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schools and three high schools, Brouillette continued, it would be impossible to close a building. "So, we'd be drastically cutting staff and programs."

Sharp, a board member since 1998, said he isn't sure where the anticipated 10 percent loss of students to private-parochial schools came from. It doesn't seem logical in Farmington and Farmington Hills, where those schools are at capacity, he added.

"I also know that those independent schools that are not aligned with religious affiliates will not accept vouchers," Sharp explained, "because they don't want to stop up and accept the obligation set forth if they are accepting state money. So, I

don't know where those kids would go."

Brouillette said the sting of vouchers might take awhile to be felt.

"The first year, we probably wouldn't see much of a difference," Brouillette said. "In 10 years, we wouldn't recognize them (Farmington schools)."

Another major problem if the voucher proposal passes is the fact that there would be automatic reduction in the 2000-01 School Aid Fund of \$100 per student, or about \$1.7 million to Farmington schools, Sharp said.

That loss would have to be replaced out of the district's general fund.

Parental choice

The second question of the pro-

gram was about what was called a recent controversy over "Respecting Myself and Others," a new age-appropriate elementary school curriculum in the district that includes a unit about sexual harassment. The board approved a policy giving parents the right to review sensitive classroom materials and opt out their children from watching those, if they felt uneasy about the subject matter.

Some parents took the district up on the policy. According to Sharp, "parents did what parents are supposed to do, they reviewed portions of their children's curriculum and exercised their right to opt that child out of that particular curriculum."

And the board strongly urged

parents to do just that, he said. But board members on the curriculum committee and administrators also trusted the judgment of "professional educators" about going forward with the sexual harassment unit, which Sharp confirmed is mandated by the state.

"It's important to bring it out into the open," answered Brouillette, supporting the curriculum and policy. "Once it (sexual harassment) is not hidden, it is not going to be happening as much. I think it was a valuable thing to have public conversation about it and I'm very comfortable with it."

Brouillette and Sharp, both parents of students now attending Farmington schools, said pressure does exist on school districts to do more "parenting" of young people than ever before.

But it would not be wise to push the envelope to the point where frumpy parents could be penalized for problem students.

Instead, educators need to encourage parents to be actively involved in the education of their children, Brouillette said. As a safety net, the district teaches students about core values, "about being a good person really, and all of those skills tie into being good parents" themselves later in life.

The existence of new programs such as peer mediation, conflict resolution and the "pence

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Gary Sharp
—Farmington school board

palette," explained Sharp, also will pay dividends in the future.

"That's going to aid our children as they progress and start having kids of their own," he said.

Both incumbents strongly opposed any thoughts of districts imposing penalties on uninvolved parents.

"We cannot legislate morality, we cannot legislate parental involvement," Sharp said. "You can't do it. It's not our place as a government to put that on the people and it's scary. It's scary to think there are elements out there who would like to do it."

Concurring was Brouillette, who emphasized that "it would be a very strange world" if parenting were to be regulated. "There are a lot of things we can do together to raise the level."

(The forum was hosted by the Farmington Area Council PTA and moderated by Joanne Maliszewski, editor of the Farmington Observer. It was taped for showings on local education TV-10.)

FOOTBALL CAMP SIGN-UP

Join former All-State and All-American Harrison High School greats Mill Coleman and Kevin Bryant, along with pro and college athletes for a football experience of a lifetime on July 7-8. Sign-up ends Friday, June 30, and openings are limited.

Camp divisions are: Mid-camp, grades 6-8, 9 a.m. to noon; and high-camp, grades 9-12, 1-4 p.m. The camp will take place at Harrison High School's practice football field. The fee to participate is \$65 per player. Call 473-9570.

Hours

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a.m. to 11:45 a.m.; P.S./P.M., 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.; Headstart/A.M., 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Headstart/P.M., 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
2000-2001: P.S./A.M., 9:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.; P.S./P.M., 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.; Headstart/A.M., 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Headstart/P.M., 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Note: Farmington Public Schools did not yet have 2000-2001 school hours available for special education facilities and the Farmington Alternative Academy.

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