

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Candidate for top schools job: It's about leadership

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

C. Robert Maxfield said it's not about money. It's not about time. Rather, when it comes to running a successful school district, said Maxfield, "The single most important ingredient is leadership."

When Maxfield speaks of leadership, he's not just whittling the term to endear himself to prospective employers.

Berkley School District operates on 43 mills, one of the highest in Oakland County. That means residents pay \$43 for every \$1,000 of state equalized property value.

Why? First, there's the practical explanation. The school district has little commercial property, relying mainly on a smaller residential tax base.

As superintendent, Maxfield has had to go to tax-strapped voters four times for an assortment of Headlee overrides and millage requests. All but one — in June 1990 — has succeeded.

There, the leadership quotient comes into play. "I think he sold it very well," said Berkley city manager Cal Teague, "... he basically outlines their goals and what they want to accomplish. He's very up front."

"He takes that extra step to work with the community and keeps voters informed." Maxfield is disarming, generous with a handshake and accommodating with a smile. Education-also doesn't dominate conversation.

Maxfield approaches employee relations, cultural diversity and other matters of potential conflict with similar gentility. "Some people feel tuned out," said Maxfield during his second board interview Dec. 1. "We have to find a way to let them in, accept their barbs, and get them on



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHANNON LEMMONS

The man from Berkley: C. Robert Maxfield, superintendent of the Berkley Schools, talks with Frederica Frost, director of Assessment, Evaluation and Special Projects for the Farmington Hills Schools.

our side."

An example of such an approach can be found in how Berkley schools has dealt with cultural diversity. The district, which includes Berkley, Huntington Woods and the northern part of Oak Park, has seen an influx of Russian and Chaldean residents as well as African Americans.

One elementary school boasts of 14 different languages being spoken in its building. Maxfield has embraced such diversity, having newsletters include Arabic and other languages.

The district has also contended with the growing pains associated with such changes.

When disputes between ethnic groups spilled over into fights at the high school, a communication retreat was organized. Student leaders went to camp together and discussed their differences. Fights dwindled.

Leadership Maxfield speaks of comes through experience. He's approaching his 30th year as an educator, starting out as a student teacher at Mumford High School in 1964.

Maxfield has both doctorate and master's degrees from Wayne State University and a bachelor's degree from Albion College.

He was a social studies teacher from 1965-73 at Birmingham Seaholm High before moving into administration.

Maxfield joined the Berkley School District as an assistant principal in 1973. He was principal at Clawson High before returning to Berkley to serve as deputy superintendent. He became superintendent in 1988.

Leadership, to Maxfield, also means being accessible. That includes things such as meeting the

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Chat: Thomas Shorkey, head of the East China school system, chats with Farmington board member Helen Prutow and Farmington Hills councilman Aldo Vagnozzi.



Superintendent candidate says he's a communicator

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A member of the audience asked Thomas Shorkey a question. He turned in his chair and faced the inquirer. His shoulders were square and his eyes focused. The query was a direct one. The person simply wanted to know what's his strongest attribute.

"Number one, I'm a communicator," said Shorkey, 47. "I recognize communication means more than being able to talk. It means more than being able to write. It means being able to listen to people and hearing what they are really saying."

"Secondly, I'm honest." Shorkey is not short on directness. He presents himself as someone who knows the nuts and bolts of a situation and provides the oil for easy application.

His credentials reflect a hands-on approach. Since 1989, Shorkey has served as superintendent of East China School District. He immersed

himself in various facets of central office administration prior to becoming school chief.

He was the district's assistant superintendent for personnel from 1988-1989. Before that, he was assistant superintendent for curriculum and director for elementary curriculum for the district, which is in the state's thumb area.

He has an education specialist's degree from Wayne State University and master's and bachelor's degrees from Michigan State University.

Those experiences, as well as being a teacher and a principal, have served him well in his ascent to the superintendent's post.

Some accomplishments during his tenure have included: starting a districtwide schools of choice program, helping develop district-level goals with the board of education and completing a three-year restructuring of the curriculum for kindergarten through second grade.

"I feel I have a leadership style that holds things together and encourages teamwork," said Shorkey, who grew up in Marine City, East China School District presents challenges. The district encompasses Marine City and St. Clair, two neighboring but divergent communities.

"There's a rivalry in the district," said George Joachim, a past trustee of East China School District. "Tom is a hometown product. He's been adept at not favoring one over the other."

Those on both sides agree. Said St. Clair police Sgt. Donald Barnum: "If you're looking to see if there is any bias... not at all."

Added Marine City Police Chief John Kelly: "What you see is what you get. Your gain, our loss, if it works out that way." With 5,000 students and 825 employees, the out-of-formula district runs on a \$30 million

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Secondary interviews were wrapped up Thursday with Shorkey answering questions from trustees and community members. Maxfield's interview took place Wednesday.

Receptions for both finalists took place prior to the Q&A sessions at the Farmington Training Center.


Questions in the second interviews were more direct, designed to solicit specific answers from the finalist. Things such as how they both responded to the audience and even their body language were being observed.

Those attending felt both Maxfield and Shorkey were impressive.

"I think it's going to be a difficult decision," said Debbie Cornwell, president of the PTA Council. "They both seem equally enthusiastic."

"I think one of them is more a visionary and the sky-is-the-limit type of person. That is Maxfield. Shorkey is more of a doer, a bit simpler perhaps. ... I think they both did real well. Both are genuine. I couldn't call it."

Added Farmington resident Laura Myers, who attended both interviews: "Both appear to be very good candidates. I would commend the board in how the process has been handled. ... I'd be happy and content with either one."



SANTA'S CALLING

REGISTRATION CARD

Farmington Hills Department of Special Services has prepared a North Pole Hotline for Santa Claus or Mrs. Santa Claus to call your child on Tuesday, Dec. 14, between 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. free of charge. All forms must be mailed or dropped off by 4:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 10, at Farmington Hills Special Services Department.

Farmington Hills Special Services Department
Care of Santa Claus
31555 Eleven Mile Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

Child's name and address: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ Teacher's name: _____

Friend's name: _____ Friend's name: _____

Brothers' names and ages: _____

Sisters' names and ages: _____

Pets' names: Dog: _____ Cat: _____ Other: _____

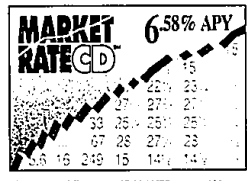
Specific gifts your child would like to get: _____

Message that Santa could relay: _____

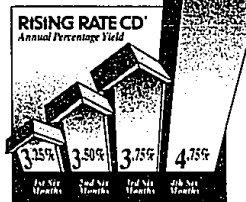
PHONE NUMBER: _____ (sorry - no long distance calls)

Call before 6:30 p.m. Call after 6:30 p.m.

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RIISING RATE CD
Annual Percentage Yield

6.58% is the Annual Percentage Yield (APY) you would have earned on a two-year deposit maturing on October 23, 1993. APY is based on historic results and is not intended to indicate future results or returns.


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Wall Street Thrills Without Wall Street Chills.

This year we're offering you a blue chip opportunity to invest in a new kind of two-year CD. One that allows you to go after Wall Street's potentially higher rates without risking your principal. Your Market Rate CD can be opened with a low \$2,000 minimum deposit. At the end of each 52-week period, your interest is calculated based on the average change in the S & P 500® Index** as reported in *The Wall Street Journal*. And at maturity, you're guaranteed a 100% return of your FDIC-insured initial deposit. The new Market Rate CD. Now the best way to lock in the market's high earnings potential is with a CD that has no risk to principal.

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Every six months of its initial two-year term, our Rising Rate CD gives you a guaranteed increase in your interest rate without locking you in. The rate earned for each six-month period rises as the chart above indicates, giving you 4.75% APY during the final six-month period.* You can withdraw all of your investment within the first 10 days of any six-month interval during the initial two-year term without penalty. Or you can make a partial withdrawal without penalty as long as you maintain a \$1,000 balance. And the minimum deposit amount is only \$1,000. The Rising Rate CD. The liquidity you want, with the guaranteed interest growth you need.

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