

102 ponder Farmington future

Bucks to decide teachers' fate

By LYNN ORR

While students and teachers are presently enjoying Easter vacation, at least 102 Farmington staff members may be contemplating the future—or the lack of a future—in Farmington schools.

What often can be more problematical for the pink-slipped teachers is that termination is not a foregone certainty.

At this same time last year, 99 teachers were pink-slipped. Only nine of those, all secondary staffers, have not yet received a recall notice.

Pink-slipping and recall is based on contract language, which requires a 60-day notification of termination; lack of knowledge about teachers presently on leave who may be returning in the fall; and estimates of enrollment decline, says Dr. LeRoy Bartman, director of personnel.

"One of the problems is placing people in the right slot, certification alone isn't the guide," says Bartman. "A lot will depend on going for additional mileage and the economic situation in the fall," he says, plus the possibility of some teachers resigning who have not yet notified the district. Richard Ringstrom, executive director of the Farmington Education Association (FEA), agrees that pink-slipping slightly less than 10 per cent of Farmington teachers seems to be a necessity at this point.

But he's hopeful the majority of teachers will be recalled either next fall or during the year.

"At this point, we don't know what's going to happen," he says. "A good number of those people, who just got laid off, will probably not be recalled," he projects.

And for some who received either their third or fourth layoff notice

since their hiring date, morale often is a problem.

"They know why it's happening, but it bothers them," he explains. "They have to question why they're put in this position every spring."

Although Ringstrom concedes that a number of those laid-off will probably investigate the possibility of alternative employment, the FEA's job is to provide their members with jobs. And Ringstrom believes that job coincides with the goal of providing the best education for Farmington students.

"We have the facilities and staff to provide a better educational system than we have at present," he says. And the FEA hopes to attain some

gains for its members that may alleviate some problems for the school district.

"We've been looking at early retirement inducements, some kind of bonus factor," he says. "When people on the higher end of the scale retire, you can bring back those on the layoff list who are on a lower pay scale."

Another consideration for the bargaining team will be reduction of class size, a high economic item for the district, Ringstrom admits.

"I think there will be a conscientious effort on both sides to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio," he says. "We're about two students higher on the average in class size than last year."

Student-teacher ratio in the 1975-76 school year averaged 26.1, while the present ratio is at 28.1, Ringstrom says.

"If we can go back to the 1975-76 level, which was the lowest level we've seen here, a number of those teachers could be recalled right away."

OF THE 102 TEACHERS pink-slipped, declining enrollment is responsible for 26 and possible budget shortfalls account for 10, according to Supt. Lewis Schulman.

Also, 66 teachers are currently on leave and will have until Aug. 1 to notify the district of their intentions to return to classrooms in the fall.

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23 Channel 'CB' 49⁸⁸

PAGE CB123A

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