

Schools eye plan to broaden high school social studies

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A proposal to increase graduation requirements, diversify curriculum and add a new department coordinator is being considered for high school social studies in Farmington.

"Social studies encompasses more than history, and we have allowed history to be the major thrust of the department," said school trustee Janice Rolnick, who heads the school board's subcommittee on curriculum. "There's so much more to social studies."

While high school social studies committee chairman Norman Dickson said he "didn't intend" for the project to take so long, the four-year effort that began in 1985 was an effective way to critique the curriculum.

The proposal recommends one additional semester — half a year — of social studies, and would change requirements as well for students entering high school this fall. As part of the new program, students would take two semesters of U.S. history and one semester of economics/law, one semester of introductory social science, one semester of modern world history, and one semester of American government.

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— Trustee Janice Rolnick

Instead of 2½ years of required social studies, students would have three years upon graduation, Dickson said.

The board is expected to consider the proposal and take action at its next regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 7.

DURING A study session Jan. 24, Rolnick said board members were "generally very supportive" of the social studies plan, which could lead to other changes in the future. One of the concerns is for students having enough time to handle required classes. Rolnick is in favor of alternatives such as flexible scheduling to help.

"What happens when we require a new . . . class in the ninth grade — what happens with, say, the language student? That's the problem — the number of (school) hours in

the day," she said. "We're going to have to start looking at the structure of the high school day to fit all the different areas into the curriculum."

Dickson said his committee was also concerned about students having time for elective courses. "We're very concerned about this," he said. "How do we protect these areas? It's got to be addressed."

A key area addressed in the social studies proposal is integrating cultural learning into the schools — something that has been emphasized heavily in the Farmington-area communities during the past year.

"These are important in a changing society," said Rolnick. "I don't like scratching the surface; I want an in-depth program. I think we can do it."

THE INCREASE in academic requirements has gained momentum across the country, as educators address what high school students will need upon graduation. Rolnick said Farmington is not the first to look at changes to social studies curriculum.

"It's really the way the nation's going," she said. "We're kind of in the middle — I'd like to be on top."

During the four-year study in Farmington, state education officials published a recommendation of six semesters, or three years, of social studies for high school students. Of 28 districts in Oakland County, 17 currently require six semesters, according to the committee's report.

If the curriculum changes are approved, Dickson said he would like to see a follow-up program set up to evaluate the changes. "What I'd like to see is an evaluation component," he said. "Not many districts do that — I think it can be done."

Also a social studies committee will now go back and review education in grades kindergarten through grade eight, to integrate lower grade levels with the new high school program, if it is approved.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Norman Dickson is high school social studies committee chairman. The social studies curriculum review began four years ago, he said.

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

● BB/PELLET ATTACK

A 40-year-old Novi woman was struck on the cheek by a glass fragment after a BB or pellet was fired into the driver's window of her car as she turned from Halsted onto westbound Grand River at 9:50 p.m. Wednesday.

The woman believes the shot was fired from another car waiting to turn left onto Grand River. Damage was estimated at \$150, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

No mention was made whether the woman required medical treatment.

● COINS TOSSED

A 31-year-old Walled Lake man was northbound on Orchard Lake Road, near I-696, when three occupants of a passing car tossed coins at his car after swearing and gesturing at him.

The incident occurred at 9 p.m. Tuesday, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

● INDECENT EXPOSURE

A man thought to be in his 30s exposed himself to a postal carrier at 12:10 p.m. Thursday at Hunters Ridge Apartments as she was walking back to her truck after delivering some mail.

He was standing on the sidewalk, grinning with his arms at his side, as she walked by, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

● FRAUD ALLEGED

An ex-employee of a Farmington Hills gas station is charged with two counts of fraudulently using a customer's credit card.

Charges stem from the fraudulent use of a credit card inadvertently left behind by a customer on Dec. 26 at the Shell station at 29370 12 Mile. Fraudulent purchases, totaling \$21, occurred Jan. 12-13.

The 18-year-old suspect was arraigned Wednesday before District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington. He pleaded not guilty to two counts of use of a credit card without the card holder's consent. He faces up to four years in prison if convicted.

Cash/surety bond was set at \$10,000 pending a preliminary exam in 47th District Court.

The employee was terminated, detectives said.

● MAN ARRESTED

A 24-year-old West Bloomfield man was arrested for driving without a license and for possessing marijuana after a traffic stop Feb. 1 on Grand River, according to a Farmington Department of Public Safety report.

● 30-DAY TERM

A 24-year-old Detroit man was sentenced to 30 days in the Oakland County Jail after pleading guilty to the theft of a Michigan state flag at March Tire in Farmington.

Farmington Hills officer C.J. VanMeter saw Terrance Lee Schultz hitchhiking on Grand River. When Schultz reached March Tire, he was

seen lowering the flag, folding it, then opening a knapsack. He ran when approached by Van Meter, but was stopped. Schultz was then turned over to Farmington officer James Madigan for processing.

Schultz was arraigned Feb. 1 before District Judge Michael Hand at the 47th District Court in Farmington. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. The sentence also covered a larceny warrant issued out of Farmington Hills.

● THEFTS REPORTED

Jewelry valued at \$1,000 was reported stolen from a house on Danvers Court between Jan. 18 and Feb. 1.

A lawn tractor valued at \$1,100 was reported stolen from a yard on the 35100 block of Rhinowood between Jan. 25 and Feb. 1.

A tool box, a gas chainsaw and assorted tools valued at \$1,000 were reported stolen from a storage area at the Chatham Hills Apartments in Farmington Jan. 27-28.

A Coke bottle bank containing \$125 was reported stolen from a house on Colgate Jan. 27-30.

A 1988 GMC pickup valued at \$15,000 was reported stolen from the parking lot at Drakeville Apartments in Farmington Jan. 30-31.

A 1985 Ford Escort valued at \$4,000 was reported stolen from the parking lot at Chatham Hills Apartments in Farmington Jan. 31.

Cash and a watch with values totaling \$150 were reported stolen from a purse during a basketball game at Farmington High School,

32000 Shawassaw, Jan. 31. The purse was stolen from beneath the bleachers at the school, then recovered in the girls bathroom minus the cash and watch.

Two cars, a 1984 Pontiac Grand Prix and a 1979 Chevrolet Camaro, were reported stolen from TRW, 24175 Research Drive, Feb. 1. The cars were valued at \$8,000 and \$15,500, respectively.

An electric guitar valued at \$50 was reported stolen from the String Shop, 31114 Haggerty, Feb. 2.

Jewelry was reported stolen from a house on Foxcreek Feb. 2.

● TICKETS ISSUED

A 26-year-old Powertville man was ticketed for possessing open beer during a traffic stop at Grand River and Orchard Lake Road Feb. 1.

A 32-year-old Port Huron man was ticketed for possessing narcotics paraphernalia when a cocaine consumption kit was found in his car

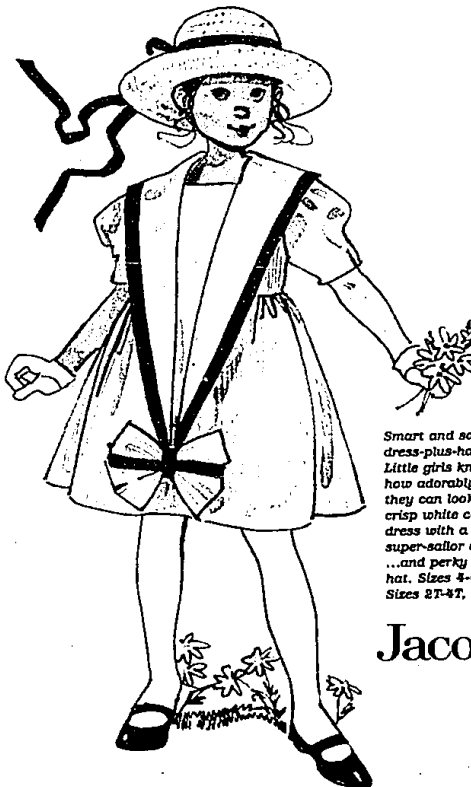
during a traffic stop at Tulane and Grand River Feb. 1.

● DAMAGE REPORTED

Damage was estimated at \$300 when windows of two cars, one parked on Beauford Lane, the other on Meadowhill Drive, were shattered Jan. 27-28.

Damage was estimated at \$240 when someone slashed three tires on vehicles parked at TRW, 24175 Research Drive, Feb. 2.

SAILOR SET



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Jacobson's

Center expansion plans trigger tenant concerns

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DDA executive director Wendy Strip Sittsamer.

The DDA will address the issue at its regularly scheduled meeting at 8 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7. Muirwood is about one mile west of downtown Farmington.

BEZTAK OFFICIALS are aware of concern about their plans to expand the center on average immediately west of the existing center.

"I've heard some concern. We're not speculators or merchant developers. We take a long-term approach. Our intent is not to be antagonistic or short-sighted. We'll talk things through and provide the best response that we can," said Bob Meehan, Beztak development officer. "It's not just our corner we're concerned about."

Beztak officials plan to demolish

the existing 37,000-square-foot strip of retail space on the western edge of the center. It would be replaced with a new 84,000-square-foot building on land west of the existing center, Meehan said. A house on the property would be torn down.

Beztak wants to rezone the 12 acres next to the existing center. The property is currently zoned for multiple family. The rezoning request is for B-2, community business. A public hearing on the request before Farmington Hills planning commissioners is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16.

Beztak officials have submitted traffic and commercial studies to the city for review, said Ed Gardiner, Farmington Hills senior planner.

THE CITY'S master land use plan designates the acreage as multiple-family. But Gardiner calls it a "gray area. The master plan is only a guide and doesn't show specific bounda-

ries." The existing center is zoned B-2.

"We're looking at the long-term trend of the center, and we want to ensure the long-term vitality of the center. What we're seeing is a trend toward some decline in situations where you don't have a major anchor," Meehan said.

The planned supermarket would be about 40,000-45,000 square feet. Which supermarket hasn't been identified.

The expansion, Meehan said, would provide about 14,000-15,000 square feet of retail space.

"Current tenants can move into the new building. We are not proposing to displace anyone," Meehan added.

The remaining five acres of the 12 acres adjacent to the existing center would be open space or perhaps a clubhouse for the Muirwood Apartments and Terraces, also owned by Beztak of Farmington Hills, Gardiner said.

by Dr. Edwin Blumberg of Farmington Hills.

The centers include Oak Hill Care Center in Farmington, Williamsburg Convalescent Center in Farmington Hills and others in Novi, Detroit, Royal Oak and Howell. Five of the facilities were bought last year from California-based Beverly Enterprises.

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zens for Better Care's Detroit office. Connors said last week he could not elaborate on the complaints.

The nine Care Centers of Michigan are home to many elderly and disabled people who require regular nursing care. The centers are owned

Nursing centers probed

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