

District forms committee to examine fiscal future

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

To follow through on its Mission 2007 goal of maintaining fiscal stability, Farmington Public Schools is forming a Blue Ribbon Financial Strategies Committee.

The 20-member committee will include principals, teachers, students and district support staff. However, the committee is expected to be co-chaired by two citizens and would also include a cross section of people from the chamber of commerce, rotary, senior citizen groups, and YMCA organizations.

Community volunteers will have a large say in the process, said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for Finance.

"Their input will be very valuable," Cannon said, "because

they will need to tell us what the community will support or buy into."

"They are really the ones who question the school community, school people who are making the recommendations. They'll give it that outside look."

After it is formed, the panel is expected to examine the district's \$106 million operating budget, facility conditions and technology and develop a financial strategy for the district.

Members will take into account recommendations from separate staff and ad hoc committees on technology, long-range budgeting, building standards, facilities, and marketing and communications.

The blue ribbon panel will then make its presentation to the Farmington Board of Education

in November 1996. Time is of the essence, district officials said.

A portion — 9 mills — of the Farmington schools operational millage expires at the end of 1997. The district will have to ask voters for a renewal.

No one has been selected to the blue ribbon committee yet.

District officials are combing through a list of names of people who wanted to serve on Mission 2007 implementation committees. They've also asked the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce for suggestions.

"We're trying to get a good cross representation, people who have been active but not just school people . . . People who would have some visibility in the 'community,'" Cannon said.

Children with serious Emotional Disorders need your help



THE CHILDREN

Sadie, age 13, needs hospital care at Fairlawn Center, the public psychiatric hospital for children in Oakland County. Despite repeated recommendations from her doctors, the Oakland County Community Mental Health system refuses to authorize her hospitalization.

John is 16 and in a private hospital for the fourth time this year. His parents and his doctors have repeatedly asked that he be transferred to Fairlawn Center. The Macomb County Community Mental Health Board refuses to authorize his hospitalization.

Bobby, 12, is an inpatient at Fairlawn Center. He has been in the hospital for the past six weeks. Two more months of inpatient treatment are necessary. The Oakland County Community Mental Health Services Board insists that he be discharged immediately.

Marianne is 14 and has been in two different psychiatric hospitals for short stays since June. Her doctors recommend hospitalization at Fairlawn Center. The Macomb County Community Mental Health Services Board says no.

These children are real children with severe emotional disorders who are being neglected by Michigan's mental health system. They represent hundreds of other children and their families whose pleas for help are going unanswered.

Mental illness in children strikes any time, any age, any nationality, any intellectual level, any socio-economic class.

THE PROBLEM

MICHIGAN'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN IS IN CHAOS

The Michigan Department of Mental Health is continuing a misguided policy of closing our children's hospitals.

Fairlawn Center, a specialized psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents 17 years of age and under, is being dismantled. Fairlawn Center has a highly trained staff of child psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, special education teachers, psychiatric nurses and child care workers which we must not lose.

"With the expansion of treatment programs in the community, there is just less of a need for State operated hospitals," says Scott Walker, spokesman for the Department of Mental Health. THE PARENTS OF SUSIE, JOHN, BOBBY, AND MARIANNE KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE. Community mental health boards, acting as gate-keepers, and in concert with State policy, are denying hospital care to children in desperate need.

Our State government is shifting responsibility for children at serious risk to local community mental health boards. But their programs are overburdened with children too disturbed to be helped by short-term hospital stays and outpatient treatment. Even our schools are adversely affected. The result: increased juvenile court cases involving youngsters unable to cope in the community.

The problem is NOT MONEY. The problem is expert psychiatric care for our children is being lost and at HIGHER COST to taxpayers.



YOU CAN HELP IN TWO WAYS

1. WRITE OR CALL:

The message is: "Keep Fairlawn Center open as the Michigan model psychiatric hospital for children with serious emotional disorders!"

Governor John Engler, Lansing, MI 48909; 1-517-373-3400

Lt. Governor Connie Binsfeld, Lansing, MI 48909; 1-517-373-6800

Mental Health Director James Haveman, Lansing, MI 48913; 1-517-373-3740

Your State Senator/Representative, Lansing, MI 48913; (1-517-373-2540 for name and number)

Your County Commissioner (for name and number, call)

Oakland County . . . 1-810-858-0100

Macomb County . . . 1-810-469-5125

Your County Community Mental Health Services Board

Oakland County . . . 1-810-858-1210

Macomb County . . . 1-810-469-5275

• ENLIST FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, RELATIVES AND FELLOW WORKERS TO WRITE OR CALL ALSO.

2. CIRCULATE A PETITION:

Circulate a petition to Governor Engler, James Haveman, Oakland and Macomb County Boards of Commissioners. For petitions call Mary Jo Fitzpatrick at 810-552-0044 who will send one or more immediately.

MICHIGAN RESIDENTS HAVE A PROUD HISTORY OF PROVIDING A FULL CONTINUUM OF TREATMENT SERVICES, INCLUDING FAIRLAWN CENTER, FOR CHILDREN WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS. ADD YOUR VOICE TO THOSE WHO WISH TO CONTINUE THIS VITAL MICHIGAN TRADITION.



This message was written and prepared for publication by representatives of:

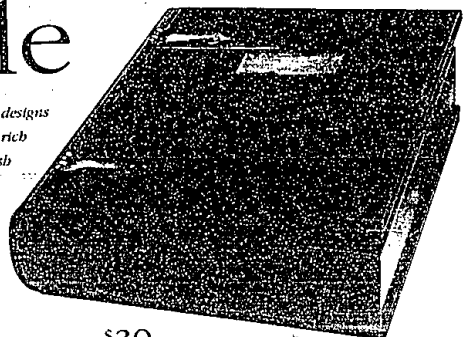
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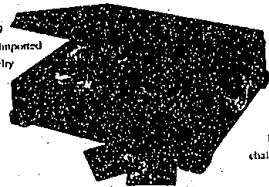
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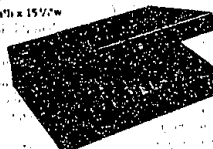


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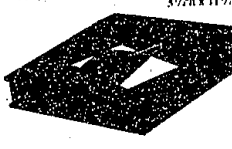
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