Superintendent supports taking a look

Farmington Superintendent
Bob Maxifeld believes forming
a committee to consider an
Out of District Schools of
Choice program was the right
hing to do.
"It's efficient, and it makes
sense." said Maxifeld.
The program could mitigate
what he expects to be a continued decline in enrollment.
They don't drop in neat little groups, Maxifeld said.
Tyou don't love 20 kids from
Gill or 24 kids from
Gill or 14 kids from
Gill or 14 kids from
Hen you lose revenue
but you don't have the opportunity to cut your expenses,
especially with our smalle.
It's messy afready, because
have more combination classes
than we want could also putthan we want."

The district could also pur-

I ne district could also pur-sue other revenues through shared time - hiring out pub-lic school teachers to private schools - or by attracting home-schooled or private/parochial students, he said.

said.
A recent taping of Maxfield's regular "From the Desk Of..."
TV program kicked off an effort to tell the story proactively. January is the time when many private and

parochial school parents decide where their children will attend high school, he

said. Diane Bauman, director of school and community rela-

tions, is also working on a mailing to those parents. "It's the whole business of can we do more?" Maxfield

can we do more?" Maxfield said.

The other budget crunching alternative that nobody wants to deal with is to close a school, he said.

When we chose to move the kindergarten out of Fairview and Alameda, that controlled a number of costs and helped us focus on the 15 elementaries, 'Maxfield said.' If we dropped 200 elementary children, and I don't want his to sound like a threat, we've got to do something, not so popular with the Flanders or William Grace community.'

Flanders or William Grace community.

A recent audit gave a more positive turn to the budget, but it has yet to be completely defined. The district saved money with health insurance last year, Marfield said.

"We've been told to expect that our contribution to the state retirement system will go up 2 percent of our payroll, which will be \$1.8 million."

He expects there will be no

He expects there will be no increase in state aid for proba-

by Winter Break. Last year 85 million was cut.
"We're waiting for Mary (Reynolds) to finish this round of budget amendments for this year to reconcile changes," Maxfield said.
She will present that to the board Jan. 28.
"I can't imagine that there is any school district or municipality which hasn't been affected financially," Maxfield said. "Citles got hit with revenue sharing."

CLARENCEVILLE

Some have raised concerns about the affect of open enrollment on the Clarenceville

bly two years. That's what the Governor is saying: Be prepared, folks, this will be terrible:.

"We're looking at a 3 percent increase in payroll costs for egotiated contracts," Maxfield said. "Benefits, we have more control over than most districts because we do a lot of self-insurance and that's where we saved money last year on health insurance. Our expenses in any given year go up 4-5 percent."

He couldn't identify possible cuts yet because the budget committee reports the first week in February. He's hoping for the first draft of the budget by Winter Break. Last year Simillion was cut.

"We're waiting for Mary when the farmington Public School District.

Nobody likes it, "Maxfield said." It's sort of cannibalistic because there only so many

District.
"Nobody likes it," Maxfield said. "It's sort of cannibalistic because there only so many kide"

because the series of the kids. Clareneville School Superintendent Cheryl Leach said it's too early to predict the effect on her district, adding that she hasn't seen Farmington's plan. 'Our (two) elementaries to the property of the prope

our (two) elementaries
have a firm grip in the community," Leach said. "I'm not
sure we would have a loss to
Farmington."
Her district has had one

school of choice committee meeting and hasn't had a sec-

sbuck@oe.homecomm.net ((248) 477-5450

DISTRICT

FROM PAGE AT

FROW PAGE AI

The district receives 90 percent of its funding from the state through a foundation grant. Each student enrolled in a district brings part of this foundation grant when moving to another district.

Advantages include additional revenue, maintenance of existing programs and staffing, consistency in annual planning and maintaining neighborhood schools. However, officials warn, there is also a down side.

Schools of choice families do not contribute to taxes, bonds or millages within the community. Community residents often express concerns about the influx of new students. Also districts can end up "competing" for enrollments, and the addition of more special education students could increase costs.

Mary Joyce Readler, principal of Flanders Elementary, and Morawski are co-chairs of a committee which also includes Donna Reuter, a student information technician in the Central Office and a Farmington High School parent; Kelly Zuby, a Flanders parent; Ann Marie Kurzyniee, a Flanders media specialist, Kate Harris, a William Grace paraprofessional, and Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for business and finance.

superintendent for business and finance.

The committee, organized in October, is looking for comments from district residents.

There will be a public hearing, on March 4 at 6 p.m., an untelevised meeting, followed by a report at the 7.30 p.m. school board meeting, which is televised. The hearings will be held at the school administration building on Shiwassec, east of Farmington Road.

Seventeen of 22 districts in the Oakland Schools intermediate district have an out-of-district schools of choice program. The Farmington District lost 52 students last year to other programs. Of these, 28 went to West Bloomfield, 14 to West Bloomfield, 14 to West Bloomfield, 15 schoffield, five to Royal Oak, four to Ferndale and one to Berkley, Interviewing officials from these 17 districts, committee members found districts

You Deserve

continue to opt for the program and erpand it. Districts had clear guidelines and an applica-tion process, which includes expulsion for falsifying informa-tion. Officials also said the Michigan Educational

tion. Omerais assists the Michigan Educational Assessment Program sores and student behavior weren't negatively impacted by the program. Sibling preference begins after a Schools of Choice child has attended school for at least one semester. The following year, a district would have to give preference to a sibling if there is a Schools of Choice slot available. Farmington's foundation grant is \$10,007. The district will receive richer \$8,000 dollars per pupil or the lesser amount if the students home district's per pupil foundation grant is less than \$8,000. Students who enter the elementary school can remain in

grant is less than \$8,000.
Students who enter the elementary school can remain in the district through their senior year, Morwski said, No transportation would be privided to these students.

We're not looking to overcrowd a school, add classrooms or add staff. Morawski said.

The recommendation we've heard from other school districts is to bring them in the early grades, Readler said.

We all like the idea of being cautious, Morawski said.

Parents had a variety of views at a Jan. 13 PTA Council Forum meeting at the Farmington Training Center. They asked about the possibility of creating magnet schools and attracting home-schooled, private and parochial schools. One asked how the district could say there would be a high level of parental involvement with these students.

Marybeth Miller, a Beechview. Marybeth Miller, a Beechview

Marybeth Miller, a Beechview parent, said she was shocked. "I can't come up with a decent question," she said. "I didn't know this was going on. How good are your number? Everybody needs time to develop their theught process. The first reaction is to be scared." For more information, to make comments, or to ask questions, contact Morawski at (248) 489-3747 or Readler at (248) 489-3673. sbott@ebonecommet (248) 475-350



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