

Walled Lake schools examine school closing options

More elementary schools in the Walled Lake School District will be closed during the 1983-84 academic year, as a result of action Monday by the school board.

Specifically, the board by a 5-2 vote said it will not close another elementary school in 1983-84.

The two dissenting votes were cast by board president Robert Cooper and Patricia Jackman. Cooper said it was premature to take a hard, fast position until "we know more about what our financial situation is going to be," while Jackman expressed similar sentiments.

"I'd love to be able to tell everyone

we're not going to close a school, but we have no assurances about revenues," she said, pointing specifically to various tax appeals, assessment hearings and further decline in state aid.

"There are a lot of factors which could force this board into an embarrassing situation (if anticipated revenues do not materialize)," she added. "I think we have to keep our options open."

The board's decision to close no more schools in 1983-84 followed receipt of a special report from the Citizens Committee on Declining Enrollment and Facility Utilization.

The committee, which was formed last year and prepared a report which ultimately led to the closing of Union Lake Elementary, was reconvened in September to study the effect of declining enrollments on the future use of school facilities.

Committee chairman Steven Lasher said Monday that the group recommends all 11 elementary schools remain open in 1983-84. "All available space in the elementary schools is essentially being effectively utilized," said Lasher.

"The committee strongly believes that the closing of an elementary school in the 1983-84 school year is not

warrented, nor can it be justified for any reason other than financial."

Additionally, Lasher reported that the expected enrollment decline over the next five years does not constitute an enrollment equal to one elementary school.

He noted, however, that space is potentially available for closing another school within the next five years if the board decides it's necessary for financial reasons. At the same time, he emphasized the committee's belief that space currently available for elementary programs such as art, music and learning disabilities must not be sacri-

ficed by prematurely closing a school.

According to data prepared by the committee, enrollment in Walled Lake Schools has declined steadily from 1978-79, when there were 11,400 students, to the present. Official fourth Friday-count figures show current enrollment at 9,174.

Lasher said the committee projects a further decline over the next five years to a low of 8,198 in 1985-87. At that time, he said, enrollment will begin to rise.

He noted that the declining enrollment experienced over the past five years may be a blessing "because it has allowed for the permanent housing in full-sized classrooms of such programs as art, music and learning disabilities."

Other recommendations made by the committee include:

- Retain 11 elementary schools and redistrict the elementary population to achieve a proper balance and utilization of each elementary school. Lasher noted that enrollment at Dublin is approaching 700 students, while Wixom and Tawas are substantially under capacity.
- Retain 11 elementary schools and

use surplus space primarily for district-related purposes such as special education, community education, adult education and senior citizens.

- Adopt a middle school concept in 1985-86 when enrollment in grades seven and eight has decreased to such an extent that the addition of sixth graders will not overpopulate the two existing junior high schools.
- Request additional millage for repair and maintenance of district facilities. Lasher said the committee recognizes that a previous maintenance millage proposal was defeated by voters, but continues to believe the board cannot continue to allow its buildings to deteriorate.
- Close one elementary school and utilize the vacated building as a centralized community education building with appropriate space for senior citizens.
- Close one elementary school and use the vacated building as a centralized administration building. The current administration building could then be used as a community education facility with appropriate space for senior citizens.

obituaries

VIRGINIA M. CROSSLEY

Mrs. Crossley, 42, of Farmington Hills died Dec. 10 in Sinai Hospital.

Mrs. Crossley was a school teacher for the Farmington Public Schools.

Survivors include her husband, Terrence; sons, Terrence Jr. and Scott; parents, Sidney and Dorothy Bunce.

Services were Dec. 14 at Redford Baptist Church with the Rev. Dr. Wesley Evans officiating. Burial was in White Chapel Cemetery. Troy. Arrangements were made by Ross B. Northrop & Son Funeral Home.

CLARISSA MARTINDALE WARNER

Mrs. Warner, 87, of Birmingham, formerly of Farmington, died Dec. 10. Mrs. Warner was a homemaker.

Survivors include her sons, Alan Warner and Harley Allan; one sister, Mrs. Thomas Richardson, and five grandchildren.

Services were Dec. 16 at Christ Church Cranbrook. Arrangements were made by William R. Hamilton Funeral Home, Birmingham. Memorials may be made to Camp Oakland, 930 E. Drayner Road, Oxford, Mich.

DOUGLAS J. PAGE (J.D.)

Mr. Page, 43, of Canton died Dec. 11 in St. Mary Hospital.

Mr. Page worked for Earl S. Smith Co.

Survivors include his wife, Joan; sons, Douglas, Donald and Ronald; daughter, Vicki Sherk; brothers, Lional, Allen, and Raymond; sister, Robbie Talarico, Zula Zech, Lillie Ramsden and Frances Morrell; two grandchildren.

Services were Dec. 14 at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington with the Rev. Johnny Hall officiating. Burial was in Parkview Memorial Cemetery, Livonia.

CHARLES F. MERRIFIELD

Mr. Merrifield, 91, of Farmington Hills died Dec. 11 in Botsford Hospital.

Mr. Merrifield was a retired salesman.

Survivors include his wife, Madelyn; step-son, Robert Isbell, and two nieces, Betty Galbach and Margaret McKinley.

Services were Dec. 14 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Kenneth J. Hoffmaster officiating. Burial was in Oakview Cemetery, Royal Oak.

Duke re-elected

Thomas A. Duke, Farmington-area builder and chairman of the Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington, was re-elected as director of the 1.3-million-member Automobile Club of Mich-

igan's during its annual meeting in Dearborn recently.


Duke, who will serve a three-year term on the Auto Club's 16-member board, has been a director since 1976.

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Merry Christmas

The wondrous miracles of Christmas! May you and your family share in all its many blessings and experience the inner peace and brightness of that first Christmas Day. May the spirit of the season continue to enrich your lives throughout the coming year.



Sheryl Samp, Dr. Kevin Dittnick, Linda Sibai, Dr. Bryan Kostelnik, Dr. Gary Kotila, Kathleen Sanders, Mr. Frederick Williams, Barb Pankow, Dr. Sheldon White, Pattie Shekol

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