

School chief search gains steam

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Local residents and school staff members want a "humanistic" person with "a holistic approach" running Farmington Public Schools, according to a consultant involved with selection of a new superintendent.

Consultants from the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) visited 25 locations districtwide, Monday and Tuesday, at the school board's request.

Meetings were scheduled to involve the community and school staff in selecting a new school chief. Staff and parents attended the 45-minute sessions. One consultant estimated he spoke with 40-50 people during six sessions Monday.

The information will be compiled and a written report given to the school board within two weeks, according to Michael Bugenski, director of commu-

nications and publication of the MASB. The report will be used by the board to help set guidelines for screening applications.

The Lansing-based MASB was retained by the board to aid in the superintendent search.

"If everything goes well, the board will make an announcement (of the new superintendent) in May or June," he added.

BROCHURES ADVERTISING the superintendent's opening were mailed Monday to a national MASB list of prospective candidates, Bugenski said. They have until mid-March to apply for the superintendent's post.

School board members will screen each application, "whittling the list down to 7-12 applicants, then to three (finalists)," he added. "They (the board) fully realize they'll have to spend 15-20 hours in the screening process. The board has full control to fulfill the vision you have for your district."

The MASB expects to attract 70-100 applicants for the position, including "several" from the current Farmington administration, he said.

"Farmington has the ability to attract a lot of candidates," Bugenski said. "We'll have no shortage of applications."

The district seeks an individual with teaching and administrative experience, he added.

Although teachers, parents and staff at each school level had individual concerns, most wanted a "clone of Lew Schulman," the ex-superintendent who retired Dec. 31, according to Bugenski. "We want the person who will best fit the community."

SIX DISTRICT collective bargaining unit leaders met with Bugenski in a special session Monday afternoon, giving their collective, written suggestions for superintendent selection guidelines. An initial concern involved searching on a national basis. One member felt "Michigan is a forerunner in collective bargaining" and that applicants from outside the state "might not have a

built-in understanding and belief in the process."

They stressed the district's "outstanding" record in labor relations under Schulman, highlighting the excellent communications between unions and administration.

"We were never surprised," one leader commented.

As more positions become available in the Farmington district, union representatives requested "a sensitivity" to hiring women and minorities by the new superintendent. They also want equal treatment of employees at all levels, in all departments, to be continued.

Appointment of the MASB consulting group was approved in January by a 5-1 vote of the school board. The group offers administrative and clerical services — including the printing and mailing of brochures and network contacts — for a set fee of \$2,500. The board approved a \$10,000 budget, which is expected to cover the MASB fee plus other expenses related to the search.



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Indoor snowmen

Andrea Leonardis (above), 7, of Farmington Hills was awarded second place for her efforts in the Farmington Community Center's snowman contest Feb. 3. The competition was held indoors due to a lack of snow. Fifteen youngsters drew pictures of snowmen for the judges. Jonathan Goldie, 8, of Farmington Hills took first place. His brother Matt, 6, took third. Prizes included a free class at the center for the first-place winner. The second- and third-place winners were given a free gift from the center's Elf Shop gift shop.

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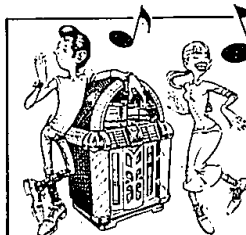


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