

Schools get better report card in '83 — Runkel

A national commission recently charged that U.S. schools perpetuate mediocre educational performance, but in Michigan, at least, parents seem to be giving educators passing grades.

Nearly half of all Michiganians gave their local public schools an A or B rating on the second annual poll by the State Board of Education.

"Results of the poll are encouraging," said Phillip E. Runkel, state superintendent of public instruction.

Overall, the state public schools received a better report card on the 1983 statewide poll compared with last year and significantly higher grades than public education received on the 1982 nationwide Gallup Poll.

Runkel said 46 percent of the 800 Michigan adults interviewed in the 1983 poll gave their schools an A or B, compared with 42 percent last year and 37 percent on the 1982 Gallup Poll.

"THE PUBLIC is aware, however, that Michigan's public schools have been dealing with serious financial problems that have resulted in curriculum cutbacks in many schools. The poll indicated that many citizens believe the curriculum in their school districts must be strengthened to prepare students for today's world."

The State Board of Education poll was conducted Feb. 7-9, when telephone interviews were conducted with

persons throughout the state. Households called were selected by computer. Poll results were tabulated before the National Bell commission issued its grim report.

Runkel said persons who have children in public schools gave higher marks for schools than persons without children in public schools. Some 58 percent of all public school parents gave schools an A or B when asked to rate their quality.

On the downside, 11 percent of all poll participants gave schools a D or E rating, compared with 14 percent on last year's Michigan poll and 19 percent on the Gallup Poll.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT findings in the 1983 Michigan Education Poll were:

- Nearly four out of 10 (38 percent) believe the quality of their local schools has remained about the same in recent years. 18 percent think schools are better, and 25 percent think they are getting worse.

- Forty-three percent feel financing is the biggest problem facing local schools, up from 35 percent who cited finances as the No. 1 issue last year.

- Fifty-seven percent believe school budgets should increase at the same rate as inflation, 23 percent said spending should remain at its present level, and 11 percent said it should be reduced.

- Forty-eight percent believe the curriculum in their schools should be changed to meet today's needs, while 34 percent said it now meets present needs. This is in sharp contrast to the Gallup Poll in which 45 percent said the curriculum should be changed and 42 percent believe it meets today's needs. Michigan citizens who believe the curriculum should be changed favor greater emphasis on basic skills, computer instruction, vocational-technical training, math and "hands-on" learning.

- Ninety-two percent of all public school parents said they feel welcome when they visit their child's school.

- Eighty percent said they have confidence in their child's teachers and 65 percent have confidence in the school's principal and in their school board.

- Fifty-six percent of all citizens would support merger of their school district with one nearby if it would result in better programs at lower cost, up from 48 percent last year.

- Sixty-three percent of all citizens favor charging fees for driver education, and 58 percent feel students participating in sports, band and other extra-curricular activities should pay a fee. However, 64 percent oppose charges for transportation to and from school.

- Eighty-seven percent feel adults and community education programs are important and 30 percent of all Michigan adults have enrolled in an adult or community education class during the last two years.

- Twenty-six percent believe schools should offer more computer instruction for their students and 67 percent agree that "computer literacy" should be a high school graduation requirement.

FORTY-SEVEN percent gave public schools a "good" or "excellent" rating on the way they spend their money and 28 percent ranked them "fair."

Sixty-eight percent oppose a four-day school week to reduce energy costs.

Runkel said the statewide survey, which is conducted as part of the State Board of Education's "Project Outreach," provides the governor, the legislature and the state board with statewide data on major issues facing public education in Michigan.

The survey also provides local and intermediate school boards with benchmark comparative data for surveys they are doing with the same questionnaire.

Project Outreach director Ned S. Hubbell, a national expert on education polls, coordinated the survey and wrote

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— Supt. Phillip Runkel

the 31-page report that interprets the responses made by the 800 persons who participated in the poll. The sample size was based on a 95-percent confidence that sampling error does not exceed 3.5 percent, Hubbell said.

to operate youth camp

Parents in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties have until June 30 to register their children in the July 11-22 summer arts for youth camp at Oakland University.

The camp is sponsored by OU and the Oakland County Intermediate School District to provide area children ages 5-15 with expert introductory level instruction in music, theatre, mime, dance and art.

To register a child, contact camp director Carl F. Berman at 377-3016. He is professor of art at OU. Only 100 campers will be admitted. Some scholarships are available for students whose parents are unable to pay. The price of \$150 includes the cost of instruction, morning and afternoon snacks, lunch and tickets to a July 17 performance of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Camp will be held 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. On July 22, the last day of the program, there will be performances, displays and exhibitions open to parents and the public.

SEMTA runs for Grand Prix

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) is offering a limited number of train tickets to the Detroit Grand Prix auto race Sunday, June 5.

Round-trip tickets are \$7.50 per person and are on sale at SEMTA's Transit Centre in the lobby of the First National Building, 800 Woodward, the center's open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. No other locations will sell tickets.

The train will depart from Pontiac at 7:45 a.m., Bloomfield Hills-Long Lake Road at 8 a.m., Birmingham at 8:15 a.m. and Royal Oak-Hill Mile at 8:30 a.m., arriving at the Renaissance Center Train Station at 9 a.m.

The train will depart from the Renaissance Center Station 45 minutes after the Kelly American Challenge for the return trip.

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Round Trip	N/A	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$50.00
Order 20 thru 50	\$25.00	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$125.00
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