

OLS

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pre-empted by a funeral, Maxfield said.

If shared time is to start in fall 2003, the Farmington school board must make a decision before the end of February because of its budget.

"It was sort of a joint decision (to meet)," Maxfield said. "We will not to decide the thing then."

The discussion will focus on how the grade-level meetings went and determining next steps. "It's a chance to say, 'How do we read it?'" Maxfield said.

His prediction is that OLS officials will say they listened to everyone, thought it all through, evaluated and tried the process, but there are still people who don't want it.

Brouillette hopes to see strong support of shared time in considering the issue.

"It can be a win-win," Brouillette said.

"Our art, music and physical education programs are outstanding."

She mentioned the difficulty of studying the benefits of a shared-time program while also hearing the hurt voiced by some parents.

Watson said 177 parents out of 550 families attended the grade-level meetings. Forty opposed shared time, she said. Critics say that's inaccurate, and the number of people against shared time was much greater.

"About 30-33 people were able to discuss some legitimate questions in a thoughtful, appropriate manner," Watson said in a Nov. 14 school newsletter. "The behaviors exhibited at the meeting of Oct. 29 are wrong. It is time to move on. This issue has taken too much time, too much energy and has detracted from other school issues that need to be addressed."

Denise Wood, an outspoken critic of shared time and president of the Parent-Teacher Guild three years ago, said she plans to send her children to St. Fabian School in Farmington Hills next year.

Neither St. Fabian, Hillel Day School nor Mercy High School have expressed interest in a shared-time arrangement, Maxfield said.

"The meetings were a way to placate," Wood said. "It was a pacification process. They had to because that's what Farmington Public Schools wanted."

Wood said leaving OLS is difficult because her family loves the teachers. Her decision was based on a number of factors, which included shared time.

She was especially critical that the grading section that houses grades one-four was without heat for several days in October.

"The thermostat was 50 degrees," Wood said.

Watson said building work was under way at that time and couldn't say how long the low-heat situation lasted.

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Shared time plan succeeds in Livonia

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Our Lady of Sorrows Monsignor Walter Hurley has said in the past that if the Farmington Public Schools district doesn't partner with OLS officials to provide shared time programs, he may approach the Livonia Public School district.

As of Dec. 11 that had not happened, according to Mary Combs, supervisor of shared time for the Livonia Public Schools. However, the concept of shared time has proven successful there.

The district initiated shared time at most major Livonia nonpublic schools at the same time seven years ago.

Agreements allow public school teachers to work in private school classrooms.

Livonia provides services to 13 nonpublic schools in several school districts:

■ Livonia - St. Edith, St. Genevieve, St. Michael and Peace Lutheran

■ Westland/Wayne - St. Damian, St. Mary of Wayne, St. Michael's of Wayne and St. Matthew Lutheran

■ Plymouth/Canton - Our Lady of Good Counsel and All Saints

■ Northville - St. Paul, Northville Christian and Our Lady of Victory.

"It's been wonderful," Combs said. "We have had great experiences."

Only noncore classes such as art, music, physical education, computer and industrial technology are offered. All classes aren't offered at every school.

For instance, Combs said, students at one school receive only band instruction.

Shared time has not been a financial windfall for the Livonia district. The public district pays for supplies like glue, chalk, paint brushes and volleyball and basketball nets.

"The profit is not there that people think," Combs said.

About 2,800 students are in the Livonia-sponsored programs, said Jay Young, who was the director of the shared time program until this year.

The money paid to the school district goes back into program

costs, Young said.

"We have over 100 (full-time equivalent students) in the shared time program," said Randy Liepa, Livonia's assistant superintendent of business. "They are counted on a pro-rated basis, based upon the amount of time they are with us as a ratio to a full day of instruction."

Livonia's foundation allowance is \$8,105 per student, Liepa said. The small portion that remains after all costs goes into the general fund to support all school efforts, he said, although information about that amount wasn't immediately available.

In introducing the shared time program, both Young and Combs made presentations to parents at nonpublic schools.

"We started small with the major ones," Combs said. "We didn't do a lot of recruitment."

After about three years, the Livonia school district branched out to other districts. A public school district can only provide shared time to contiguous districts.

"They have to be our neighbors," Young said.

Until this year, the Livonia district transported nonpublic school students to the former Dickinson School on Newburgh. About a dozen teachers go to the various schools now.

New teachers were hired to work specifically in the shared time program because they work part time for a fraction of the week, Young said. They fall under the community education division, not the K-12 category.

"It's win-win," Young said. "It's allowed us to keep a building open."

While OLS leadership and Farmington school officials may also feel that way, a vocal group of parents have raised concerns about such issues as the elimination of the religious aspect of instruction from shared-time classrooms. Combs heard about the controversy at OLS from parents who called.

"It saddens me, I can't tell you how," she said.

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KNOL

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"Right now I plan to concentrate on my position as secretary," she said.

Welday believes Republicans have to leave the political arena in the past.

"I want to give a personal to call for Republicans from one side of the county to the other they are welcome to the organization," he said. "Conservatives, what have you. I want to build a strong, solid foundation to elect candidates at all levels."

A high priority for the group, Welday said, is helping get President Bush re-elected in 2004.

"I want us to carry the county for Bush," he said of the GOP. "We'll be looking at the state House races as well in 2004. I want to raise the level of awareness and excitement."

Welday said he wants all Republicans to come back to the county party and let go of any ill will from the past and "get on the same ground."

Asked what it was about the two local Republicans that earned them both spots on the board, Welday said, "The Farmington area has a lot of great folks. ... It's a breeding ground for Republican activists and it's something the community should be proud of."

"It's a place I'm proud to call home."

Chris Cummings, vice chairman for the Farmington Area Republican Club, said he strongly supported Patterson and felt he did a good job in the last two years, but is happy Welday was chosen to lead the county.

"Paul Welday is a very respected strategist and I have the utmost confidence he will lead us to many Republican victories in 2004," Cummings said.

Welday is former chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Township) and was chairman of Knollenberg's successful 2002 re-election campaign. He is currently president and CEO of Renaissance Strategies, a

marketing and public relations firm based in Bloomfield Hills and Washington D.C.

Knol is a manager at Johnson Controls in Plymouth Township.

Also elected Thursday by the Oakland County Republican Party Executive Committee were Christina Pappageorge of Troy as vice chairwoman and Mary-Katherine DeCuir of Southfield as treasurer.

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