

Debate from page A1

the district financial strategies committee (co-chaired by Reid) to pursue alternate funding for the issue.

"I do feel that our school district is a fairly well-off district, but the money has been easy here and we have gotten complacent," he said. "We shouldn't benchmark ourselves against ourselves."

"Challenging and gratifying" was how Feldman described her time on the board so far. She stressed the importance of working with other board members, and being able to "agree to disagree at a meeting and present a united front in the end."

For her question session, Feldman asked Clevey what type of

leadership roles he had held in the past to give him experience in board matters. Clevey admitted that he had only been in the district a few years and hadn't had much of a chance to gain experience.

"I've had four years of experience on the board. I know it inside and out," said Feldman in her opening statement. "I am prepared to continue to dedicate the time and effort it takes to be a committed board member."

Reid covered a variety of issues quickly — pledging to ensure continuous improvement of test scores, get consistent results from across the district, and engage parents and area businesses in the learning process.

Calling alternative funding "the centerpiece" of Clevey's election bid, Reid called into question Clevey's concept of approaching major corporations for gifts and grants.

"It's important to understand the community you hope to represent," said Reid, a 12-year Farmington-area resident. "I believe the board can be the agent of change to take us to the next level."

During Shipice's question-and-answer segment that the discussion turned lively and candidates were confronted with different issues and scenarios and how they might respond as a board member. (See related story.)

"This was designed to distinguish between them," said Shipice afterward. "It still wasn't as specific as I would've liked. With all the talk of all these (forums) it is all a candidate to speak in generalities and non-specifics."

However, Shipice conceded, "I was struck by the fact that all

three of them gave such poor marks to Engler. . . . The other surprising thing was that all three of the candidates are supporting merit pay. I didn't know there was any interest in that. Of course, merit pay means different things to different people."

His questions may have failed to pin the candidates down to too many specifics, but Feldman remarked in her closing comments: "Please keep in mind that the issues we've discussed tonight aren't necessarily the issues of tomorrow."

Look for a cable rebroadcast on Farmington Hills Channel 8 at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, and 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday.

Second board debate

The Farmington Area Jaycees will host another school board debate between Clevey, Feldman and Reid at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 29, at Farmington Hills City Hall. Jaycees president Christa Murphy will moderate.

Here's a bit of Q&A

Here are some of the questions moderator Barry Brickner and former school board member Michael Shipice posed to the three Farmington school board candidates Wednesday night:

Q. Grade the current state of the Farmington school district:

All: B.

Q. Grade the current board of education:

Clevey: C. "The school board has gotten complacent. . . . We need to get a lot more lean and mean about going after funding."

Feldman: A. "There's always room for improvement. That's why I gave it the minus."

Reid: A.

Q. How many school board meetings have you attended?

Clevey: Five.

Reid: 25.

Q. Grade Superintendent Bob Maxfield's performance:

Clevey: "It's very difficult, as a non-board member, to rate

him."

Feldman: A.

Q. Do you favor a voucher system?

All: No.

Q. Should the state maintain its existing school board?

Clevey: No.

Feldman: Yes.

Reid: Yes.

Q. Grade Gov. John Engler on public education:

Clevey: C.

Feldman: "Close to (a C)."

Reid: C.

Q. If the board had to cut \$20 million from the district budget, what would you cut?

Clevey: "The first thing I'd do is raise \$10 million, so I'd only have to cut \$10 million."

Feldman: "I would immediately begin to work on non-instructional services first."

Reid: "My inclination would be to find things that don't affect education first and cut those."

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Impaired from page A1

This fall, Farmington is moving its EMI students from Hillside and William Grace into the TMI program at Kenbrook because the special education center programs are being eliminated across the county, school officials said. Districts are now responsible for providing services for their own special education students.

Students are currently grouped in these programs based, in part, on intelligence quotients — EMI students have an IQ in the 55-70 range, TMI students in the 35-55 range.

Parent Jack Trabue criticized

the district for its lack of communication with TMI parents.

"No one's getting to me and letting me know that these things are happening," he said. "I want to know what's going to be done on your end to communicate to me."

Board president David York said that the next few years will be a time of transition for special education in Michigan, but defended the school board's decision.

"Reactions and decisions we had to face as a board come with change," he said.

"Change is difficult. . . . We may

disagree on the programming, but it's not fair to say that the children don't come first."

Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield seconded York's opinion, and apologized for any miscommunication with parents of special education students.

"The plan to combine (EMI and TMI classes) was done carefully. . . . It's our intention to monitor that program closely," he said.

"We can't undo any communication that should've occurred earlier, but we can continue the communication that has happened."

"We can't fix the past," added York. "We can improve the future."

During the special meeting with parents, Don Cowan, executive director of student services, pointed out that he had met with a group of three EMI parents to discuss options for the pending change. Cowan said later that school officials "did not see

(inviting those TMI parents) as a great need because they would not be relocated." In hindsight, he said it would have made sense to inform both groups together.

Staffing of the new classes will be 4-to-1, including teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff, well below county or state requirements, Cowan stressed.

Teacher Chris Todd assured parents that staff wouldn't have difficulty working with both EMI and TMI students together: "As special education teachers, we teach children, we don't teach labels."

Later, teacher Julia Gradin asked parents for patience. "I need you to give us the chance to make this work."

Mergener responded: "When our children arrive in your classroom, you will have no stronger advocates."

Staff writer Todd Wicks contributed to this report.

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Having joint injection means more than getting a shot into a joint.

First, your doctor has a reason for treating by injection rather than by oral medicine. Usually the decision comes out of the need to remove fluid, which can be done at the same time, and to spare you the side effects of taking oral steroids. Second injections consist of corticosteroids formulated to remain in the joint. These medications do not have the same potentially bad effect on your adrenal glands and bones as can occur with corticosteroids taken by mouth.

Second, the preparation required before giving you an injection. The area the needle enters should be germ free, and so require a sterile prep. The site of injection needs to be more than cleaned; it usually is cleaned with an iodine-alcohol swabbing that kills germs. In addition the doctor scrubs his hands in a surgical type way to eliminate germs, and/or wears sterile gloves to preserve the bacteria-free field.

Third, the physician must use skill and experience to place the injection properly. Entering joints is not easy; your doctor must first learn and then keep practicing the techniques of locating surface landmarks and being aware of their variations.

Keep in mind that a double injection gives no more useful steroid than a single injection, which contains sufficient medication to counter joint inflammation. Also, at this time there is no evidence that any one steroid injection product is superior to any other.

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