

Teachers' unions win, keep 4 'snow days'

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Teachers' unions flexed their political muscle as the state House of Representatives beat down plans to require 180 days of classroom time a year.

The issue was whether to eliminate four snow days, specifically allowed in the Senate bill, from the \$558 million school aid bill.

State aid is based on 180 days, but schools are not penalized for days lost due to boiler breakdowns, "snow days," teacher training and part-day parent-teacher conferences.

"The school year has been reduced 20 days in 20 years — from 192 days when I was on the local school board to 172," charged Rep. William Keith, D-Garden City, author of one of the defeated amendments.

"Our youngsters have to compete (when they graduate) on a global level with those in foreign countries who have had 220 to 240 school days a year."

Aid for 2-year colleges scaled down after veto

By Tim Richard
staff writer

After Gov. James J. Blanchard vetoed a \$198 million community college aid bill, the Legislature scaled it down to \$189 million.

"That was what the Senate recommended originally," said a pleased Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville, a member of the Appropriations Committee.

"It's a pretty good deal for Oakland and Schoolcraft," Geake said after the 33-3 vote last week.

OAKLAND Community College will receive \$12.8 million in the state fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

It's a 7.59 percent increase from the current year, and one of the largest percentage increases for any of Michigan's 29 two-year colleges.

Schoolcraft, in northwestern Wayne County, will get \$6.7 million, up 8.7 percent from the current appropriation. Its percentage increase is a bit better than average for the state.

Wayne County Community College (WCCC) will get \$20.3 million, up about 6.34 percent.

GENERALLY, community colleges get a third of their operating funds from state aid, a third from property taxes and a third from student tuition and fees — with one exception.

WCCC property owners pay 0.25 mill while other districts levy at least 1 mill (OCC) to 2.27 mills (Schoolcraft).

That bothered two outstate senators, who provided the only debate on the measure.

"I think it's unfair and unrealistic to require the taxpayers of the entire state to underwrite and supplement one community college district because the people within that district have refused to vote additional millage," said Jack Welborn of Kalamazoo.

"I think it is unfair that the taxpayers of this state should be forced to supplement and make up the difference," said Welborn, whose re-

Economic awards go to county

Oakland County officials today were scheduled to accept five national awards from the American Economic Development Council.

Representing the AEDC at this morning's County Board of Commissioners meeting was John Currie of Michigan Bell Telephone Co.

"These awards merely emphasize what an excellent job our Economic Development Group does," said County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, whose office supervises economic development.

Awards were for: best marketing literature used during 1986 in the U.S. and Canada; first place for its general marketing brochure; first place for a full-color publications advertisement designed to attract auto-related manufacturers; first place for promotional direct mail literature; and an award for international literature.

Accepting the awards were Murphy; Richard Wilcox, county board chairman; Joseph Joachim, director of economic development; and Jim Berline of the Berline Group, marketing communications consultant to the county.

Dunn represents Garden City, Livonia, Plymouth-Canton, Redford Union and Wayne-Westland. He had favored the amendment.

"They're calling in their chips," Dunn said of the unions. "They want to demonstrate to their membership they do have certain powers."

Keith agreed after the vote. "The teachers did a helluva job," he said. "Too bad nobody was lobbying for the kids."

THE HOUSE spent more than an hour last week rejecting the 180-day amendments, branded "hogwash" by Rep. Robert DeMars, D-Lincoln Park.

That was all the rebuttal anyone offered to Keith and Rep. James O'Neill, D-Saginaw, author of similar amendments.

The Keith amendment failed 39-66 with five absent. Those voting yes wanted to require 180 classroom days. Those voting no favored specifically allowing four snow days. The local vote:

Yes — Democrats Keith, John Bennett of Redford and James Kosteva of Canton; and Republicans Wilbur Brotherton of Farmington, Gregory Gruse of Madison Heights, David Honigman of West Bloomfield,

Gerald Law of Plymouth, Judith Miller of Birmingham and Gordon Sparks of Troy.

No — Democrats Justine Barnes of Westland and Maxine Berman of Southfield; and Republicans Lyn Banks of Livonia and Mat Dunaskiss of Lake Orion.

The House version is different from the Senate bill and will be sent to a joint conference committee for compromise. Final passage is due this week.

KEITH TRACED how the school year was whittled from 192 days in the 1960s.

"We found it was 187 days, then 184 days. Rep. E.D. O'Brien feared it

was being bargained away (in union negotiations) so he put in an amendment to make it 180 days.

"Someone in the Department of Education decided it wasn't necessary to make up snow days. Then we found the average was 172 days. Now it's time to reverse that trend."

Keith said an education commission on which he served recently recommended after 18 months work that the school year be 200 days. But the state Department of Education advised the panel that every day's extension would cost the state \$36 million, so Keith settled for starting with a demand for 180 classroom days.

He said the loss of 20 days from

the school year meant "kids lose 1 1/2 years of class in their 13-year experience."

NO ONE defended the unions' point of view during debate, but O'Neill of Saginaw said union letters made these arguments, which he deplored:

- "The anticipation of snow days is a morale booster."
- "Snow days are not days of rest and rehabilitation but shoveling days."
- "Requiring snow days to be made up would mean Saturday sessions that would cause 'stress' among teachers."

June 28th is Sensational Saturday at SFA!

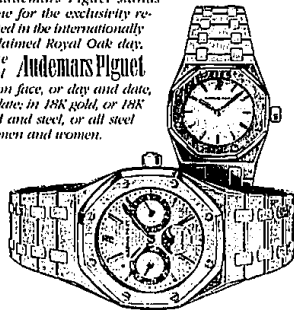
Come join us at Saks Fifth Avenue — Troy as we celebrate Lady Liberty's Centennial and salute the red, white and blue! We've got an All-American array of activities, entertainment and special events that's guaranteed to put some fireworks in your Saturday shopping!

- An old-fashioned barbershop quartet will be strolling the store for your musical enjoyment.
- "Russell the Clown" will up to his antics, with balloons and surprises for our little customers!
- The Jean Deer Collection of exact replicas of our First Ladies' Inaugural Ball Gowns will be on display.
- Get that "Country-Fair" feeling with complimentary popcorn and lemonade on every level, plus a sampling of ice cream and Silver Palate toppings on the second floor.
- For your listening pleasure, our piano player will entertain you on the first floor.

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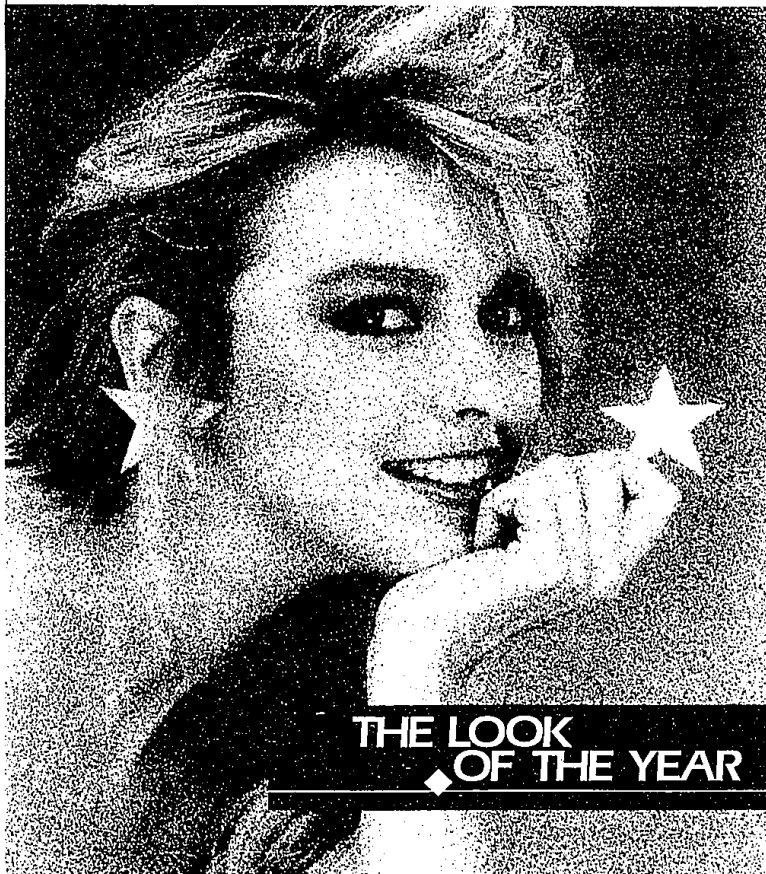
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