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and defense funds for officers, such as Detroit officers Larry Nevers and Walter Budzyn.

A large amount will go toward Cops for Christmas this year. Dwyer said his problem in part with the solicitation is philosophical.

"I'm adamantly opposed to any police organization soliciting," he said, adding that if Midwest would divulge how much of the money actually went to the union, he'd feel better about the process. "I have a good relationship with the union," Dwyer said. "But when I receive complaints, I have to follow up on them."

Dwyer said there is no connection between his opposition to soliciting and the timing of current negotiations between the POA local and the police administration. Jacques said that the law, Pub-

'Every year at this time we have some complaints. Some people feel like they're being harassed or intimidated.'

Chief Bill Dwyer
Farmington Hills police

lic Act 238, requires any organization soliciting to register with the state Attorney General's office and also requires a bond. He added that not only does that protect people from "baiter room" operations, it makes it a felony to break the law. "Hey, if there is anything wrong, swear out a complaint," he said.

Gifted from page 1A

Borregard said. "At the beginning of second grade, he took a second-grade test (on the math book) and received an 86 percent."

About that time, Borregard wrote the school board and asked about the new grading system "that didn't make any sense to us," he said.

No letter grades

Farmington elementary schools use no letter grades, but use numbers instead to grade students. Last year, students were graded on a scale of 1-5. The scale has been revised to 1-6.

A "1" means performing below grade level; a "2" is developing grade level skills; "3" demonstrates grade level skills; "4" is high achievement at grade level and "5" is performing beyond grade level.

"They told us he's beyond grade level," Eric Borregard said. "The question has come up, how far beyond grade level?"

His wife, Alice, is a music teacher in Livonia Public Schools. At age 7, James was at the level of an 11-year-old, according to a test administered by Livonia schools.

"Six months ago, he tested grade 6.5 in math," Borregard said.

Eric said James is working on a junior high level.

'The reason why I didn't sign my name to it, is because this stuff is syndicated and copyrighted. I distributed to every area of Farmington Hills at one time or another.'

Eric Borregard

"We sent letters to every school board member," Borregard said. "No one replied to any of our letters."

School board president Cathy Webb said board members usually direct letters to school department heads who can resolve the problems.

In correspondence, Judy White, assistant superintendent for instruction for Farmington Public Schools, said that "current research supports later identification of students using multiple criteria."

Pushed toward center

"They denied our perceptions," Borregard said. "Our allegation is that they push all the children toward the center."

The Borregards belong to several gifted support groups. "It's a common complaint (among parents)," Borregard said. "My kid keeps doing the same thing. I know that he is capable of more. They are trying to streamline and compact."

Report cards don't give private up the ladder, they are pushing

schools any idea how good the child is, Borregard said. "It would be nice to have something similar to what they have in Livonia — a magnet school, where they identify these kids to provide an alternative."

Highmeadow Common Campus provides a more rigorous group that is "easier for the teacher to manage," he said. "It provides a quicker group, but it's more of a learning club."

Age discrimination?

Borregard would also like abilities testing for every single child in the public school district.

"Right now, (Farmington schools) are working in the dark," he said. "They are prescribing a curriculum, but they have no idea what that child's potential is."

"This is going on all over the state. There's legislation addressing age discrimination." It's discrimination by age because you don't discover what his ability is and match it, he said.

"While everybody else is going up the ladder, they are pushing

these kids through school sideways."

In Farmington Public Schools, gifted students are formally identified in the third grade, according to Woodlawn principal Laseana Jones.

Jones declined to speak specifically about the Borregard case, citing confidentiality of previous conversations.

"All classroom teachers design activities to meet the needs of the full range of students in the classroom," Jones said.

Placing James in the Livonia school district is a possibility. However, Borregard said he's uneasy about the politics of his son being in the same school where his wife teaches and is concerned about tuition.

White could not be reached for comment.

Such complaints are not unusual, according to an Eastern Michigan University professor.

"If you're asking if parents in other places are concerned about their children being challenged, that is certainly the case," said Alane Starko, who works in the university's Teacher Education Department.

"There is a concern in many places, not all places. It's certainly not unique to Farmington."

Staff writer Larry O'Connor contributed to this story.

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