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buses are gassed up and prepared to hit the road on Tuesday.

"They are ready to go," said St. Laurent, adding that the district will receive another excellent rating from the state, which recently concluded its annual inspection. "There are 132 items checked on each. It (the inspection) is pretty extensive."

Just to be sure, St. Laurent and his staff were spending the last week or so kicking tires, polishing mirrors and looking under hoods.

"Every interior was scrubbed, too," he said. "Now all we have to do is put students (into) seats."

When bus drivers take those buses out of the garage on Tuesday, they'll take on more than 500 routes, made up of a total of 2,363 bus stops. With few exceptions, the stops are the same as last year.

Postcards or letters informing every student where they should be picked up and dropped off were mailed to homes early last week. That same information also will be posted in the school

buildings.

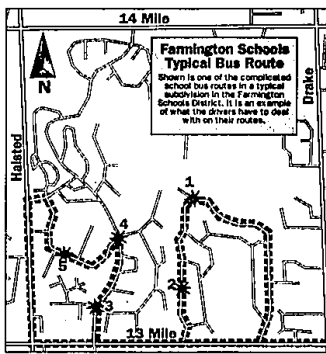
"This has not been an unusual year" for mapping out routes, said Teddy. "There have been no school building time changes or anything like that. That really effects what we do here."

Teddy did say some runs were added, largely to service newer subdivisions in the district, such as one at Inkster-10 Mile roads. She noted that approximately two-thirds of the district's estimated 13,000 students are scheduled to take the bus in '97-98.

According to Teddy, only minor changes were made to some existing bus stops serving elementary school children, located deep in subdivisions and neighborhoods. Older students who ride the bus to middle school and high school are picked up on major streets.

"We like to keep neighborhood stops the same," she said.

But every year, the maps have to be tweaked, due to those students who move into the district and those who shift to a different school. "There'd have to be something drastic that would cause a bus stop to move more than a



house or two."

For the past month or two, Teddy and other transportation department scrutinized whether bus stops needed to be re-located, taking advantage of a sophisticated computer mapping system. "We look at every route, where students live in relation to the stop."

Teddy also wanted to use the start of another school year to remind motorists to drive with caution around school buses.

"People need to be aware of bus lights when they're loading and unloading (students)," she said. "They have to stop at least 20 feet from each direction when lights are flashing red."

But, because it is probable that some drivers will ignore the lights, district bus drivers are empowered to report violations to the Farmington Hills Police Department and Farmington Public Safety Department, Teddy said.

## Bond

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One change is that people have a choice. Rather than all-or-nothing, they will vote on a \$65 million Proposal 1 and \$28.1 million Proposal 2. The latter hinges on the success of Proposal 1.

The most-crucial building improvements are included in the \$65 million Proposal 1. Those include: adding classrooms at all levels; upgrading high school science facilities; improving several middle school cafeterias and media centers; fixing boilers and air conditioning; wiring the entire district for future technological needs.

The \$28.1 million Proposal 2 would do more of the same, as well as deepen Farmington High School's pool to meet safety standards and add auxiliary gymnasiums at Farmington and North Farmington high schools.

Both proposals combined are nearly \$17 million less than the bond issue proposal that was defeated by 195 votes on March 25. The bulk of the reduction is linked to the pairing of computer purchases from the list.

Although a successful Proposal 1 would wire buildings, money will not go for computer purchases. Instead, to meet a goal to increase the number of in-classroom computers from one-to-three, at least \$10 million will be available in the general fund's capital projects budget by mid-1998, Maxfield said.

The postcards and videos are another example of how the current proposal is different, to do a better job informing the public, the superintendent said.

Board of Education President Linda Enberg is campaigning to help people understand why the district needs a bond issue. But she wears a different hat when she telephones residents — that as a member of the grassroots citizens' committee, Advocates for Excellence in Education.

"People are just starting to pay attention now and learn about it," Enberg said.

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