

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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'An unprecedented change'

Teachers opt for benefits in contract

By SUSAN AVERILL.

A possible change in the present teaching contract will save the Farmington School District \$100,000 and allow teachers to go home with a little extra money in their pockets.

The savings will reduce the district's loss in state aid to \$161,000. This figure includes a \$140,000 loss because of a reduction in enrollment.

In a press conference Tuesday morning, school administrators and Farmington Education Association (FEA) representatives announced a proposed change in the 1973-74 master contract.

The change, as it will be voted upon by teachers Friday, stipulates that the school district take over payment of the teachers' five per cent retirement contribution to the Michigan Public School Retirement System, in lieu of paying teachers a previously agreed upon six per cent pay increase during 1973-74.

Still subject to ratification by the school board and the teachers, the agreement would mean the teachers would take home slightly larger checks than they would if they received the six per cent increase according to a joint press release.

The move was heralded by both sides as an "unprecedented change" in an already settled contract.

schools' goals stated during the April millage campaign.

"For the Farmington Schools, this agreement represents a fulfillment of the promises we made to the voters last spring when we asked them for an increase in the millage rate for the schools," he said.

"Last spring when we went to the voters, we promised to provide a complete educational program because of the recent cuts in state aid and a greater loss in enrollment than projected for this year, the district would have been hard pressed to meet all of our promises.

"The \$100,000 plus reduction in the teacher payroll will go a long way toward helping us keep those commitments," he said.

Ringstrom credited the idea to the administration. By state law, all districts must make similar contract adjustments during the 1973-74 school year.

Giving an example of the new aspect to the contract, Ringstrom said a teacher earning \$10,600 which included his raise, would lose the \$600, but end up with his retirement contributions already paid and an additional \$3.66 per check. The additional amount the teacher will receive will depend on his salary and tax bracket.

The new agreement, Ringstrom said, would be retroactive to July 1, the beginning of the school year.

teacher's net pay.

Van Arneyde announced that fourth Friday enrollments showed a 651-student decrease, or 140 less students than the district projected. That means, he said, a further reduction in the school budget of \$140,000.

Earlier in the year, the schools had been hurt by an 11th-hour decision by the State Legislature to cut school aid by six-tenths of one per cent. For the Farmington district, this meant a loss of \$121,000.

Total enrollment figures for the district were given as 14,715, with 6,718 in elementary schools, Junior High schools have 3,754 students and seniors 4,233, for a total of 7,997 in secondary schools.

The schools and the FEA also announced agreement on a tentative one-year contract for 1973-74. The present teaching contract expires at the end of this school year.

"The agreement represents what we believe to be a fair agreement for both sides. Ratification this early will mean that the board and teachers can continue to concentrate on providing the best possible school programs for students in Farmington," Ringstrom said.



Elementary schoolers who cross Nine Mile at Shawasse must cut through a field or ride bikes along the shoulder of often congested Nine Mile. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

"THIS AGREEMENT is highly unusual in that each side can see a very clear advantage to this," said Hubard Ringstrom, executive director of the FEA.

Supt. Marvyn Van Arneyde said the agreement would help accomplish the

ALTHOUGH DETAILS remained to be ironed out, he said a correction check will probably be issued. The check will erase the six per cent increase while raising the level of the

Residents protest walkway; fear for safety of children

By CORINNE ABATT

Every school day about 90 youngsters leave Shawasse Elementary School, walk east on a sidewalk on Shawasse, come to a fence, move to the roadway and continue to Nine Mile.

A crossing guard at the point where Shawasse angles into Nine Mile, stops the traffic as the youngsters, often a dozen at a time, cross the busy artery. Once on the other side, they have a choice of following the muddy paths through the field to the subdivisions behind or walking the Nine Mile shoulder.

They choose, in practically all cases, to maneuver the path

don't bring any results he will go to the state level.

He recently mailed a copy of one letter to 11 officials by registered mail and received two acknowledgments.

One of the problems is obvious, the former orchard is private property and school officials have appealed to Floyd Cairns, Farmington Hills city clerk, for help. Cairns says he has been down to inspect the area, but has not been able to talk to the property owner.

HE EMPHASIZES it is private property and the eventual solution may be to gain approval from the property owners for a walkway, easement there.

"We're trying and hopefully we'll

get that easement," Cairns said.

This means, however, that the children will have a longer walk along the road shoulder and doesn't necessarily solve the problem of the children who cross Nine Mile and head west.

Meanwhile, Laliberte is working on solutions of his own, mentioning as he lists them, that the fence on the back of the orchard was put up on an Edison easement without a permit.

"Some of the parents," he says, "want a light at Shawasse and Nine Mile. Some think our kids should be bused although I guarantee that it would cost the district about \$60,000 a year to operate two buses to pick up 90 kids."

He estimates an easement through

the field might cost about \$4,000, an unlikely solution because the owner has shown interest in building on the site. The easement and accessway on vacated Shawasse could cost about \$4,000, Laliberte suggests.

Also on his list of solutions would be to transfer the students south of Nine Mile to the closer William Gray school and if there is not enough space, install portables at Gray.

None of these are final. The only thing certain is that the route those youngsters take to and from school each day has their parents' worried. There is always a group of mothers waiting at the corner to shepherd the little ones through the maze-like highway route.



A safety hazard? Children from Grand River Homes subdivision cross private property and edge through a corner of a newly erected fence to make it home from school. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Why students should enjoy their educational training

By SUSAN AVERILL.

"Not everything in education is fun, just as not everything in life is fun," Mel Blackman said philosophically.

Enjoyment, however, is still an important ingredient in a child's educational career, the principal of Woodcreek Elementary School said.

"The programs should be enjoy-

able, educational and worthwhile. Children need to be given a sense of responsibility. An assignment should be reasonable and appropriate for them."

Blackman was born in Detroit but lived in St. Johns, 20 miles north of Lansing, during his school years.

He received his bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and his masters from Wayne State University. He has taught only in Farmington since he began his teaching career in 1963 at Highmeadow Elementary.

WHILE THERE, he was a fifth and sixth grade teacher. Later he became an administrative intern at Larkshire Elementary and was appointed princi-

pal of Bond Elementary the next year.

Four years later, the school was closed and he was transferred to Woodcreek Elementary. He replaced Lawrence Freedman as principal when Freedman was appointed assistant superintendent of elementary education.

Married 10 years to his wife, Helene, Blackman has lived in Farmington for three years. "Not only did I like the community, but I am extremely fond of the elementary here," The Blackmans have two sons in Farmington schools, one in third grade and another in kindergarten.

Being a teacher can be a learning (Continued on page 7A)

Farmington O&E conducts seminar

We want to get to know you better. To accomplish this, the Farmington Observer & Eccentric is conducting a public seminar on Thursday, Oct. 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the Holiday Inn, Ten Mile and Grand River.

The seminar will explain the basic guidelines needed to get the word to your club or organization out to the public by using your community newspaper.

The seminar is free and open to publicity chairmen, club presidents and interested individuals from civic groups. Each participant will receive a pamphlet of general information on how to prepare stories and pictures for a newspaper or other publication. During the seminar participants

will be able to sit in on three informal discussions.

One discussion will cover how local news editors work and the type of articles they will consider for publication. The second is handled by the editor of our Farmington Suburban Life section. The third is devoted to photography—how to work with a photographer and what makes a good photograph.

Following the three workshops, everyone is invited to join in refreshments and informal talk with our staff members.

If you wish to attend the seminar, fill out the registration form and mail it to the Farmington Observer & Eccentric, P.O. Box 80, Southfield, 48075. See you there.

FARMINGTON PUBLICITY-PRESS RELATIONS SEMINAR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 - 8 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 38123 Ten Mile, Farmington
Phone 352-5400

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