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Stein: "We all know how the state functions. We know the funding is going to be guaranteed for the first year. After that, out-laying school districts are guaranteed a larger increase in the amount of money they receive per student, whereas Farmington Farmington Hills is not going to receive the same amount of money. I believe the state is going to come back to us and say, 'We're not able to supply you with the money we said we would be able to.' The question then becomes, 'Where is the money going to come from?' Is it going to come from us the taxpayers? Or, is it going to come from other sources? Presently, President (Bill) Clinton just passed a new bill, a Goals 2000 bill, which guarantees \$700 million for local school districts in the year of 1995. If we get off our butts, and start working hard to get some of that grant money, I believe Farmington schools could remain one of the top school districts in the state and in the nation without additional cost to the taxpayers."

Webb: "We've just gone through an unprecedented dramatic change, shift actually, in the way funding is approached in the state of Michigan. I think our greatest challenge before us is to make this shift work for us in Farmington. Now, more than ever, board members certainly have a responsibility, and our community members as well, we have got to be proactive and in touch with what sort of legislation is taking place in Lansing. I know I have participated quite a bit in both the fall and winter in personal trips to Lansing to meet directly with our legislators and followed up with phone calls directly to them, expressing our concerns and trying to protect, and enhance, the funding that is so necessary in order for us to continue quality education as we know it here in Farmington."

What is your thought on outcomes-based education?

Stein: "We have a lot of people in this community who are extremely concerned about outcomes-based education. I firmly believe that when a student goes to a school they are there to learn the fundamentals. Out-

comes-based education grows out of a desire to have students, when they graduate, have the thinking skills to enter any type of situation and come up with a solution. If you don't have the fundamentals you're not going to be able to do that anyway. We need to teach students how to read, how to write, arithmetic — all the fundamentals. And, also teach them the thinking skills they need, because in the 21st Century, the students who are going to become the employees tomorrow are going to need to know how to solve problems. Although I don't agree with outcomes-based education as it stands, and believe in the fundamentals, some of the ideas behind it are good ideas. Just the way they're going about it is not the right way."

Webb: "Basically, some people are concerned about outcomes-based education. What it means to us here in Farmington is what we want the children to come out with. I think we provide excellent educational opportunities here. We certainly have a traditional mix with a lot of new and innovative and exciting ideas. There is a hue and cry across this nation calling for change in education. We have stepped up to the challenge really in a leadership role here in Farmington to address the needs that we're hearing from the business community. We know we have got to produce students who come out as team workers and collaborative workers that can go into the work force and contribute as citizens."

Inch: "I think part of the problem is when people start talking about outcomes-based education and goals and traditional (education) they are assuming there is a dichotomy between the two, that they're mutually inconclusive. That's not necessarily true. Outcomes-based education and traditional values and traditional skills can be taught at the same time. . . . Often you hear of the fact that we do not develop students that fit today. What outcomes education is supposed to do is help the students that are graduating to fit in with society and within the workplace."

What is the strongest aspect of the Farmington Public Schools? How would you help

keep it strong?

Webb: "Our students and the families that are raising them. In order to keep them strong, I think we need to continue to find better ways of communicating with them, to continue to listen to what their needs and desires are when it comes to educating the youth in our community. We have a very strong community that is very supportive of education. I think we're very fortunate."

Inch: "The fact we have students who come from homes that highly value education, who have been willing through the years to contribute to public education in the form of property taxes and their time, and who have backed the teachers and administration and who have been helpful in providing a full range of programs for Farmington Public Schools. I think this has been helped because of the backgrounds and ethnicity that represents so much of the Farmington area."

Stein: "I agree with everything that my two colleagues had to say. In terms of intangible assets, I believe it's the taxpayers in this community who have the time and money to pass millages and give more money so the school board could do it out to pay for litigation against teachers unions that results in no benefit to students whatsoever, to go towards paying for teachers who are not doing the job they should be doing. I believe Farmington Farmington Hills has some of the best teachers in the country. However, I also believe we have teachers who shouldn't be teaching any longer. There is nothing we can do about it with the tenure system the way it is."

Does Farmington have a gang problem?

Inch: "I think the potential for gang problems are throughout the entire metropolitan area of Detroit, if not the nation. If Farmington has a gang problem, it is in the incipient stage. We are taking every step to discourage the development of breakups within the school body based upon loyalty to gangs, or individuals or questionable ethics. I think with the help of outside agencies, such as Farm-

ington Youth Assistance, the Farmington youth officers . . . I think we can do our very best to direct this problem and to make it the most benign of all situations."

Stein: "Currently, I don't believe there is, quote, a problem in the Farmington Public Schools with gangs. We have quite an affluent community compared to the city of Detroit where gangs are prevalent, and I believe there is a direct relationship between poverty and the formation of gangs. However, it is always a possibility and the committee on multiculturalism is working to make sure problems like this are not going to occur in our community. There are always racial tensions when you have a bunch of different groups that come together, and as long as we keep doing what we're currently doing, I don't see gangs as really becoming a major problem in Farmington Farmington Hills public schools."

Webb: "I'm excited by the initiative that our entire city is approaching the issue of a potential gang problem. And that's the police department in concert with the Farmington schools, with the wonderful organization in our town, Farmington Families in Action, and many others have been on top of this from the get-go from the first inference that there might even be a chance of this

happening in our community. Everyone has worked together hand in hand to try to anticipate what may happen and what we can do to be proactive to try to stop this from happening."

Other than finance, what do you see as the district's greatest challenge in the next four years?

Stein: "I believe that we currently have two challenges we need to face. One of them with the passage of the new (anti-strike) bill by Governor Engler is to make sure that we keep teachers unhappy with the board of education because the board of education is suing them over the current contract that they have with the school system. When you have unhappy teachers and unhappy custodians and unhappy bus drivers, that translates into unhappy students. So, I think we need a realignment and work to bring a consensus between the educators and the board of education and the community. And that is not going to happen if we keep the same people in place year after year after year. . . . The second is we have to prepare our students for the 21st Century, utilizing technology, training teachers to use these tools."

Webb: "I truly do believe, even though it's against the question as you have proposed it, that our financial status is going to be our greatest challenge and one we're going to have to stay on top of. . . . One challenge that does come to mind, though, is because our community is so successful we are attracting many families that are moving into this area, and with them are coming children. We have done much to address our facility needs. We have done some additions to our schools, but the need is still there. We have a five-year plan for additions to our high schools, but overcrowding is perhaps a potential problem."

Inch: "I would view that five years ago I would have come up with the same answer. I think the most outstanding challenge we have is to find the most efficient way to make students avid readers, because I think it is the ability to digest material that defines success in handling material that is a sure key to success in an academic background. That would be my number one challenge. My second challenge would be, with the number of students that we have, how we can make the best use of facilities, how we can provide technology we need to bring students into the 21st century. That's where our biggest challenges are in the next five years."

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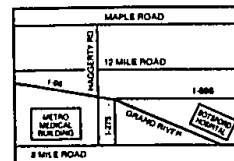
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