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Farmington Observer

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Board feels Maxfield's top in his class

BY SUE BUCK
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Farmington Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield received high grades for his performance during the past year, and school board members think he's the top in his class.

"We had some very tough issues but you did an outstanding job," said Linda Enberg, chairwoman of the Superintendent's Evaluation Committee.

Enberg made her comments during the May 21 school board meeting.

The board reviewed a three-inch thick portfolio in a three-hour closed session review May 14, as allowed by the Open Meetings Act.

Topics discussed included progress toward goals, student

'We continue to be amazed at Dr. Maxfield's leadership in the community. People have said that Dr. Maxfield works in this community like he lives here. He doesn't live here, but he does care about the quality of life in the community and the region.'

Linda Enberg
Chairwoman, Superintendent's Evaluation Committee

achievement, advancing the strategic plan, finances, employee and board relations and community involvement.

"We continue to be amazed at Dr. Maxfield's leadership in the community," Enberg said. "People have said that Dr. Maxfield works in this community like he lives here. He doesn't live here, but he does care about the quality of life in the community and

the region."

Enberg credited him for having an open and inclusive philosophy in decision making, tackling three "difficult and divisive issues": school boundaries, graduation requirements and the feasibility of a late start for high school.

She called his effort to include all voices in an open process of decision making "remarkable."

Through a collaborative effort, the district was able to provide a two-year contract extension for employees.

"In times of shrinking education dollars, he and staff have had to make difficult decisions," Enberg said. "While not everyone has agreed with these decisions, everyone has been informed along the way. He has insisted that the quality of our programming be protected even during economic slowdown."

Maxfield's contract allows him a yearly management seminar. Enberg praised him for his receipt of the J. William Fulbright scholarship this year, pointing out that during the district's difficult economic times, he found a seminar with a scholarship.

Salaries from page A1

'sup's. They are not getting the type of candidates they are hoping for."

Because Maxfield will eventually retire, Reid said it's not only important to honor him for his current role but stay competitive for any successor, so the district can recruit a good candidate.

The board information was based on both new and current contracts in surrounding districts.

"You can see there's some districts in the \$225,000 range and others flirting with \$200,000," Reid said. These are total package amounts.

Maxfield's current base salary is \$141,590; with benefits, the total package amounts to \$162,918.

The average among similar districts is \$187,949. Among comparable districts studied were Waterford, Walled Lake and Troy. "I averaged them out and came up with \$188,000," Reid said.

"There's a \$35,000 difference," Webb said. "We have Walled Lake at \$200,000 for 2002-2003. It would take us three years to get Bob to that level."

Board members talked about incentives, and Sharp mentioned

an escalating longevity bonus. Webb approved of the idea as well.

"He is the CEO of a major corporation," Webb said. "I want to send the right message to him and to others."

Sharp did his own research of area districts. He worked out higher numbers.

"I worked out the assumption of the restrictive free agents or the franchise player on a sports team which restricts the ability for a person to move but you guarantee them the average of the five highest of the salaries at the position," Sharp said. "My

main concern is not Bob but Bob's successor...I don't want to get into a position where we hand-aid it this year and we revisit it next year. We are far underpaying and we need to rectify that."

"We made an equity adjustment three years ago and we said we would look at it again," Enberg said. "It's a difficult economic time but you still have to be competitive."

Farmington has a \$130 million budget with 12,000 students.

Maxfield received an A-plus rating following a three-hour review in closed session May 14.

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