

Residents speak out on school chief qualifications

By Teri Danas
staff writer

The new superintendent in the Clarenceville School District should be positive-minded, have strong financial and communication skills, be supportive of the staff in situations involving children and should have "backbone."

In short, the new superintendent should be a lot of things to a lot of people.

And by the way, four people said the superintendent should be a man.

Those were just a few of the viewpoints culled from a two-day open house held two weeks ago in the Clarenceville district, which includes parts of Livonia, Farmington Hills and Redford Township. The purpose of the sessions was to document just what kind of characteristics residents of the district would like to see in the top administrative post once David McDowell retires this year.

The sessions, held Jan. 10-11, were conducted by Carl Brautigam, a consultant from the Michigan Association of School Boards.

It was Brautigam's job to record the comments from primarily residents and district employees and administrators. Confidentiality was given to the participants, Brautigam said. His report will now be considered by the school board in its decision-making process over a new superintendent.

IN ALL about 30 people turned out. Brautigam said the majority of the respondents appeared to be parents and "longtime residents of the community."

"It's a normal response in a district that's been fairly calm and hasn't had a lot of furor," Brautigam said of the turn-out.

Desired administrative characteristics cited in the report include: a positive attitude toward team management, strong financial skills, an ability to practice an "open door policy" and be a good listener, experience in building administration, experience in motivating a well-established staff, a positive attitude about "in house" contract negotiations, a commitment to decentralized administration and an ability to work with administrative groups.

Other desired characteristics include: liking children, being supportive toward staff and student activities, being people-oriented and innovative. Several people made comments about how the selected person should view not only the position but the Clarenceville community.

At least three people suggested the person be "Clarenceville-oriented" and able to view the small school system as "a family."

Four people said the new superintendent should be familiar with the district and be able to "bring it back together."

BUT while others called for a familiarity with the district, it was a toss up among 10 people on a related question. Five people said the new superintendent should be "an outsider" while five said otherwise.

According to Brautigam, the school board is not asking for residency as a requirement in accepting applications, however.

So far, Brautigam said his perception from community and board comments is that the replacement should value Clarenceville's intimate quality as a small school system located in a metropolitan area.

The person should be able to work in the Clarenceville community — a small community in a metropolitan

complex. Clarenceville does not like to be known as Livonia — part of that huge system," he said.

Last Thursday Brautigam met with the school board to begin working out set criteria to be used in rating the candidates. It's his guess that the board will screen those before deciding which to interview in person, he said.

He said the screening should begin about March 10 with the interviews beginning about March 16. In addition, Brautigam will host a March 14 workshop for the board to teach them interviewing skills.

"Hopefully, they'll end up with 6-10 (candidates) that they're really interested in interviewing," Brautigam said. Those interviews must be done at a public meeting.

If the board moves swiftly, the consultant said a replacement could be named in April.

Cable group meets to discuss charges

The Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission will review cable consultant Harold Horro's study determining whether the MetroVision cable TV firm has lived up to ordinance requirements in building the tri-city cable franchise system at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Farmington City Hall.

Horro's compliance study was requested by the six-member commission in response to a dispute between MetroVision and residents in less densely populated neighborhoods who were told they could not receive cable TV unless they paid a \$200-\$300 installation fee.

The dispute, made public by angry residents in Farmington Hills' Power and 11 Mile neighborhood in early October, concerns who will pay for the installation of cable and whether some residents in the less-populated neighborhoods of the tri-city franchise area will get cable at all.

Under MetroVision's "line extension" policy, customers may be charged for cable installation in areas which have fewer than 30 houses in a linear mile.

Residents in populated areas have received cable installation free.

Walled Lake revises district budget

By Patricia N. Bowling
Novi-Walled Lake News

The Walled Lake Board of Education last week revised its operating budget to include an additional \$1.4 million for teacher salaries.

The new budget reflects about \$3.4 million in new tax revenue generated by the five-mill tax increase approved by voters last December. But \$2.1 million of this new money will be carried over for future years, said Russell Wright, assistant superintendent for business.

"We're still on a very tight budget," he told the board, cautioning that his five-year plan depends on carryover funds each year.

The board unanimously approved Wright's revised spending plan for the 1983-84 school year.

The most significant change from the original budget, approved last June, occurred under instructional expenses, Wright noted. In addition to returning \$1.4 million for teacher salaries, the new budget includes \$160,000 in teacher benefits, which covers some early retirements and unemployment expenses for the teachers laid off last November. The budget also includes funds for two additional elementary teachers because of increased enrollment.

THE NEW BUDGET adds \$42,000 under elementary supplies for purchase of science textbooks for kindergarten through grade four. Science books for fifth and sixth graders had been budgeted prior to the revision. All these books have been ordered, Wright noted.

An extra \$115,000 for legal fees was added because the district is involved

In many lawsuits, Wright said.

The board voted to reject the allocation of \$850 for the Middle School Study Committee from the amended budget. Several board members said they had reservations about the committee and suggested the issue be placed on the February agenda for discussion.

OTHER BUDGET changes include:

- Purchase of junior and senior high textbook. The purchase includes both junior and senior high mathematics books, costing about \$20,000. Money for these books was allocated in the original 1983-84 budget, but approval of the purchase was twice delayed by the board because of the district's precarious financial condition.
- More money for maintenance, supply and capital outlay expenditures. These items also were considered "on hold" until the tax-increase was approved.

(Maintenance Director Nelson O'Shaughnessy) has traditionally not spent a large part of his maintenance budget in case some disaster happened at the end of the year," Wright noted.

THE BOARD has received a "budget building timetable" for planning the 1984-85 school budget.

Building administrators and program directors received budget guidelines last week. Textbook requests for 1984-85 will be submitted by Feb. 13. A compiled budget is expected to be ready for committee review by March 9.

The budget will be presented to Superintendent Don Sheldon on March 28 and to the school board April 9. The board is scheduled to adopt the 1984-85 budget June 11.

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