

Foreign language grants awarded

By G.L. Rugenstein
staff writer

Three Oakland County school districts were among 59 in the state chosen to share more than \$1 million in special grants for teaching foreign languages.

The grants from the state board of education were designated to establish or improve foreign language instruction at elementary and middle school levels.

The money was included in the Michigan Department of Education's 1989-90 budget by the legislature.

Avondale, Birmingham and West Bloomfield are the three Oakland County districts that will receive the special grant money.

"The increasing interdependence of the people of the world calls for our schools to provide a more global education reflecting many languages and cultures," said Donald L. Bemis, superintendent of public instruction for the state. "We consider this an excellent opportunity for schools to enrich their curricula and provide students with a greater understanding of other languages."

PROMOTING a greater understanding of other languages and cultures was exactly the rationale behind the West Bloomfield district's grant proposal, said Larry Thomas, assistant superintendent of instruction for the district.

"We think one of our problems is the lack of student awareness of the Japanese and Arabic cultures. We want to be more culturally aware of things going on in other cultures," Thomas said.

"The district will implement experimental classes in Japanese, Arabic and Russian for seventh graders at the district's two middle schools."

The details are yet to be worked out Thomas said.

"We would like to have some ten-week exploration classes, 40 to 45 minutes long, with about 20 students each."

The teachers will be contracted from the Berlitz Agency as supplemental aids to the district's current foreign language teachers.

The grant stipulates the classes have to begin this year. Thomas said they'll have another ten-week session next fall, then review the results before adding the new languages permanently to the curriculum.

Thomas said the West Bloomfield School District has about 225 bilingual students. Of that number, 100 to 150 are Chaldean and 20 to 25 are Japanese.

"We don't have a lot of Russians yet, but we anticipate getting more," because of the Soviet Union's less restrictive immigration policies, Thomas said.

The Birmingham School District's grant will establish a program in French for children in grades one through five at Walnut Lake elementary schools.

GRANT money will enable the Avondale district to have a required ten-week introductory language class for sixth graders and a beginning German class for eighth graders. The Foreign Language Experience class for sixth graders will consist of a series of two-week classes in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Hungarian.

Why Hungarian? Because they have the resource available, and because it will be fun said Sarah Renvec. "We'll be teaching Hungarian because it'll be a different experience. Many of the students are familiar with French and the other languages."

Renvec currently teaches French for Avondale. A native of Hungary, Renvec majored in French and German, and taught English as a Second Language class for five years in the district.

Senate OKs higher ed aid package

By Tim Richard
staff writer

The Michigan Senate has voted 15 universities state aid increases averaging 5.3 percent and 29 community colleges an average of 5 percent for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

"We've moved toward a formula approach — more equal per-student," said Sen. R. Robert Goake, R-Northville, vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The higher education bill passed last week on a 29-2 vote, with all area senators supporting it, and was sent to the House.

SENATE REPUBLICAN leaders twitted House Democrats on their lack of action.

"Once again this chamber has taken the lead," said Senate majority

leader John Engler, R-Mount Pleasant.

The Legislature recessed for a two-week Easter break. But Engler, a gubernatorial candidate, suggested the House stay in session to complete its work.

Added appropriations chairman Harry Gast, R-St. Joseph: "This is the last of the Senate budget bills except capital outlay. We have not received a single bill from the House."

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY was voted a 5.4 percent increase to \$36.7 million or \$5,405 per full time equivalent student (FYVES).

University of Michigan Dearborn is scheduled for a 9.7 percent increase to \$18.2 million or \$3,604 per FYVES.

Wayne State University is scheduled for only a 4.4 percent boost to \$181.7 million. Its \$7,925 per FYVES is highest in the state.

The University of Michigan's Ann Arbor main campus was allocated a 4.8 percent increase to \$263.7 million, highest grant in the state, amounting to \$7,609 per FYVES.


Michigan State University was raised 5.8 percent to \$213.3 million or \$6,002 per FYVES.

Eastern Michigan, one of the major growth schools, was voted a 7

percent increase to \$63.3 million or \$3,574 per FYVES.

THE COMMUNITY colleges were voted a total of \$223 million. It was about the same amount recommended by Gov. James J. Blanchard, but the Senate cut some of the higher individual increases and raised some of the lower ones.

Oakland Community College was voted a 5.04 percent increase to \$15.5 million.



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