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Educators battle over mandatory courses

By MARY GNIEWEK

Advocates of mandatory humanities education in high school will make a direct appeal to the Farmington Board of Education.

The proposal recently was nixed by school administrators. Humanities are now offered solely on an elective basis. Rejection of the proposal has been labeled as an insult by Paul Barber, Farmington music department chairman. "They're still not encouraging students to push themselves. If you go to the expense of having a professional staff in the arts but don't give them recognition in a curriculum, why have them?" he says.

The proposal was drafted by Harri-

son Principal James Geiger while a member of a study committee chaired by Farmington High Principal Jerry Potter.

Geiger's proposal would have required all high school students to take two courses in humanities satisfied by forensics, drama, art, music, foreign language or an English humanities class.

It has the support of the newly formed Concerned Parents for Music, a group which recently expressed displeasure with the music curriculum in the district.

But the committee adopted a proposal which stresses academics more than the current graduation requirements. It

leaves humanities as an elective. That proposal will be recommended to the board's curriculum committee later this month.

STUDENTS fulfill a major portion of graduation requirements while still in ninth grade, according to Barber.

"If the kids take English, math, science, world history and physical education in ninth grade, they have fulfilled five requirements," he says.

"All they would have left is two years of English, one year of social studies and 1 1/2 years of physical education. Then they could take basketball and study halls."

But Potter defended the committee's

proposal, saying it offers students more flexibility in scheduling.

"Every department wants a graduation requirement," says Potter. "The problem is there are only six classes in a day."

"Kids should have the option to choose. Otherwise there's no chance for a four-year sequence in a given area."

In addition to humanities, other elective areas are business, health occupations, home economics, industrial arts and social studies.

The committee proposal would add a year of math or science, or a math/science combination — a semester of each — and a semester each of composition and literature for 10th-graders.

"We hoped our proposal would get better consideration," says Geiger. "We're not trying to de-emphasize math or English, but we thought this might encourage more students to get a bit more into other areas."

The Harrison proposal would also require three years of English; one of math; one of practical arts — business education, home economics or industrial arts; 1 1/2 years of physical education; two of science; 2 1/2 years of social studies; and 1/2 of consumer education — business law, consumer economics, independent living or fundamental math.

The curriculum would enable students to elect 6 1/2 credit hours over

four years for a total of 20 hours required for graduation.

Concerned Parents for Music, which drew 180 supporters to its first meeting last week and has another session scheduled April 16 at 7:30 p.m. at Harrison High, has jumped on the humanities bandwagon.

"Our main goal is to offer quality education to our children," said group spokesman Dick Levinson. "Humanities is very important."

Graduation requirements are being restudied this year because the district is adding ninth grade to high schools in September, necessitated by the disbandment of junior highs and the creation of middle schools.

Moratorium has its good side for Botsford

By MARY GNIEWEK

A state-imposed moratorium on new hospital construction has had a positive side effect on Botsford General Hospital of Farmington Hills.

The hospital was planning a \$28 million expansion to include drug and mental health care units at the time of last year's freeze in April.

The moratorium coincided with a statewide plan calling for a decrease in hospital beds to lower health care costs, a plan which is currently in limbo until the state Legislature studies its effects.

In the interim, Botsford has entered into negotiations with the Clarenceville School Board for the acquisition of Edgewood Elementary School, adjacent to the hospital at St. Francis and Secolia streets.

"The building has 50,000 gross square feet. It is our estimation we could construct what we were originally contemplating in one-third the space," said Gerson Cooper, chief administrator of the 310-bed osteopathic hospital.

"Acquisition will enable us to achieve a cost effective solution to many of our space problems much sooner than the end of a full construction project which would be 3 1/2 years."

THE FARMINGTON HILLS Planning Commission has voted to recom-

mend to city council the rezoning of the school property for hospital use.

Cooper said the price is still negotiable. The hospital would have to obtain state approval via a certificate of need from the Michigan Department of Public Health before acquiring the property. The state moratorium on new construction will be lifted in September.

Once approval is granted, construction could be completed in 2 1/2 years with the school building providing for some immediate relief from overcrowded conditions at the hospital.

The school would house data processing, human resources, finance, a library, another business department.

An entrance through the hospital side of the property would eliminate traffic on St. Francis. Landscaped berms would buffer the school from the residential neighborhood.

"It's rare given a situation where many schools are closed that two community needs occurred simultaneously," Cooper said.

"The school is closing because of declining enrollment and a budget deficit in the district.

"The school district and hospital would both benefit from this," Cooper said.

Hospital administrators proceeded with the major construction expansion plan two years ago after the Clarenceville Board said it had no intentions of closing the school.

Walled Lake eyes employee cutbacks

Eight teachers, three custodians and three administrators were terminated last week as Walled Lake Board of Education attempted to reduce a \$717,500 deficit in its 1980-81 budget.

Additional cutbacks in the district's programs and supplies are expected in the next few weeks.

The district's budget is projected at \$22.2 million.

The latest layoffs came after a heated series of four meetings in 10 days.

The board considered almost exclusively personnel cuts because of an April 1 contractual deadline for issuing termination notices.

Reduction of eight teachers (\$120,000), three custodians (\$44,000) and three administrators (\$69,000) will save the district \$233,000. That's \$184,500 short of the \$717,500 deficit for the coming year.

The district's fund equity (savings) is projected at \$750,000-800,000. Administrators said the remaining \$484,500 deficit could be covered by taking about \$500,000 from the fund equity if necessary.

The district wants to maintain at least \$300,000 in its fund equity to cover unexpected expenditures or unforeseen revenue losses.

THE THREE administrators whose positions were eliminated are Transportation Director Floyd Vickery, Grounds Maintenance Director William Diem and Student Relations Coordinator Dean Niculof of the community education department.

Vickery resigned in December. His responsibilities were assumed by other administrators.

The decision to lay off the personnel came after discussion of several proposals that at one point or another in-

cluded as many as 22 teachers and five administrators.

At a March 24 meeting, Superintendent Don Sheldon recommended four alternatives for dealing with the deficit:

- Cut the budget.
- Retain present programs and staff, and underwrite the cost out of the fund equity account.
- Use a combination of cuts and fund equity.
- Seek additional millage.

Board members were skeptical about the chances for obtaining additional millage in light of uncertainty over the economy and three unsuccessful millage elections in 1979.

As a result, the board scheduled a meeting March 26 to discuss ways to cut the budget.

SHELDON'S INITIAL proposal was to cut 22 teaching positions, three custodians and three administrators.

At the March 28 session, Trustee Stephen Lasber submitted an alternative proposal to cut 11 teaching, three custodial and five administrative positions.

That proposal was unanimously approved by the board. But Sheldon protested, saying the elimination of five instead of three administrators would hurt the district's educational program.

The board directed Sheldon to return with a recommendation to eliminate the two additional administrators at the March 28 meeting.

Sheldon proposed eliminating Athletic Director Thomas Evans and Outdoor Education Director Barbara Garbutt.

"We looked at every conceivable administrative position in terms of its effects on students and in terms of which

(Continued on Page 2A)



What a deal

That's how drivers standing in line at the Boron station on Orchard Lake and 13 Mile were feeling last week as they found gasoline selling

for \$1.09 a gallon. Did you ever think the day would come when a \$1.09 a gallon would be a deal? (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Patients will see double

Twins head out for nursing jobs

By MARY GNIEWEK

Patients might think they're seeing double when they come out of anesthetic and observe identical twin nurses Debbie and Diane Joanna tending to their needs in a hospital recovery room.

The duo from Farmington Hills don't try to confuse people; it just happens naturally. To make matters worse, the two are inseparable.

Together they'll reach a milestone in their lives next month when they graduate from Madonna College in Livonia with bachelor's degrees in nursing.

They hope to work in the surgical ward of William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak where they have applied for jobs.

"We'd like to work together for a year or two. We can drive together, share the same experiences," said Diane, who wears her hair slightly different than her sister.

The two, practically mirrored images of each other, admit they've been confusing people almost since birth 22 years ago.

"Senior year we've been together the whole time. It took some teachers until the end of the course to tell us apart. We drove them crazy," Debbie said.

Diane was the first of the two to show an interest in nursing when the sisters were seniors at Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills and Debbie was thinking about a career in child development.

ABOUT SIX months later, Debbie opted for the nursing curriculum. By their junior year, the twins were taking the same classes together.

"We were always determined and motivated," Diane said. "We worked hard to get what we wanted."

"We relate to each other," said Debbie. "We study together all the time. It makes you feel like you're not alone."

Both single and living with their parents, James and Selma, the twins were the first family members to break from the family construction business.

An older brother and sister as well as both parents work for the firm. But for the past two summers, both worked as nursing assistants at Mt. Carmel Hospital in Detroit and Heritage Hospital in Taylor.

"Our family has been very supportive," Diane said.



DEBBIE JONNA

DIANE JONNA

"Dad paid for our education," Debbie added.

Eventually Debbie plans to pursue podiatry while Diane has her eye on obstetrics. Both want to go back to school in a year for master's degrees.

What happens if Beaumont accepts one and not the other?

Both looked at each other and smiled.

"They'll accept us both," Diane said assuredly. "There's a big demand for nurses."

"I don't think we'll have a tough time getting a job together," Debbie added.

District announces teacher layoffs

Thirty-four Farmington teachers will be laid-off June 14, which is one-third the number "pink-slipped" during the past two consecutive school years.

School officials warn that this year's situation is the exception and not the norm due to early scheduling of teaching assignments to accommodate the shift to middle schools and four year high schools in September.

"For the past three years the board of education was presented with a list of over 100 teachers to be pink slipped above the amount needed to insure certified and qualified persons were

placed properly," explained Lewis Schuman, superintendent of Farmington Public Schools.

"We hope that with additional leaves, resignations and transfers additional people will be placed in jobs," added Robert Coleman, personnel director for the district.

Laid-off teachers can opt for a reserve teaching program in lieu of unemployment compensation. In it, they earn a higher rate of pay for consistent substitute teaching: \$50 a day compared to the standard rate of \$35 a day.

what's inside

At Your Leisure 4C
Suburban Life section and you'll find Loraine McClish writing about the good sounds coming from the Oakway Symphony and music dedicated to senior citizens. To see what its all about turn to Section B.

GOOD MUSIC

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