

C'ville schools chief will resign

By Kevin Brown
staff writer

Clarencville Public Schools Superintendent Michael Shibler plans to resign June 30, after five years on the job.

"Beginning in 1984, we began a long and exciting journey to improve the educational opportunities offered to Clarencville students," he wrote in his letter of resignation submitted to the Clarencville Board of Education.

"And I believe that we have been successful in accomplishing all of our established goals."

SHIBLER SAID that last week, he settled on a contract with the Rockford Board of Education in suburban Grand Rapids, a school district with roughly twice as many students as Clarencville.

Rockford, an out-of-formula district, is experiencing increasing enrollment of about 300 students a year.

He plans to formally submit his letter of resignation to the board of education at tonight's board meeting. Shibler asks that the resignation be effective June 30.

"It isn't the best timing," Shibler said, as Clarencville voters will be asked in just 11 days to approve a 3.5 mill increase in general operating millage.

Shibler said he'll continue to appear before groups to urge passage of the millage. The issue goes before voters April 24.

"We think he did an outstanding job in his five years as superintendent in Clarencville," said Richard Wood, board of education president.

When Shibler was selected from a field of 90 candidates, "We said

we would probably get four or five years from Mike because he's an opening superintendent in the state," Wood continued. "It's our loss and his gain."

AMONG SHIBLER'S accomplishments, Wood cited the guaranteed high school diploma, campus testing, and the academic letter.

With the help of a survey sent to district homes, asking residents what changes they'd like to see in the district's schools, "He helped us establish long and short term goals," Wood said.

"By doing that we were able to stay out of financial trouble as far as deficit spending that a lot of the in-formula districts have gone through."

A representative of the Michigan School Boards Association is scheduled to attend tonight's board meeting, to help board members begin a direct search for a superintendent.

Wood said the board hopes to name a new superintendent by July 1, which would head off the need to name an interim superintendent.

"I think my greatest success has been in working with the community, the board of education, the students, staff and employees of the Clarencville school district," Shibler said.

Among accomplishments he cited was the K-8 promotion-retention program, in which students must complete 80 percent of class objectives to be promoted to the next grade.

While he said the school district's biggest problem is a lack of adequate state funding, he said the public has "really stepped behind some of the problems we've had in this community."

DDA — clean up downtown

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Melting snow and spring winds uncovered an annual problem in Farmington and other communities.

Trash. And members of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority are encouraging their city to step up enforcement in the way local businesses and landlords handle their garbage to keep the downtown area looking good.

"It seems that . . . until they (property owners) do something, the problem of trash and littering will remain," said DDA member Merrill Miller. "The concept of keeping downtown attractive can be promoted by this committee. It is blight."

The issue was put on the April 4

agenda by DDA member Frank Clappison, whose family is part owner of a downtown shopping center and was recently ticketed after trash from the center blew into neighboring properties and neighbors complained. Clappison could not attend the April 4 meeting, but felt the issue should be addressed.

"This is not a brand new problem," explained city manager Robert Deadman, who also sits on the DDA board. "Maintaining a clean facility is a cost of doing business."

He added that the trash problem is not unique to downtown but must be monitored at all shopping centers.

WHILE AWAITING results of a study on using benches and decorative trash cans in the downtown area, DDA members suggested the

city try to put more barrels out to encourage shoppers and visitors to dispose of their trash properly. "There are great stretches where there aren't any (trash cans)," said DDA member Jody Soronen. "Most adults will use them, if they're provided."

DDA president Harry Wingerter also suggested that some trash cans be installed so that people could drive by, and not have to get out of their cars.

Deadman stressed that the city, with a crew of six to handle public works projects, cannot be responsible for picking up the trash. "Landlords and tenants just have to pay special attention this time of year," he said. "The city doesn't have the manpower, or the inclination, to take care of garbage. We're just not going to do it."

Deadman suggests shopping center landlords use regular clean-up crews to make an extra effort this time of year, then make another effort in the fall. Routine maintenance "is not enough this time of year," he added.

THE CITY sends out warnings before ticketing landowners for unsightly garbage, which can be seen along fence lines and in bushes.

Deadman said that because of ticket warnings, by the time such matters get to court, they are treated seriously. He cited one problem several years ago, in which a business was fined \$500 per day until they handled their problem.

Deadman said he would immediately step up city enforcement efforts.

Parent told to wait for court decision

A parent who has sued Farmington schools over what he claims is unfair treatment of his elementary son was told last week to wait for a judge's decision.

School attorney J. Kingsley Cotton responded to Loren Leon, who spoke during a public comment segment of the April 4 school board meeting. Cotton said since the matter was already in court, school officials would

not comment during a board meeting.

"You had your choice. You have chosen to use the (state appeals) process . . . and also chosen to go to circuit court," Cotton said. "The board and administration has directed me to respond in those forums. We are not going to respond in this forum."

Leon has sued superintendent

Graham Lewis and the Farmington school district to get more help for their son, who has been qualified as learning disabled.

The suit, filed in January, followed months of hearings at the county and state levels. The Leons claim the district has not implemented a state hearing officer's decision; the district claims it has.

Leon has appeared at several recent school board meetings, berating officials for not releasing school records pertaining to his son and criticizing the board for not starting an investigation of the matter.

Leon said he expected a decision any day from Circuit Judge Fred Mester, who is hearing the case in Oakland County Circuit Court in Pontiac.

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