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the job since March. Trustee David York was ousted.

"One of the advantages of changing boards is a new set of eyes and ears that helps the superintendent focus on different issues," York said. "I have a concern (with) the precedent this sets."



Cathy Webb

Webb said she's happy to serve another term as president. She presided over the superintendent search, which led to Maxfield's hiring, and was president during a year of considerable change in school financing.

Said Webb: "It's a lot of work and it takes a lot of time. I'm glad to do it."

She was surprised by York's comments.

"I'm sorry he feels that way," Webb said. "It certainly is not going to affect how the board works."

"I absolutely guarantee I will very gladly step down after another year, because I was looking forward to doing it this year."

The idea came out of a discussion between Webb and Skove, who was in line to become president. Maxfield was asked what he thought of the idea and said it

would be helpful, Webb said.

Skove introduced the motion at Monday's meeting, citing the need to keep distractions such as dealing with a new board president to a minimum in Maxfield's first year.

Said Skove: "I feel a change in officers would detract from his (Maxfield's) efforts and would be time-consuming."

"I do believe we are making a change," Feldman said. "We're changing a long-standing tradition... I think that this change tonight to remain the same is in order to allow Bob (Maxfield) and the district to grow in an uninterrupted fashion."

Mandates: District sighs, complies

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

With 27 new school reform acts, the state has told districts where to go but not how to get there.

Despite some vague directives, Farmington Public Schools officials believe the district is already complying with many recently enacted state mandates. They added they intend to meet all of them "in good faith."

New state mandates cover everything from teaching abstinence as part of the sex education curriculum, sexual harassment policies, school improvement plans, and teacher training to providing physical education credit for extracurricular activities.

The reform acts were passed in December in the state Legislature's overhaul of public education. Most of the bills were agreed to in the late hours, perhaps explaining some of the unclear language.

"Unfortunately, we can't be as definitive as we'd like to be because the state is not as definitive as we'd like," said Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield. "We think we're on top of it."

Farmington Public Schools is affected by the school code and

■ 'Unfortunately, we can't be as definitive as we'd like to be because the state is not as definitive as we'd like. We think we're on top of it.'

C. Robert Maxfield
Superintendent

student reform bill and state school aid act, said assistant superintendent for Finance Bruce Barrett. Barrett gave the school board an update at Monday's meeting.

He gave an example of one in several mandates open for interpretation.

It states that school districts are required to recognize and meet the educational needs of a diverse student population.

"That sounds good," Barrett said. "Unfortunately, it has almost everyone scratching their heads as to what it means."

"It looked good when it was put into the bill, but it will need to be greatly modified in future."

Others are more specific.

For a district to receive accreditation, all students must be assured of enrollment in core curricu-

lum courses. It's an attempt to prevent "tracking," where non-college-bound students are placed in easier, non-core curriculum classes.

State directives are also concise in calling for districts to have student conduct and sexual harassment policies in place. Farmington already has both.

Though districts may already comply, the difficult part will be

in demonstrating that to the state. Undoubtedly, administrators expect more paperwork to be involved.

For example, if a district does not offer a breakfast program, it must have a public hearing and file a justification report.

Trustee Joe Skove wondered what effect complying will have on teaching.

"I don't know what the numbers are but if it's taking 10 or 15 extra man-days to do this, we're taking away from some of the creative and innovative opportunities that we have," Skove said.

"We're doing it. Now we're mandated. Now we have to record it. Here's all the extra time that's going into it."

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