

# Wrestling with rising enrollment

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half its capacity and could handle about 125 more students.

AT PRESENT, Longacre has 468 students, principal Millie Bennett reported, and that number is growing daily. More than half the classrooms are at 28 students — a contractual maximum for teachers — and after additional students enter next week, "we will be going over that maximum," Bennett stressed.

If an elementary school were built, the logical site would be an 11-acre parcel near Halsted and 11 Mile owned by the district, he said.

Freedman has spent 15 years involved with eight elementary school closings due to declining enrollment in the 1960s, and boundary studies done throughout the district. He noted that enrollments are now increasing, specifically in the western end of the district.

The district reached an all-time high enrollment of 18,000 in the late 1960s, and currently has 10,300 students enrolled.

TWENTY-FIVE PARENTS from the Farmington Square and Heritage Village subdivisions, in the affected Section 30, attended Tuesday's meeting, voicing concerns, which will be included in the committee's report to the school board. Freedman and committee members Bennett and Scott Bacon,

the district's administrative assistant, conducted the meeting.

The committee's information and proposals will most likely be presented to the school board in late March, Freedman said.

Parents requested that the district's decision be made in a timely manner, so children can be adequately prepared for any changes. Several also said they approved a suggestion to move Longacre kindergartners to Flanders while other options are studied.

One parent called the options presented "Band-aid approaches" and stressed the need for more permanent solutions.

At a January study session between

the committee and school board at Flanders, preliminary boundary changes were discussed with a gymnasium full of Longacre parents from the two subdivisions.

THE BOUNDARY committee's original study called for possibly moving 72 students in these subdivisions from Longacre to Flanders during the next school year.

The parents disapproved loudly at the January meeting, prompting the school board's request for other options, and reminded the administrators of their concerns in the low-key session Tuesday.

Negative comments at the January meeting, attended by an elementary

classroom from Flanders, upset some Flanders students and parents.

Freedman said he was "flattered" that everybody in the community feels as strongly as they do about Millie (Bennett, Longacre principal), but he cautioned the parents against giving negative or incorrect information about boundary-change proposals, that may frighten children and would "tear this community apart."

The boundary committee is also meeting with parents from Wood Creek Elementary, whose children may possibly be moved to Forest Elementary during the next school year. Freedman said parents there are not opposed to a possible boundary change, but have concerns the district is addressing.

## Infant care

When he isn't examining infants, managing a department or teaching students, Wayne State University's Dr. Ronald Poland (left) is chairing a committee that is setting the standards for infant care nationwide. Part of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Committee on Fetus and Newborn tackles the problems pediatricians face everyday. Here, Poland and registered nurse Karen Simmons of Farmington examine a premature infant in one of the nurseries at Children's Hospital of Michigan. Poland is director of the hospital's newborn nurseries and is an associate professor of pediatrics at WSU.



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