

C'ville has 3 finalists for superintendent

By Kevin Brown
staff writer

Three finalists for the post of superintendent of the Clarenceville School District were named by the board of education June 4.

The seven board members voted on their top choices after interviewing eight semifinalists June 4 at Clarenceville Middle School.

The finalists are Noreen Blake, assistant to the superintendent of the Avondale School District; Jerry Montecillo, superintendent of the Taylor Public Schools; and Leonard Shafley, superintendent of the Lakeville Public Schools, near Flint.

In narrowing the list of finalists to three, both Montecillo and Shafley got votes from all seven board members; Blake got five.

Clarenceville takes in parts of Farmington Hills, Livonia and Redford Township.

BOARD PRESIDENT Richard Wood voted to name Montecillo and Shafley to the list of finalists.

"Both of them are experienced superintendents, both

of them have come from districts very similar to Clarenceville, both of them basically know or can foresee the needs of Clarenceville," Wood said.

He also praised Montecillo and Shafley for "putting students No. 1."

"They have had experience in negotiations and with unrest in their staff," Wood said. "There's a concern there's an undercurrent among the teaching staff that the board is not concerned with their needs, even though we sit down and tell them the bridge will have to be built" to re-establish good relations, he added.

Clarenceville teachers have been working without a contract or a pay raise this year.

BOARD VICE president Linda Brandemihl also voted to name Montecillo and Shafley as finalists, and Blake.

Blake, she said, "had excellent background in curriculum and staff development. I thought she demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and self direction and possessed good team leadership."

Brandemihl said Montecillo "has very strong interpersonal skills. He demonstrates an ability to work very well with people, and he had a great deal of experi-

ence the board was looking for in staff development, curriculum and negotiations."

Shafley, she said, works in a district "similar in size and in budget" to Clarenceville. He also had the experience the board was looking for, a strong educational leader able to bring people together in a common purpose.

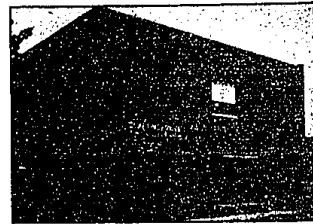
Both Brandemihl and Wood praised all eight candidates, saying they had excellent qualifications.

TO DETERMINE a final selection, teams of two board members will visit each candidate in their home districts.

At a board meeting scheduled for 7:30 p.m. June 15, each candidate will be interviewed for a half-hour, before one is selected.

Wood said questions at that session would include "what would they do, why do they want to come to Clarenceville, what they can do for Clarenceville."

The board will also discuss contract terms with the candidates, including length of contract, fringe benefits and salary, Wood said.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A new superintendent for the Clarenceville School District is expected to be named Thursday night. The central administration works from offices on Middlebelt in Livonia.

Blake sees communication as goal

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

It's clear Noreen Blake is a person who comes from a long line of educators. Her manner is upright and proper. The 's' are dotted. The 't's' are crossed.

When one board member asked about a particular committee she headed, Blake kindly corrects his reference to her as a chair to "chairperson."

Blake shared her experience, her enthusiasm about education, and the role the superintendent plays during her interview for the vacant Clarenceville School District position at Clarenceville Middle School.

BLAKE'S EXPERIENCE as an educator spans 17 years, starting as an English teacher for the Berkeley School District.

Her mother and her grandmother also were teachers and her daughter is studying to enter the profession.

Blake has served as assistant superintendent of schools for the Avondale School District since 1986. During that time, she also pinch-hit when the superintendent was out with extended illness.

Open two-way communication with the board, administration, teachers and the community is important, she said.

She keeps the school board at

Avondale informed and has been instrumental in establishing newsletters that go to district employees and to the community.

"I believe in inclusion, not exclusion," she said.

BLAKE USES that same model in tackling programs, preferring the team approach.

At Avondale, there is no director of curriculum. Instead, she has teachers work together to establish a learning program.

"I believe in the bottom's-up model. The more people involved, the better the decision," she said.

Blake doesn't hold the same view about the superintendent's role in

contract talks. She recently served as chairwoman of the Avondale School District's bargaining committee, which recently worked out a three-year contract with teachers.

That experience could come in handy, Clarenceville teachers have been without a contract for a year.

"I found that by removing the superintendent from the table, what you're doing is decreasing the tendency of knee-jerk reactions to proposals. It allows for some room to move more carefully."

"The old model of the adversarial approach to negotiations is very damaging to education as a whole and to that school district in particular."

Involvement is key for Montecillo

By Diane Gale
staff writer

If the Clarenceville school district is looking for a superintendent to sit at a desk all day, Jerry Montecillo said the board members should look elsewhere.

Montecillo, Taylor Public Schools superintendent, described the role of the top school job by telling a tale about a second grade teacher who introduced him to her students.

"These kids didn't know what a superintendent is, so I said: 'I'm your teacher's helper,'" said Montecillo, adding that relationships between students and teachers are "really the only important thing."

MONTICELLO holds a master's of arts and has worked as teacher

and elementary principal. He also served on community college boards and as secretary of the Wayne County Superintendents Association.

The former superintendent in Warren was asked about his communication skills by board members, residents, principals and teachers, who are without a contract and are threatening to strike in fall.

"People have to have dignity and when I deal with them they have to know they have dignity," said Montecillo. "I consider that my primary task."

He told Janet Galfie, who described herself as a community person, that she could count on him sending out a lot of surveys if he were hired.

Carl Kipela, a special education teacher, asked: "How would you feel

about starting with a no contract, no work stand in September?"

Montecillo said he has experience with strikes.

"It's not the most desirable of all situations," he said.

HIS MANAGEMENT techniques are five-fold: involvement, personal commitment to the final product, assessment, planning and execution.

"I need to have maximum involvement," Montecillo said. "I'm talking about ownership... Face-to-face involvement. Face-to-face communication."

Talking to people and listening are key to an administrator's job, Montecillo said repeatedly throughout the 90-minute interview.

When asked about his career

goals, Montecillo, 53, said: "I am as a superintendent what I consider at my ultimate. I am where I want to be. I have probably five good years and I want to use them as superintendent."

"I'm looking to have this as my last phase of my career. I want to have fun."

Shafley stresses decision-making

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

To know where Leonard Shafley stands, simply look for both feet and ask.

As one of the three finalists for the Clarenceville superintendent position, Shafley stressed his ability to make decisions when needed during his interview before the school board at Clarenceville Middle School.

"In education, we've seen so many weak-knee people who take so long to make a decision," said Shafley, 51, during his interview, "whereas I tend to go the other way."

AS SUPERINTENDENT of Lakeville Community Schools for nearly four years, Shafley has had to make plenty of decisions.

He took over the district when it was beset with teacher unrest and a depressed economy due to a downturn at General Motors Corp. in the Flint-area. The school was

on five-hour days, teachers were disgruntled with the community, and the community was disgruntled with the school district.

Today, Lakeville Community Schools has longer school days and has teachers and administrators working together, Shafley said. He's helped foster that through a basic philosophy: be frank.

"If I had to say what one of my weaknesses was, I'd have to say it's that I can be too open at times," Shafley said. "Not everybody appreciates the openness that I provide."

Shafley said he believes a superintendent should visit school buildings regularly. They should keep lines of communication open with the administrators, teachers and students.

THE SAME open approach should be used at the bargaining table with teachers, he said.

As superintendent of Airport Community Schools (1979-85), he faced a 21-day teacher strike in 1983.

20 is the magic number for Community Center

The number "20" will be on everyone's mind. If The Community Center Farmington-Farmington Hills can help it.

This year marks The Community Center's 20th anniversary. To kick off the celebration, a "20 ribbon cutting ceremony" will be held Wednesday at 1 p.m.

The 20 ribbons, each 10 feet long and a different color or pattern, will be intertwined and cut in front of The Community Center, an independent, non-profit organization in a historic, 20-room Georgian country home.

The event's official ribbon cutters will be a group, numbering nearly 20 of the center's former board presidents as well as former mayors of the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills who have served terms during the past 20 years.

The center's current board president, Larry Freedman; the current mayor of Farmington, Richard Tupper and the current mayor of Farmington Hills, Terry Sever, will also act as ribbon cutters.

The ribbon cutters will introduce themselves and give

some historical information about the year of their term. They will then simultaneously cut the ribbons.

After the actual ribbon cutting, state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, will present Dorothy Pfaff, executive director of The Community Center, with a tribute signed by herself and the governor of Michigan, James Blanchard. Dolan is both a former Community Center board president and former mayor of Farmington Hills.

A reception, complete with birthday cake, will be held immediately after the ceremony.

The center will continue its 20th anniversary celebration throughout the summer. The next event will be an Alexander Zonjic performance on Sunday, June 18, at the center's newly renovated outdoor amphitheater. Showtime will be 7 p.m. and ticket price is \$10 a person.

Located at 24705 Farmington Road, just north of 10 Mile, The Community Center Farmington-Farmington Hills provides programs and services for adults and youth. It is also available as a rental facility. The phone number is 477-8404.

Students turn hands-on physics lesson into fun

By Casey Hans
staff writer

This assignment was an easy ride for 6,000 high school students.

You might say the students coasted right through it.

Physics students from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana came to Cedar Point Amusement Park in Ohio to "ride the rides" and measure wind velocities, acceleration of various roller coasters and totally evaluate several major attractions through a physicist's eyes.

"Instead of a lab at school, they had a lab at Cedar Point," explained Farmington Hills Harrison High School physics teacher Dennis King. Both Harrison and Farmington High School had groups visit the amusement park for the annual event.

It is the second year Harrison students have participated, but this year, King said he was better prepared. About 62 students, mostly seniors, split into lab groups of four to tour the park and do their work. Before leaving on the trip, students made measuring devices — many which could attach to a belt so they wouldn't be lost on the rides.

The results counted as one test grade in physics.

"They could organize, their day any way they wanted," said King. "They had to ride the ride and take measurements."

STUDENTS WERE expected to evaluate five different rides, but because of drizzly weather were only able to complete analysis on three attractions.

These "amusement park physics"

is not a new phenomenon. Parks across the country are hosting similar activities, which are written up in magazines, said King. Using these articles, he wrote away for material, then used what he thought appropriate for his students.

Not only were students put to work at the park, but King made the ride down educational, as well.

On the bus, students had questions to answer, such as: "If you could drive around the Equator, how many gallons of gas would be required?" or "How many marbles would fill up a baseball?" He also offered students a sheet explaining phobias — including heights and wind — and how to overcome them.

"It's actually very, very effective," King added. "The key to it is to make the kids realize it's a working physics exercise."

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