

School Reform: What Milliken Proposed

Here's your program for watching the State Legislature continue to do battle over Gov. William Milliken's education reform proposals.

Your local legislators and representatives are wrestling now with 13 bills and three proposed constitutional amendments aimed at the following:

THE SCHOOL AID BILL: The governor recommends a total increase of \$183 million for 1970-71, of which \$70 million would be allocated for basic membership allowances on a new aid formula of \$535 per pupil minus 14 mills.

The proposed bill would set a minimum required millage of 12 for partial local district participation and a rate of 16 mills for full participation.

Of the \$183 million total package, \$730 million would be allocated for teacher-pupil ratio reduction (which would

add approximately 3,500 teachers) to be available only to districts currently levying 20 mills or more for operation and having a pupil-teacher ratio of 15:1.

...\$45 million would be used to meet retirement obligations.

...\$35 million would be allocated to assist in paying the salaries of an estimated 5,800 certified lay teachers of secular subjects in accredited non-public schools (the parochial provision).

QUALITY, EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT:

The governor proposes to use \$1 million for development of a state-wide assessment program to be administered in grades 1, 2, 4, 7 and 10.

He proposes also to seek to identify areas of need, particularly in reading and mathematics, focusing upon achieve-

ment standards, public data, local evaluations, incentives to innovate and state budgeting information.

NEIGHBORHOOD EDUCATION CENTERS:

The governor proposes to initiate new local education centers to focus on the problems of urban schools.

He specifically recommends establishment of a public non-profit organization to combine expertise of state government, the education community and private enterprise to initiate centers that will work with dropouts.

FUTURE AID

The governor recommends change from state aid formulas to budget management based upon state guidelines, and plans to introduce legislation to enable full operation by March, 1971 for use in 1972-73.

He further proposes that operational spending maximums be determined by the state, with the local districts largely retaining educational spending authority.

PROPERTY TAXES

The governor proposes to initiate a 16-mill state property tax levy for education (via constitutional amendment) to replace local educational taxes on property, to become effective with tax statements December 1971.

With this, property tax relief would occur during fiscal 1971-72, and the corresponding revenue losses for education at the local level would be sustained that same year.

The 16-mill levy would represent an approximate eight-mill decrease in the statewide average, or \$300 to \$400 million less than is presently collected from the property tax.

The new state property tax would be administered through the existing tax structure.

Local districts would be permitted to levy, by vote of the people, an extra three mills against a state guaranteed base of \$30,000 valuation per pupil (yielding \$90 per pupil).

NEW TAX REVENUE

The governor proposes:

- A five-cent increase in the per pack tax on cigarettes (yield: \$18 million in fiscal 1969-70 and \$45 million in fiscal 1970-71).

Elimination of the property tax credits applicable to the state income tax due in April 1971 (yield: \$116 million in fiscal 1970-71).

REORGANIZATION

State Reorganization: The governor has proposed abolition of the existing State Board of Education and the post of state superintendent, and the creation (by constitutional amendment in November 1970) of the post of state director of education appointed by the governor and approved by the Senate.

Regional Reorganization: In his verbal presentation to the Legislature, Gov. Milliken deleted a substantial portion of this section of his original text, but in it...

...He proposed to replace the 60 existing intermediate county school districts with 10 to 15 regional units, to be responsible for special and vocational education, transportation, central purchasing, data processing, budget review, educational media and other appropriate services.

Procedure recommendations included establishment of a boundary commission to recommend by March 1970 precise regional boundaries; assignment of educational and business functions by July 1972; creation of regional boards composed of representatives selected by constituent school boards and appointment of regional directors by the state

director of education, subject to veto by the regional board.

Local Reorganization:

The governor proposed further reorganization and consolidation of local school districts "which are either too small to operate comprehensive programs or which operate less than a K-12 program," suggesting 2,000 pupils as a minimum size.

Consolidation could be achieved by local initiative or, failing this, a mandate after hearings.

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If a change to a statewide property tax is voted by the people, one possible plan for raising extra revenue to offset the loss of property tax

revenue and increasing educational costs would be increasing the income tax, effective Jan. 1, 1971.

On individuals--1.5 per cent to a total of 4.1 per cent;
On corporations--2.1 per cent to a total of 7.7 per cent;
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per cent to a total of 11 per cent.
Overall yield--\$212.2 million in 1970-71 and \$447.5 million in 1971-72.

SPLURGE! It's Christmas, isn't it?

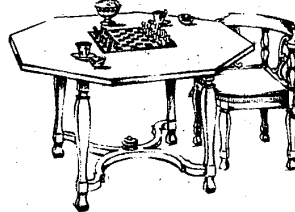
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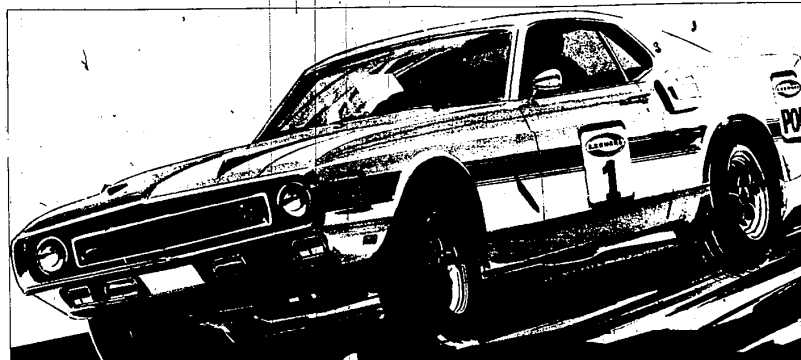
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