



ROBBERY

FROM PAGE A1

occurred in the city so far this year, the highest number he's recalled. Karen Y. Carpenter was arraigned in 47th

District Court in Farmington Hills Friday and charged with one count of bank robbery in the Farmington Hills incident, a felony punishable by up to life in prison.

A not guilty plea was

entered on her behalf. Her bond was set at \$500,000 or 10 percent cash surety.

Carpenter's preliminary exam is set for Oct. 25.

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VAGNOZZI

FROM PAGE A1

Vagnozzi argues against Knol's contention that while vouchers aren't needed in Farmington/Farmington Hills, they would be good for other districts which aren't doing as well.

"This argument that we don't need them in Farmington/Farmington Hills but we need them in other areas, you can't do that," Vagnozzi said.

"You can't pass a law which only applies to certain districts. People wouldn't vote for a proposal which only covered part of the state."

Knol is supported by Betsy DeVos group (the Great Lakes Education Project) which is pro-vouchers and pro-life, Vagnozzi said.

Knol favors a constitutional amendment that would be written so vouchers would only be available in what are defined as failing districts by the state's accreditation system.

Basing everything on one test is not fair either to the better school districts or the ones that aren't doing as well, Vagnozzi said.

"Sometimes if a district which isn't doing well increases its performance by a few percentage points, all of a sudden, it becomes an excellent school and vice versa, as we saw with Hillside, which has high scores. I don't know what happened over there, whether we slipped a little bit but all of a sudden, they are a failing school."

USA Today reported that the Farmington Hills-based Hillside Elementary, a national Blue Ribbon Exemplary School, was a "failing school" on a federal list released this summer in conjunction with President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" federal legislation. School officials said the rating was based on inadequate yearly progress in one small area of testing.

Reporters for the national newspaper set out to find out

what would happen when they compared Blue Ribbon schools with a "failing" school criteria. Vagnozzi said a fair grading system for schools shouldn't rely too heavily on standardized test scores, because they may not accurately reflect a student's abilities. Students may perform better on some mornings than on others, he said, and one test score won't reflect that.

"We need more than one test to accredit schools, more than just the MEAP test," he said. "I would like to include the graduates in rate, the percentage of graduates who go on to college and other performance standards."

Many schools spend days teaching to the MEAP and bypass regular instructional programs, he said, adding, "I would take the MEAP out of the Department of Treasury and put it back into the Department of Education."

"I would restore the power of the Department of Education," he said. "I think if Jennifer Granholm is elected, she will."

While Knol contends that a system of letter grades proposed for ranking state schools may be easy for parents to understand, Vagnozzi asked, "What are they basing their grades on?"

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Vagnozzi seeks a broader accountability for charter schools as well.

"Every study has shown most are rated below the public schools and religious schools," he said. "There's no accountability. We have to hold them as accountable as we hold (regular) public schools. Money is being siphoned off for profits in some of them. It's a bad use of education funds."

Vagnozzi questions how Central Michigan University, which authorized many charter schools, can supervise all those buildings when they are located in Mount Pleasant.

"Parents won't pull their kids

out in the middle of a semester," he said. "They will go possibly a whole year in a school which isn't meeting standards. Until there is accountability, we can't charter any more schools."

Vagnozzi favors a limit on the number of schools any one institution can charter.

He has a separate gripe about the number of university and colleges branches in southeastern Michigan.

"If we want to try to reduce tuition costs, we have to rein in some of these expenses," he said. "It must be expensive to have branches all over. We have areas where we are spending money which are self-defeating."

While he sees problems with Proposal A, which limits property tax increases and guarantees a level of funding for all school districts, he pointed out, "Proposal A is imbedded in the constitution, the Legislature can't change it." He doesn't believe Farmington schools fared well under Proposal A.

DURANT CASE

Vagnozzi also commented on Durant versus State of Michigan, a class action lawsuit filed in 1980 by various districts claiming underfunding of programs and a violation of Section 29 of the state constitution known as the Headlee Amendment.

This amendment requires the state to fund mandated programs the same proportion of the state budget when the amendment was adopted in 1978. The mandated programs involved were special education, special education transportation, school lunch program and driver education.

"I cannot understand how the Supreme Court ruled on that case and the state still refused to meet the court order," Vagnozzi said. "If you or I defied a court order, we would be in jail."

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