

County schools help local units

Regional services focus on vocations, special education

By Diane Froa
staff writer

LAST YEAR, Oakland County taxpayers contributed \$26 million toward the operation of the Oakland County Intermediate School District and its programs.

That's in addition to what they paid in tax dollars to their local school districts.

But what do taxpayers get for their money?

William G. Keane, superintendent of the Oakland County Intermediate School District (ISD), has answered that question so often that his response has a presentation flair to it.

Keane, who came to the district in 1980, explained that the Oakland County ISD provides services on a regional level to its 28 local school districts.

AN ISD provides goods and services more cost-effectively, and of a higher quality, than can individual school districts acting independently, Keane contends.

The Oakland County ISD service area covers 925 square miles, affecting 230,000 public and non-public school children in 347 school buildings.

The ISD is responsible for providing special education to 11,000 of the nearly 20,000 children in the county who have special education needs. The ISD also operates four vocational education centers in the county.

To those who might question the need for the county level in the school system, Keane responds flatly, "Anyone who says that doesn't understand economics."

ACCORDING TO Keane, approximately 30 states, mostly those in the North and Midwest, operate regional school districts. In Michigan, the ISD system was added to the State Constitution in 1963, settling up autonomous county districts to act as intermediaries between the state Department of Education and the local school districts.

The Oakland County ISD is governed by a five-person board, all of



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Oakland County ISD

whom are elected by the local school district boards of education. State law requires that the local school boards approve the ISD's budgets.

"The concept is designed to help local school districts," Keane said. "We're a service agency for local districts," he said. County ISDs "have virtually no authority to do anything except special education," Keane said.

APPROXIMATELY 250 staff members, evenly divided between

professionals and support staff, work out of the Oakland County ISD building in Pontiac, Keane said.

The services the Oakland County ISD provides range from clinical diagnostic services to providing a storehouse of more than 7,000 films and 650 periodicals.

Four psychologists and four audiologists conduct testing at the clinical facilities in the Pontiac building at no cost to the local district, Keane said. Children considered difficult cases or in need of second opinions are tested and may be referred out to psychologists or medical doctors, Keane said.

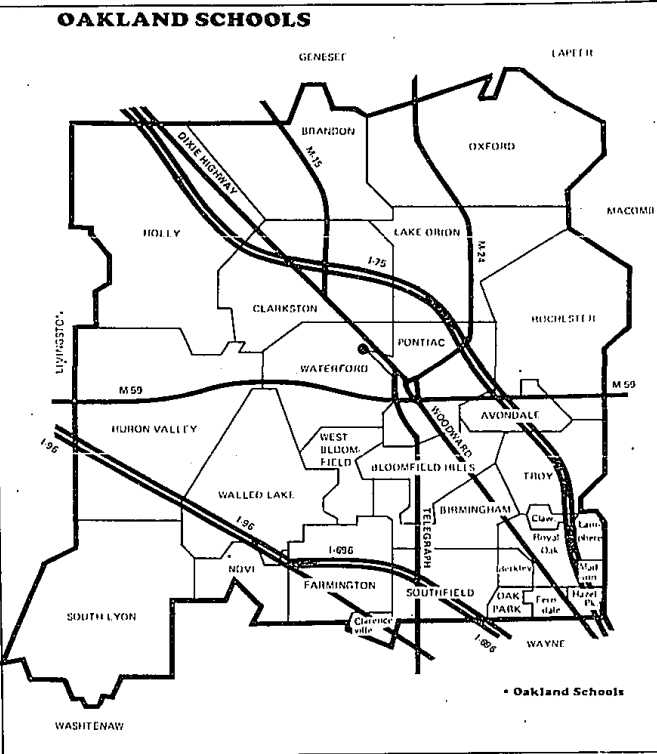
A DATA processing department at the Pontiac facility can be used on a co-op basis by the local school districts for instructional or administrative purposes. A satellite dish in the backyard allows the staff to tape programs to add to the facility's professional resource center.

A media production room provides the tools and enables teachers to purchase the materials to make everything from laminated maps, to colorful transparencies for overhead projectors to mass-produced jack-o-lantern cutouts.

The ISD runs in-service programs for private and public school personnel in the county. The topics range from energy management to micro-computer software in language arts instruction. Last year, 10,000 persons participated in the various in-service programs, Keane said.

ALL BUS drivers, cooks, bakers and other food service personnel are trained by the Oakland County ISD, Keane said — an example of how a regional center can offer services more cost efficiently. When deciding what those services are, Keane said, the ISD must ask, "Are there services we can offer on a regular basis, cost effectively, rather than duplicating them 28 times?"

If the ISD did not exist, Keane said, the local school districts would have to provide all in-service training for their teachers, buy all their own audio-visual and computer equipment, and conduct all their own clinical and



computer services. "Every single thing that we do would have to be replicated," Keane said.

IN ADDITION to the economic argument, Keane believes the county ISD ensures equity among the schools of the district. "A lot of our (local) districts can't compete," Keane said, adding that the county ISD provides the assurance that all the local districts will have access to the same

quality of services and materials.

Non-public school children are constitutionally entitled to special education services, Keane said. The law mandates non-public school participation in the programs. However, the law also prohibits paying for private school services with public funds, he said.

Although the ISDs were designed to eliminate disparity between local

school districts, a great disparity still exists between the ISDs in Michigan, Keane said. There also are too many county ISDs, he said.

Many attempts at consolidating the districts failed for various geographical and political reasons, he said. Keane thinks technology to bring geographically distant districts closer will be the ultimate solution to the problems confronting consolidation.

29% 57% 14%



Oakland County property owners pay 1.75 mills to fund the Oakland County Intermediate School District. Vocational education receives 29 percent of the millage (one-half mill), special education gets 57 percent (one mill) and general administration receives 14 percent (one-quarter mill).

District gets \$26 million in taxes

OAKLAND COUNTY property owners currently pay 1.75 mills (\$1.75 per \$1,000 assessed property valuation) annually to operate the Oakland County Intermediate School District (ISD) and its programs.

Residents who own a \$100,000 house, for example, will pay \$17.50 annually in property taxes to the ISD. Those property taxes add up to more than \$26 million annually.

How is all that money used? The breakdown is as follows:

Fund No. 1 — General Fund — One-quarter mill from the county allocation of 15 mills is designated for the general fund of the Oakland County Intermediate School District. On \$14 billion in state equalized valuation (SEV) countywide, that translates into \$3.75 million. The general fund also is

supplemented by state aid — \$1.7 million last year.

The general fund, which accounts for 14 percent of county ISD taxes, is used to run the majority of the administrative functions and the general education aspects of the Oakland County Intermediate School District.

Fund No. 2 — Special Education Fund — One mill of the Oakland County ISD school taxes, about 57 percent, was approved by voters to run the county's special education programs, those which serve the handicapped students in the district.

A special election may take place in October to ask Oakland County voters for increased taxes for special education services, according to Oakland County ISD Superintendent William G. Keane.

Of the \$19 million budget for the program last year, \$15 million comes from property taxes.

Fund No. 3 — Vocational Education. Voters

approved the addition of a half mill to the Oakland County ISD, about 29 percent of the tax dollars, to cover the costs of running the county district's four-area vocational schools in Pontiac, Royal Oak, Clarkston and Walled Lake. Of the \$19 million budget for the vocational education program, \$7.5 million is generated from local property taxes.

Fund No. 4 — Cooperative Fund — This fund is not tax-supported. Local school districts pay the county district through the fund for services, such as payroll data processing. The goal of the cooperative fund is to keep the amount taken into the fund equal to the amount spent, Keane said.

The Oakland County ISD budget totaled \$36 million last year, Keane said. These monies come from all four funds described above, state aid, and fund surpluses.

INSIDE ANGLES

Know someone doing something notable? Let us know. Write: Inside Angles, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

AREA SENIORS known in the area as "Outstanding Volunteers" will be guests of honor at a volunteer recognition reception, which begins at 10 a.m. Monday, April 22, in Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center, in Mercy Center complex on 11 Mile Road, through Gate 4, east of Middlebelt Road. Doug Gaylor, director of special services, is speaker for the event. Entertainment will come from Musical Madness and More, who hone their talents in the senior complex.

AT LAST COUNT, six balloons have been returned of the 350 that were put into the skies last month by area Girl Scouts. Three balloons found their way to Pennsylvania and back. One was returned from Virginia and another from West Virginia. And one didn't make it any further away than across the street, from the launching site in Farmington Plaza's Sweden House, to Pets n' Particulars, which was returned by veterinarian John Richardson. While the scouts are awaiting the return of more balloons, the same 19 troops are planning a weekend Neighbor Love Encampment scheduled in May.

WARRANT OFFICER Thomas W. Handzik, son of Walter and Beverly Handzik of Farmington Hills and a 1978 graduate of North Farmington High School, was involved in a NATO-sponsored exercise by participating in the Army's return of forces to Germany. Handzik is an evacuation pilot with the Seventh Medical Command in Landstuhl, West Germany.

TINA BONA, Julie Ingalls, Jennifer Reynolds, Craig Klei, James Knick and Robert Bolak, all from the Farmington/Farmington Hills area, have been named to the fall semester honors list at Central Michigan University.

SPEC. 4 DAVID MATSON, son of Joann

Matson of Farmington and Charles Matson of Bloomfield Hills, has graduated from the tactical transport helicopter repair course at the Army Transportation Center, Fort Eustis, Va. The course provides instruction for students to perform general aviation practices and procedures.

FREE DEAD-BOLT LOCKS and a door viewer are available to Farmington Hills residents who are older than 58 and have an income of less than \$19,700 for two persons. Those eligible who are interested in obtaining the safety features may call Cheryl Carter, 474-6115.

A PERENNIAL POWER in the annual Science and Engineering Fair of Metropolitan Detroit, Detroit County Day School swept the north-west metro division again this year, claiming one of two Grand Awards and eight of 10 first-place prizes at the high school level. Able to honor in the middle school competition and an ample share of second-place and special awards. Calvin Schmidt took first in environmental science; Norman Villanin took first for botany; Scott Clarke won an special award in chemistry. Also receiving honors was Chris Cheatham, a middle school student.

SHEILA EASTON of Farmington has been named to the dean's list in recognition for superior academic achievement during the past term at Madonna College.

SARA JO CLINE, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Cline, and Kristen Johnson White, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard White, have been named to the Albion Honor Roll at Albion College. The distinctive honor is earned by students with semester grade point average of 3.7 or higher on a 4.0 scale for three successive semesters.

DuMouchelles AUCTION

Friday, April 19, 7:00 P.M. Saturday, April 20, 11:00 A.M. Sunday, April 21 at Noon

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<p>FRIDAY:</p> <p>Antique pocket watches Antiquities American primitive furniture and decorations</p> <p>SATURDAY:</p> <p>Clocks and Barometers Antique English furniture and 18th century French furniture Medical instruments Art Glass, including Galle, Stouben, DeVez, Moser, Galle, Durr, LeGras, etc.</p> <p>SUNDAY:</p> <p>Antique and fine furnishings and decorations Estate jewelry Oriental rugs Bronze sculpture Paintings/watercolors/graphics: Edward H. Barnard, Georges Braque, Pierre Emmanuel Dolman, R. Glimmonson, Moshe Gat, W. Lee Hankey, J. Highmore, W. H. Hunt, Charles J. Lewis, Sarah McGregor, Renard de la Motte, Lionel Peroux, Adolphe Schreyer, Alex. B. Simpson, Herman Frederik Carst, Ten Cate, Victor Vassarely and more.</p>	<p>OVER 1000 FINE OFFERINGS</p> <p>accepting consignments of merchandise for spring/summer monthly auction sales</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Stairway L Grand Piano, ca. 1920, Loc. 71", with bench, second floor</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Part of a fine art glass collection on Saturday, signed Daisy Nancy cameo vase, H. 10 1/2"</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Adolph Schreyer (German 1824-1899) oil on canvas, signed, 15 1/2" x 13"</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>American primitive 50" tall on German</p> </div>
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