

PROPOSAL

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Principal Carolyn Witte mentioned that the scholarships were initially offered to entice more participation in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test, which is optional.

More than half of Mersey High School graduates have taken the test in the last three years. Of the graduates who took the test, 75-85 percent received the Merit Scholarships, Witte said. Graduating classes have averaged about 200 students annually.

Witte's son, a senior at Franklin High School, in Livonia, is eligible for the scholarship. She was surprised when the state sent him a letter directly stating the scholarship is in jeopardy if Proposal 4 passes.

"One of the benefits is that it is merit based regardless of need," Witte said. "This year's senior class is caught in the crossfire of the political battle. The \$2,500 is no small assist-

tance for any family considering the cost of higher education."

It sends a terrible message for students who performed well, under the guidelines of what the state considers an adequate education and then, considering the merit aspect, have that carrot taken away, she said.

However, it's not a determining factor whether students will be able to attend college or not.

Kris Czekiere, an administrator for the district's school improvement and accreditation office, said there are several ways to become eligible for the scholarships, and students

can take the test several times.

"Voters should realize if Proposal 4 passes, the Merit Scholarship program is dead and will not be revived," said State Sen. John (Joe) Schwarz, who is leading the drive against the proposal. "As a result, high school graduates throughout Michigan will not receive a scholarship that, in many cases, will make a difference as to whether they will be able to attend college or not."

Over the years, the Merit Scholarship program has provided 139,000 college scholarships for Michigan young men and women, many of whom would not attend college without that financial help, said

Schwartz. "If Proposal 4 is adopted, kids and families in coming years who were hoping for financial help in going to college will be left out in the cold."

Doug Klegon, a CEO for the American Lung Association of Michigan, has a daughter at North Farmington High who's eligible for the Merit Scholarship.

He plans to vote for Proposal 4 and informed his daughter. "There's no question it would be nice to have the scholarship money."

He believes the money should have been used as intended for health care and tobacco prevention.

"We have 28 percent of high school kids in Michigan smoking," Klegon said. "It comes down to whether we are doing right for our citizens."

Klegon estimates about one third of these addicted kids will die prematurely. He attributed his parents' deaths to smoking.

Parent Betsy Callaghan is still waiting for the actual scholarship payment.

"That's a bone of contention," she said. Her daughter Meghan, a 2002 North Farmington graduate, is a freshman at Notre Dame University. She will receive only \$1,000 — not the full \$2,500 scholarship — because

she chose an out-of-state university, Callaghan said.

Barb Crabbill's daughter Annie also graduated from NFHS this year and is at Bowling Green University. She is also waiting for the money. "My feeling is any kid who passes the test should get the same amount of money," Barb Crabbill said.

If either Meghan or Annie transfers to a Michigan university, they will receive the remaining \$1,500, Crabbill said.

Staff writer Sue Buck also contributed to this story.

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DIVERSITY

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services and they have neighborhoods which are, frankly, more fun to live in."

There aren't many other cities like Farmington and Farmington Hills, he said.

Many Detroit-area communities have "a sorry history of integration," Maxfield said.

"They get de-segregated and re-segregated. People just keep moving away from each other."

Farmington School Board Member Priscilla Brouillette said it was wonderful to see new faces who have not previously participated in MCMR events. She urged the crowd to think about the things in the news that worry them about the world and then also urged them to think about what they can affect in their hometown.

"Be glad, like I am, that all of you are here," she said.

She credited Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield as a visionary man who has had a big impact on the work of the MCMR.

Oakland University Professors Shea Howell and Kevin Early, who regularly work for the National Conference for Community and Justice, are the facilitators and challengers for the year-long diversity project.

The two planned to use a variety of techniques to break the ice. "We like to think of diversity as biologists think of healthy ecosystems," Early said.

He called the Farmington/Farmington Hills community "one of America's most diverse communities."

The group was asked by facilitators what their expectations are from the process.

"I expect you will pull it out of us," said Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell. "If we are having a little bit of trouble identifying the issues, you are going to help us get there. I think all of us probably are wondering right now where you are going with us and I expect you will pull us along."

Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock acknowledged the community was diverse. "We certainly are more diverse but not as diverse as we think," he said.

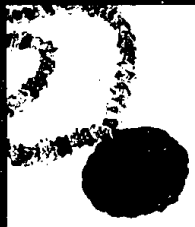
It's important to honor each other's stories, Howell said. The facilitators showed a video called, "The Power of One."

"History has shown us that one person can make a difference," Early said. "We already know that we cannot change the direction of the wind; you can only adjust the sail."

Railroad show on tap

The 22nd Annual Model Railroad Workshop and Show, presented by Division 6 of the North Central Region of the National Model Railroad Association, will be noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24, at the Civic Park Senior Center on Farmington at Five Mile in Livonia. Entry is \$4, kids 12 and under admitted free.

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