

# School districts muster opposition to Tisch tax cut

By LEONARD POGER

Public schools will be affected in the pocketbook by two major tax proposals on the ballot.

A third proposal, sponsored by Robert Tisch to cut property taxes in half, may not make it on the Nov. 4 ballot.

following an Ingham County circuit court ruling Thursday.

That ruling said that there were legal deficiencies in the Tisch proposal. Tisch is sure to appeal that decision. If he wins his appeal, the tax plan could be placed on the November ballot.

But public school officials generally

are not as united in opposition to tax proposals as they were two years ago when they opposed Tisch and two other tax plans.

One apparent reason is that they are unsure of the specific impact of how the proposals, if approved by voters, would affect them.

FOR EXAMPLE, a group of Western Wayne County school districts agreed two months ago to formally oppose the Tisch plan but will "wait until the smoke clears" before taking a position on the other plans.

That group is the Michigan Association of Improved Legislation, a special interest group made up of nine school districts, including Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Garden City, Wayne-Westland, and Redford Union.

One plan, called the Smith-Bullard proposal after its legislative sponsors, would reduce most property taxes, initiate a state-wide property tax of about half the current rate, and institute a 1 percent state income tax for education. The new state-wide property tax would replace all current property taxes for local schools.

Voters could approve up to 10 mills (\$10 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation) in local taxes and/or levy a local income tax to supplement the state-wide property tax for local education.

Another plan, put together by the governor's office and legislative leaders, would substantially reduce property taxes and raise funds through an increase in the state sales tax.

BUT THE MICHIGAN Association of School Boards has gone on record as

opposing all three proposals. (The group's board of directors unanimously opposed the three plans Aug. 25, a week before the Tisch proposal was blocked from the ballot by the Ingham court ruling.)

The MASA said that while the Tisch plan would be the most severe in reducing of school revenues, the other two plans wouldn't represent any improvement in the current state tax system.

The MASA board, acting on recommendations from a committee which spent several months reviewing the tax proposals, said two criteria must be considered in any recommendations.

One is that a tax system must provide adequate revenues to fund services by state and local governments. The other is that the taxes available to governmental units must provide a stable source of revenue.

The problems with the Smith-Bullard and gubernatorial-legislative leadership proposals are that they depend on income tax and sales tax revenues. Those two sources are subject to fluctuations depending on the economic conditions.

If there is a recession and reduction in state revenues, both the state and local schools will share in the loss, the MASA said.

The gubernatorial-legislative proposal, some school officials say, would only replace one tax with another, keeping the available state revenues for education the same as before.

He said the plan is designed "to eliminate the large disparities that exist in the funding of education and provide equal opportunity for all public school students."

King said that \$4.1 billion would be needed in the proposed five-year phase-in period and that the property tax rate on businesses would have to be raised to \$30.5 per \$1,000 (the current average is \$29.50) and a boost in the personal income tax rate from the present 4.6

percent to 6.6 percent.

One aspect of the gubernatorial-legislative proposal that school officials like is that \$188 million a year in lottery revenues would be earmarked for public education.

Currently, the money is put in the state's general fund and used for all programs and local governmental reimbursements, including state aid payments to local school boards.

## Young summer readers completed 10,192 books

By actual count, 10,192 books were read this summer by youngsters who were members of the Farmington Community Library's Summer Reading Club called "Passport to Books."

"Travel the world at your library" was the slogan for the record-breaking 1,074 children enrolled in the club. A total of 641 of that number read better than six books and were awarded World Traveler reading certificates.

For every two books reported read, stickers were earned and placed on the Passport-Reading Record along with book titles and authors. Children had their names moved along eight bulletin boards, one for every two books read.

Also, stamps were put on world maps, posted on the library wall, for each book read.

Throughout the summer, thematic programs based on the club's traveling to different countries theme were offered. Treasure hunts, movies, olympic events, stories, riddles and tricks and guessing games highlighted the programs at both library branches.

About 550 children attended the wind-up party in Civic Theatre. Mac-

Donald's Mello Yello served refreshments. Reading certificates were awarded. Ronald MacDonald furnished a magic show.

The Farmington area MacDonald's donated MacDonald's certificates.

## 2 from area join honors college

Two Farmington Hills residents are among 49 students admitted to the Honors College at Michigan State University.

Linda C. Lawson and Janice Somerville of Farmington Hills were admitted to the college which requires students submit a statement of values, goals and interests before being selected for the school.

Ms. Lawson, daughter of David and Ann Lawson, is majoring in accounting.

Ms. Somerville, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Somerville is majoring in journalism.

Both are 1979 graduates of North Farmington High School.

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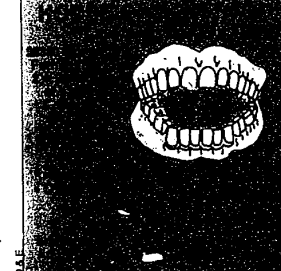
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