

## Lightman eyes board's future

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doesn't propose every new program that comes down the pike just to please members of the board."

LICHTMAN BELIEVES the current board is too concerned with the day-to-day administrative responsibilities of the district instead of setting policy and giving clear direction to the administration.

"All too often our present board members choose to stick their noses into daily affairs of the system rather than understand their role, which is that of policy making. If they want to be superintendents, let them go apply for jobs someplace."

"The board's function is to make policy and hire a superintendent to carry out that policy," Lichtman declares.

Although Lichtman first was elected to the board in 1968, he resigned after three years, mostly for personal reasons, but, in part, because of his defense of the district's sex education program.

"I had started a new job with the company and there was discussion about a transfer. But the abusive phone calls we were getting when we introduced sex education influenced the decision. Some of us stood up and took a lot of flack, but once the program was installed, my business and family responsibilities forced me to resign."

It was the board's actions concerning a superintendent, however, which motivated Lichtman to run for the board again in 1973.

The 1973 board chose to ask a superintendent to resign without telling the public why, which cost the district \$60,000 to pay a contract off. I was very concerned with the avenues of change the board was taking."

After serving on the Farmington Board of Education, as well as six years on the Oakland County Intermediate School Board, Lichtman believes he's fulfilled some of his responsibilities to the community.

His accomplishments, he says, include decisions updating of texts; in-depth language programs; greater emphasis on practical skills; new math programs; expansion of media specialist programs; and such innovations as the open-classroom concept at Woodcreek Elementary.

"Unfortunately, I don't like to think about what cutbacks have done to my school system," he says, adding that much of his time has been devoted to budgetary cutbacks.

"We get the opportunity to pilot a program, and then we have to drop it."

He blames "impossible" state aid programs and millage defeats for the financial problems of the district. But, he adds, the board hasn't always approached millage requests properly.

"Maybe we just don't explain well enough what we're talking about for additional millage," he says.

"ONE OF THE biggest problems for past boards and in the future is how do we cut our expenses and preserve our best programs. I've tried to recognize the economy and job depression and I've tried to be honest with people about the economic needs of this school district."

"I think I've been fiscally responsible and championed the cause of reducing our debt levy, and I've probably brought an understanding of school financing to the board."

And he thinks the board's basic job remains the same: To prepare youngsters for their roles in a changing society. He'd like to see some interest reactivated in the minority understanding program, once a controversial program that's been relegated to a minor role in the district's overall program.

"Too many board members espouse an attitude that they believe in minority understanding but don't give clear direction to the administration in carrying it out. The family-life education series included three programs: sex education, substance abuse and minority understand. But the toughest one for this community is minority understanding."

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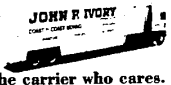


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