

WL to add 14 elementary classrooms

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Walled Lake school administrators asked for 12 new elementary classrooms to meet expanding student enrollment Monday. They

received 14.

In a special meeting called to consider the matter, members of the Walled Lake school board voted unanimously to approve construction of four permanent classrooms each at Keith, Maple and Oakley

Park elementary schools and two new rooms at Walled Lake Elementary School.

They also approved \$1.16 million to finance the construction, which is to begin immediately.

Acting superintendent Dr. Barry Roseborough requested that 12 classrooms be ready for use by September 1988.

"Our expected K-6 growth materialized as expected this (school) year and, in some schools, even more than we expected. Of our 11 elementary schools, nine need additional rooms, citing Keith, Maple and Oakley Park."

The school district includes Walled Lake and parts of West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills where new home construction is booming.

Keith and Maple schools are in West Bloomfield and Oakley Park is in Walled Lake.

BOARD MEMBER Patricia Jackson moved the 12 classrooms be built as requested and that an additional two classrooms also be built at Walled Lake Elementary.

"We are deciding new construction on the basis of future enrollment, where we have future students in need at Walled Lake," she said.

Walled Lake Elementary is in the southern part of the district, adjacent to Farmington Hills. School administrators have targeted the area as one of enormous projected growth in K-6 student enrollment.

Dispatching post added

The city of Farmington has created a part-time permanent dispatch position to alleviate a growing workload during peak times in the public safety department.

Requested by the administration, the new position was approved by city council Sept. 21. It is estimated to cost the city \$9,464 — \$6,000 more than was budgeted for public safety in this year's budget.

The new position will be for four hours per day, 20 hours per week. It will help full-time dispatchers, who now must answer the emergency and business lines, help customers at

the counter and run the police/fire radio system.

It will give additional help when dispatchers are ill or taking breaks, eliminating the use of public safety officers for fill-ins at the desk, according to city manager Robert Deodman.

He also said with the upcoming installation of the E-911 emergency system, additional skills for dispatch operation will become necessary.

"The information systems available to the dispatcher are becoming more sophisticated each year," he said.

Author awarded honor

Farmington Hills author Jean Fox was honored by the Historical Society of Michigan with an Award of Merit for the publication of "More Than a Tavern: 150 Years of Botsford Inn."

The award, the highest honor given by the statewide society, was presented Sept. 25 at the Presidents Dinner at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island as part of the society's 113th annual meeting.

More than 150 members from around the state were present for the three-day conference. The forum

featured the Isle Royale archeological project, the early years of the Grand Hotel, now marking its centennial; John Jacob Astor and the fur trade, which was headquartered on Mackinac Island; as well as tours of the Fort on the Island and tours of the West Bluff homes built for midwestern millionaires during the 1880s-1980s.

Fox will speak on Botsford Inn's 150 years in a program at the Farmington Community Library Sept. 29 and at the Farmington Exchange Club luncheon, Oct. 21.

DAVIES EXPECTS the school to be in need of 3.5 new classrooms next school year.

Keith Elementary, which is expected to gain 42 new students by next September, will need 1.5 new classrooms. Oakley Park will need 3.5 new classrooms, and Walled

Lake will need 2.5 new rooms.

"The school district at large is on a significant growth spiral," Davies said. Over the next three years he expects construction of thousands of housing units in the district to be completed.

Other elementary schools in the district, including Twin Beach Elementary in West Bloomfield, are also expected to be crowded next school year. Some 20 new students are expected to enroll by September 1988 and the school will be short an estimated two classrooms.

However, the school is not targeted for new rooms at this time because, if necessary, five classrooms now used for special education, preschool, art and music can be converted to regular classrooms, according to Davies.

Commerce, Decker, Glenbury and Wixom elementary will also need additional classrooms. Only Dublin and Loon Lake schools are projected to have adequate space.

"This plan for classrooms provides immediate relief only," said board member Joel Silverblatt. Silverblatt chairs the board-appointed Facility Needs Task Force, which recommended 12 new classrooms at three sites.

"We are out of room for our elementary students. Now we begin long range planning," Silverblatt said of the Task Force.

CURRENTLY, ABOUT 11,300 new residential units are either under construction within the school district or have been approved by city and township governments to begin construction.

Once all the units are completed, Davies expects an estimated 4,041 new students, more than 2,000 of whom will be in grades K-5.

"We are losing fewer students (due to graduation or moving out of the district), than we are gaining," Davies said.

The area of greatest growth is in and adjacent to West Bloomfield. More than 7,500 new housing units are planned, including such huge developments as a 1,500-unit apartment complex at 14 Mile and Haggerty. The project is expected to be completed by September 1990.

"I am impressed, staggered and awed by the progress our schools are making in dealing with growth in the district," Davies said.

"This plan, however, is planning for tomorrow, the tomorrow of September 1988. Beyond that, the situation must be addressed in a grand plan with new school building," he said.

Board member Esther Melnick recommended the board not consider selling any more school property like the piece recently sold to West Bloomfield schools until "we know the needs of the future."

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