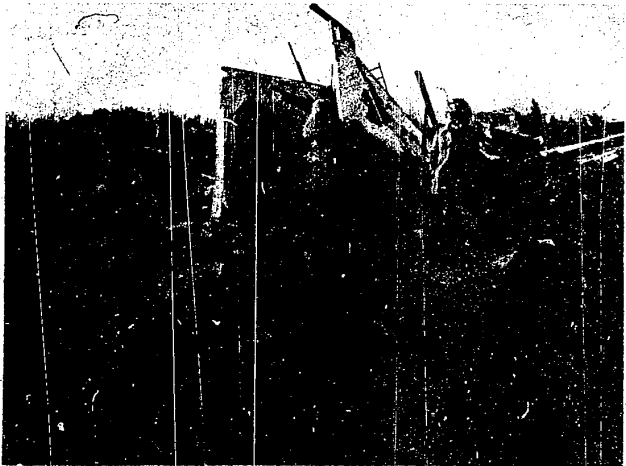
"It's off the main drag," she explained.

Egrin remained sceptical about the safety advantages that may be associated with keeping Alameda open. "I don't think they've had a child injured there, yet," he said.

He maintains that the school has been chosen as a storage facility by the district.

"Ten Mile is wanted for storage," he said. "With declining enrollment, the district can't afford another storage facility."

"It doesn't make sense," he said.



Last March, some Farmington area residents were forced by a landslide to start their lives anew. To relive March 22, 1974 and other, bet-

ter days of the last year, turn to page 3, for the Farmington Observer's year-end round-up. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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## HART REMEMBERED

Reporter Shirley Iden remembers a favor from Sen. Phil Hart that still touches the hearts of her family. For her story, turn to Page 12A.