

# WL officials give tour of aging schools

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

**P**ointing toward the Walled Lake Central High School corridor walls, 65-year-old Bill Ferguson couldn't hold back his dismay about the school's decrepit condition.

"This is ridiculous," Ferguson said to district Superintendent James Geisler during Tuesday's "See for Yourself" tour.

"This concrete block is obsolete."

Before too long, Ferguson and only a handful of others on the tour witnessed plenty of evidence why the district is asking voters to, on Saturday, Sept. 28, approve a \$114 million bond issue election. The group went from Central to another aging school, Twin Beach Elementary, and finally, for comparison purposes, to one of the district's newer facilities - Pleasant Lake Elementary.

After the 4 1/2-hour tour, Ferguson had seen enough to go from undecided to a yes vote, at least for the \$108.25 million main part of the two-part proposal. Others, such as Maple Elementary School parent Dawn Rinz, were able to get a glimpse at what district officials have been decrying for years.

"I knew I'd vote yes anyway," Rinz said. "But I wanted to see for myself. I think everybody should have come and seen these conditions."

Rinz shook her head when asked about the low tour turnout. Besides herself and Ferguson, the group included Meadow Lake Elementary parent Gerry O'Grady-Pershing, Glenary Elementary School PTA president and parent Barb Ken-

ney, Geisler, two reporters, a press photographer and school board member Samantha Ruetenik.

"This is terrible," she said. "People should be educating themselves on what they'll be voting for. It's terrible that people didn't take advantage of this."

Central, the first stop on the tour, is probably the building most in need of new life. Floor tiles were worn to the point where cement could be visible. Cable wiring was strung along a WLC wall as if it were holiday garland. Cases of tissue paper were stored along with hot water mechanical equipment.

And the stench in the varsity locker room? Don't ask.

"This is representative of a very old, tired, worn-out building," said Chuck Kissaw, director of operations for the district. "It's not a matter of clean up, paint up, fix up."

If both portions of Saturday's bond issue election are successful, that building will get quite a facelift: 70 percent to be exact, with 27 new teaching stations, a new gymnasium, wiring for state-of-the-art computers and (via \$8.75 million part two) a community swimming pool. Also, all the infrastructure would be replaced.

The bond issue would also enable other projects, which officials maintain are needed to handle the annual influx of 500-600 students. These include: construction of a new elementary school; construction of two middle schools; additions and/or renovations to other existing schools.

Tour members next visited 42-year-old Twin Beach, where



This stinks: The stench in the below-ground varsity football locker room at WLC was enough to make (from left) parent Dawn Linz, school district official Chuck Kissaw and resident Bill Ferguson gag. Kissaw was explaining areas most in need of renovation.

improvements were made over the summer out of the district's general operations fund. Principal Alec Bender, however, pointed out that space is still at a premium - a psychologist tests students at a small table located inside the school supplies room.

The bond issue would enable construction of a new gymnasium. The existing gym would be converted into a multi-purpose room, Bender said.

Afterward, Kenney gave a lukewarm endorsement for the bond issue.

"I'm not convinced they're using space as effectively as they could," said Kenney, who has a second grader at Glenary. She said it would be helpful to get more detailed information, such as: how much square footage in schools is earmarked for students, senior citizen activities and other community programs.

**Interactive possibilities:** Walled Lake Central teacher Judy Miller explains benefits students would receive, via technology, if Saturday's \$114 million bond issue election is successful. New wiring would enable WLC to be connected to a long distance fiber optic education network stretching to Chicago and Indianapolis.



## School Bond Election BALLOT LANGUAGE

### PROPOSITION I

#### Bonding Proposal - Additional School Facilities

Shall Walled Lake Consolidated School District, Oakland County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed One Hundred Eighty Million Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$180,250,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, for the purpose of:

- Erecting, furnishing and equipping a new elementary school and playground and two middle schools;
- Erecting, furnishing and equipping an addition or additions to and/or partially remodeling, refurbishing and re-equipping existing school facilities, in part, for additional classrooms and educational technology, excluding computers;
- Constructing, equipping, developing and improving outdoor athletic and physical education facilities, and sites;

### PROPOSITION II

#### Bonding Proposal - Community Swimming Pool

Shall Walled Lake Consolidated School District, Oakland County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Five Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$5,750,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, for the purpose of erecting, furnishing and equipping a handicapped-accessible community swimming pool and related lockers, storage and mechanical rooms as an addition to the Walled Lake Central High School?

(According to state law, bond proceeds cannot and will not be used for routine maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

How Many Dollars

## School Bond Election HOW TO VOTE

POLLING HOURS: 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
on Saturday, Sept. 28, 1996  
PRECINCTS:

- 1.....Community Ed.  
615 N. Pontiac Trail  
Walled Lake
- 2.....Kelth Elementary  
2800 Kelth Road  
West Bloomfield
- 3.....Commerce Elementary  
520 Farr Street  
Commerce Township
- 4.....Wixom Elementary  
3201 N. Wixom Road  
Wixom
- 5.....Glenary Elementary  
3070 Woodbury  
Commerce Township
- 6.....Twin Beach Elementary  
7149 Oakley Park  
West Bloomfield
- 7.....Dublin Elementary  
9260 Sandyside  
White Lake
- 8.....Oakley Park Elementary  
2015 Oakley Park  
Walled Lake
- 9.....Maple Elementary  
7389 W. Maple Road  
West Bloomfield
- 10.....Hickory Woods  
30655 Decker Road  
Novi

How Many Dollars

sports teams and kindergartners bused hither and yonder.

Those sound like threats. But after taking a first-hand look at some of the district's aging facilities during Tuesday's "See for Yourself" tour, those might better be described as mere facts.

For additional facts about the election, such as what the proposals are and where to vote, please refer to the charts on this page.

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See Store for details.



## WL school bond issue election is Saturday

**Editor's note:** The far northwest corner of Farmington Hill is in the Walled Lake School District - but just barely. The sprawling Walled Lake District dips south of 14 Mile Road to include almost 700 students, more than half of them in elementary school, who live in the city of Farmington Hills.

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

**S**ince October 1993, the Walled Lake Consolidated School District has taken three steps toward the edge of the window sill. One more step and...boom.

School officials will find out Saturday - the fourth bond issue

attempt of more than \$110 million since October 1993 - if the patient lives or is in critical condition.

And forget all of the brick bats, propaganda, accusations and threats. For Walled Lake schools, it all comes down to this: approve Saturday's \$114 million bond issue election or else a crisis situation will quickly emerge.

Voters have to decide whether having comfortable schools and an educational program fit for the 21st Century is worth the cost of about \$2.50 a week for the owner of a home valued at \$120,000.

If they don't think it is, look out for double shifts, no more

## 'Word of Mouth' is topic of luncheon

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will hold a membership luncheon and mini-seminar at noon Thursday, Sept. 26, at Relish Grill on 12 Mile Road, east of Drake, in Farmington Hills.

Guest speaker Brian Maxson, assistant vice president and financial planner at Merrill Lynch and E\*active Director of Business Network International of Southeast Michigan, will present "The World's Best Known Marketing Secret: Increasing Your Business Through Word of Mouth."

Maxson will speak on how to implement new marketing strategies, expand contacts through everyday activities, and reward those who refer your business.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to learn how to use the world's

best known marketing secret. The cost of this luncheon is \$20 for chamber members or BNI members and \$25 for non-members.

For more information or to make reservations, call the chamber at 474-3440 or fax us at 474-9235. MasterCard, Visa and check will be accepted.

This event is open to the public.