

Borregard

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had to just stay there and go to a university in America.

Their son recently graduated with a master's degree in chemical engineering and was hired by a major U.S. firm. Increasingly, more and more foreign students are finding the going easy in American schools where even the more average talent is prized, because they learned early on to study.

In 1990, for example, 57 percent of doctorate degrees granted in the United States in mathematics went to students from other nations. Surprisingly, foreign-born students are not taking away jobs from Americans; they are the filling the jobs left empty.

The shortage in U.S. graduate students has forced many large companies to fill research jobs, for example, with people educated outside the United States. At Bell Laboratory, fully 40 percent of their professional employees received their pre-college training in other countries.

Here in Detroit, thousands of automobile design jobs are going begging because of a local talent shortage. Modern Engineering in Warren, the nation's largest contract engineering company, needs between 500 and 600 additional employees just for in-house contracts.

They will also need hundreds more on site at the Big Three and their suppliers. Modern was forced to go as far away as California to recruit some 3,000 people.

Other local design firms to go the California route include Hawtall Whitling Inc. and APX International. At Ford Motor Company they've created a global computer network to link their design centers, to basically go where the designers are. The new Contour/Mystic cars, built in America, are chiefly a European intellectual property.

In 1993, a U.S. Department of Education report comparing U.S. high school seniors taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses in science and math with students in 13 other countries, were found to be: 13 out of 13 in biology; 11th out of 13 in chemistry; ninth out of 13 in physics; 13th out of 13 in algebra; and 12th out of 13 in geometry and calculus.

Let's suppose now you really wanted to raise Farmington's curriculum standards and assessments to international levels. You put in place the challenging world-class curriculum. You make all the administrators and all the teachers solemnly pledge themselves to uphold the tough grading and assessment standards.

What you'd probably find is 37 percent of Farmington students would have to be retained a full grade for working below any new higher standard; that is the number who currently do not pass the MEAPs. Another 43 percent would only attain the best grade if they studied three to six hours every night.

The last 20 percent of our

brightest students would have to study two to three hours every night. They would also have to do homework on the weekends and over the holidays like other countries.

This is why countries like China and Japan lead the world, because their students are spending more time studying to reach their higher standards.

Clearly, American culture is not ready for Goals 2000, when a district like Farmington is not ready to make the adjustment to international standards.

Imagine what the effect of applying these standards to other more educationally depressed districts like Detroit might be. There would need to be mass retention; that would cause a political and racial backlash.

This is why the governor and his State Board of Education have aborted the mandatory curriculum standards for Michigan Public Schools. No politician, no matter how pro-business, is going to pursue higher standards if it's going to cause civil unrest.

They would rather see the state's largest companies import their talent, than admit their educational reform is flopped. It seems they're willing to see all of Michigan's children enter the global economy educationally disadvantaged, than to fight the hard fight for higher standards in their schools.

Eric Borregard is a parent advocate for the gifted and talented.

Food, fashions benefit Children's Hospital

The Festival of Trees, a benefit for Children's Hospital of Michigan, and Parisian, have joined forces to produce "Passport to Fashion" at Laurel Park Place Sunday, Oct. 22.

More than 20 food and beverage stations including the Ritz-Carlton, The Henry Ford Estates, Park Place Caterers of Dearborn, Livonia's Dennison's and Macaroni Grill will participate, as will the Great Harvest Bread Company of Northville.

Two Plymouth establishments,

The Water Club Seafood Grill and The Plymouth Marketplace, will be featured. Walled Lake, will be represented by the Michigan Star Clippers Dinner Train. Other downriver communities will also be showcased, such as Polonus of Wyandotte, and A Sweet Affair of Woodhaven.

Pizza Papels of Farmington Hills, the Arena of Dearborn Heights, and Muanabi Japanese Cuisine and Sushi Bar will aid in

making it an International Affair. Royal Oak participants include the Canape Cafe and the Merchant Warehouse (Royal Oak and Dearborn).

Tickets will be on sale at the Parisian at Laurel Park Place every Saturday from 1-5 p.m. until the event. Tickets also may be bought at the door, or by calling Penny (313) 274-4401, Cindy (313) 665-9684, Colleen (313) 563-6172, Suzanne (313) 953-1174, or The Festival Office at (313) 996-TREE.



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