C'ville schools join lawsuits

Chreneeville Public Schools has joined two awaults in hopes of obtaining more money from

lawsults in neper or continuous the state.

The Clarenceville Board of Education is awaiting, word on the fate of first of the two lawsuits, which the board voted to join Feb. 9.

Even if the lawsuits fail, in-formula districts like Clarenceville could gain, said superintendent Michael Shibler.

microael Shibler.
"If it's (legal action) able at the least to bring an awareness to the public that a disparity exists in the amount of money behind each child, it will accomplish something," he said.

Clarenceville as a member.

The district is called "in-formula" because it qualities for major state aid to pay for programs, in-formula districts have a relatively small property tax base, and are able to spend less money or pupil that out-of-formula districts such as Livonia Public Schools which has a higher tax base nor noull.

Livonia Public Schools which has a higher tax base per pupil. Specifically, the first lawsit will be to overturn a previous ruling that prohibited local schools from using public funds to sue the state. If that ruling is overturned, the in-formula districts say they'll mount a legal challenge to the constitutionality of the existing state aid formula. Shibler said superintendents of in-formula districts are getting frustrated, as legislators who continue to promise reform have falled to agree on a plan to make school funding more fall." "Maybe the lawsuit's the only answer."

SP BECAUSE YEARLY increases in school aid to in-formula districts are not keeping up with in-fated costs, "I'm straid we're headed for a crisis in this state," Shibler said.
He predicts many in-formula districts will de-clare bankruptcy in the next few years.

The law firm bringing the first court action—to challenge the ruling that school districts can't use public money to sue the state — said if it loses the challenge, it will not bill the in-formula districts it represents.

Should they prevail in that first of the two planned court actions, each district would be billed just more than \$1,000. Shibler said the cost is worth it.

What are the chances the legal action will succeed? "There's certainly a complex road ahead to reach success," said Shibler.

Attorney defends tree removals

THE CITY attorney said he plans to sell the land, possibly for cluster housing. Larson and his family lived on the acreage until about eight years ago. The house on the land was given to the Farmington Hills Fire Department to be used in a training burn.

Department of the 19 frees cut, many were de-caying and dying, though they were landstark trees. The ordinance de-scribes landmark trees as those that stand apart from its neighbors by stignform or species and any trees 4 inches in diameter measured four

One local developer will be a lowed a large-rithan-usual sign after receiving Farmington City Council permission this week. Meanwhile, the city is cracking down on another developer who installed the same size sign without a variance.

The developer of Farmington Oaks Apartments, behind the Farmington Crossrands shonoling center at

ossroads shopping center at

fect above the natural grade.

Larson said hundreds of trees remain on the acreage, including Norway spruce and white pine, many of which Larson said be planted. "A vast majority (of the trees cut) were stressed, in the dying process. We fell it was appropriate to do this at this time. But we still honor and recognize the spirit of the tree ordinance." Larson said.

The council and the public, Larson continued, will probably still see culpment on the property because the professional. In the property because the professional is the professional to the tree was still cleaning the site. "We feel we have preserved the tree

the square footage allowed under the city's sign ordinance. Meanwhile, Nelson-Ross Properies, owner of the Village Commons Center in downtown Farmington, has been tlecketed for having the same size sign in front of a partially vacant center on Grand River, according to city officials. Nelson-Ross never applied for a sign variance, they said.

situation," he said.
Sever said he was surprised to learn of Larson's actions. "Maybe had there been more experience with him involved with the city, he may have had second thoughts about it. The polities seems to cast a different light on everything you do."

Still, Sever said he is concerned that the matter is now public and facts about Larson's actions are "re-ally sketchy. My intent was to write

ensure things like this onn happen. The mayor said he was concerned when Marks spilled the beans because city manager William Costick was still trying to determine the facts. "You like to have as much of the facts as possible before any innuendes started. I'm disappointed it happened. I'm disappointed we happened. I'm disappointed we didn't discuss it," Sever said.



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at their temporary loca-tion set up outside the

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City says sign's location

determines variance OK

gymees







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