

School district spends now in order to save for future

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public Schools is counting on less in state aid and more on cost containment measures in the future.

The district expects to receive a \$113 per pupil increase in state aid to a sum of \$8,833 for each child enrolled, which amounts to a 1.3-percent increase. That follows state-per-pupil increases of \$153 in 1995-96 and \$160 in 1994-95 since Proposal A was enacted.

"The fact that revenues will not keep pace with inflation has been recognized," said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for Finance.

As a result, the district will be developing cost-containment measures with the help of a school and community panel. Budget preparations will also start earlier, Cannon said.

Meanwhile, it's all systems go for \$3.3 million in new programs.

The 1996-97 proposed school budget calls for a 5.9-percent increase — from \$108 million to \$114.3 million — in general fund expenditures.

One reason for the nearly 6-percent hike is the reclassification of Boys and Girls Republic and O'Connell School into the general fund, Cannon said. Without those additions, the increase in spending is 4-percent.

Some 20 teaching positions will be added along with 1.5

paraprofessional positions, a data technician, transportation dispatcher and maintenance supervisor in the new budget. The district has saved \$770,000 from early retirements of teaching staff.

Additional staff coincides with new programs that include:

•Farmington High's Student Managed Academic Resource Time - SMART revamps the student class day to a more college-oriented schedule, allowing them to take more courses. Cost: \$421,000 plus \$100,000 for an additional portable classroom.

•Farmington High's Principles of Engineering - An interdisciplinary class that combines math, science and technology. Cost: \$81,000 the first year and \$17,000 each year after.

•Stepping into the Future with Technology - This is the second phase of a districtwide project to link buildings on the Internet. Cost: \$2.47 million for cabling and computers and \$50,000 for staff development.

•O.E. Dunckel Middle School Technology Lab - Provides 16 computer workstations in different subject areas such as communication, transportation, and construction. Cost: \$152,000.

•Harrison High's Micro-computer Physics Laboratory - Is a new computer lab that will combine software applications with concepts and skills for physics students. Cost: \$69,100.

No additional money is needed

for programs such as Harrison High's Success in Academics and in Life for at-risk students. Such cost-efficient methods will become the norm in the future, school officials said.

"For a year, or two or three, we'll continue to build the capacity to respond to the future the best way we can," Superintendent Bob Maxfield said. "We know we won't be able to continue those things forever."

Some additional costs — such as the cabling for Internet access — are one time only, Maxfield said.

The district maintains a \$26.7 million fund balance in the proposed 1996-97 budget. A healthy fund balance is projected for the following term, Cannon said.

"However following the these years, it begins to fall below what we feel are acceptable levels," Cannon said.

By 1999-2000, the fund balance is projected to dwindle to \$8.7 million with general fund expenditures to top off at \$119.8 million. The district expects to see only moderate increases in state aid.

Board members and school officials blame Proposal A.

"That modest increase we have been receiving — less than the cost of living — is at a time when the economy in the state is at the very best," Trustee Helen Prutow said. "What's going to happen when that economy starts to go down the drain?"

AGENDAS

Below are highlights from the agendas of meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Southwestern Cable Commission
Farmington City Hall,
4:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 14

Agenda items include:

•Public school report by Peggy Schmidt
•Cable Access Committee report by Pat Isham
•Info TV-12 report and video by Todd Whitman
•Time-Warner report on fiber optic upgrade and 1995 financial statement by Tom Bjorklund and Bob McCann
•Executive director's report on

1996-97 budget, code of ethics and harassment policy, renewal update and Ameritech update.

City of Farmington Hills Regular council meeting
City council chambers
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 14, 1996
474-6115



PHOTOS BY SHARON LAMIRUX

Smooth skating
Julia MacMillan, above, of Farmington Hills, and professional skater Susan Schnoes, a staff member at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena, were part of a spring skating exhibition at the arena May 5. The arena staff plans on having a full-fledged ice show next year.



RECREATION NEWS

Each week, the Recreation Division of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities. For more information about programs, call the recreation office at 473-9570.

SUMMER SAHO OUTDOOR VOLLEYBALL

Registration for returning teams began March 11 at the recreation office. New teams can register on a first-come, first-served basis. Leagues will be played at Founders Sports and Heritage Park. For more information, call the recreation office at 473-9570.

DAY CAMPS

Registrations are now being accepted for the summer day camps, which will be held at Heritage Park and the Activities Center. Day camps are scheduled for 6-8 year olds and 9-12 year olds. There are eight one-week sessions beginning June 17. Half-day sessions for children ages 3-5 are also available. For further details, contact the

Recreation office at 473-9570.

HAYRIDE

Enjoy an evening ride through beautiful Heritage Park. Rides are scheduled for Fridays, May 17, 24, 31 and June 7, at 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. except for May 17 when there is no 6:30 p.m. ride. The hay ride concludes with a camp fire and marshmallows. Pre-registration fee of \$3 per person is required.

FARMINGTON COMMUNITY CHORUS

The Farmington Community Chorus presents its annual spring concert "Stagestruck" on Friday, May 17, and Saturday, May 18, at 8 p.m. at the Farmington High School auditorium. Tickets are \$7, \$5 for seniors and students. Tickets will be sold at the door if available. Call Harry Doerr at 435-0164 for ticket information.

SAFETY TOWN REGISTRATION

On Saturday, May 18, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Farmington Hills City Hall Council Chambers (southeast corner of

11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads) use east entrance to the building, registration will take place. You may register children from one other family besides your own. Registration fee is \$55 per child.

ACTIVITIES CENTER OPEN GYM

The recently renovated gymnasium at the Activities Center is now available for open play and rentals. The following schedule begins May 18:

Basketball open gym - Adults: Thursdays 7:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturdays 3-5 p.m.; Sundays 5-7 p.m.; Teens: Sundays 1-3 p.m.; 12 and under: Saturdays 12:30-3 p.m.; Family: Sundays 3-5 p.m. Volleyball Open Gym - Adults: Sundays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

AMUSEMENT PARK TICKETS

Beginning Monday, May 13, you can purchase discounted tickets to your favorite amusement park at the Recreation office. Some of the participating parks are: Cedar Point, Detroit Zoo, Four Bears Waterpark, King's Island, Sea World and Greenfield Village.

SLING LOW,
SWEET SUMMER

How sweet it is to enjoy summer fun in casual comfort. Woven leather sling-back flats in dark tan, white, silver or gold. By Sesto Meucci. Sizes 7-10AA, 5½-10B, \$115.

Jacobson's

336 W. MAPLE RD. • BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND SATURDAY, 9:30 AM TO 6 PM
THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, 9:30 AM TO 9 PM. SUNDAY, NOON TO 5 PM.