

SCHOOLS

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there are so many scenarios that can play out," Heath said. "They want to feel comfortable with it."

The district needs to do a better job of getting the word out, she said.

"They need to do a town hall meeting," Heath suggested.

A list of questions and answers should have been sent home with Maxfield's letter, she added, because not everyone has ready access to a computer.

Heath, who has been a member of the on the Longacre Elementary crisis team for three years, said Principal Bill Smith has held drills, including a lockdown to simulate a sniper situation in the building, which requires students to get under the desks.

"People are concerned if the schools will have enough food and water for 24 hours," Heath said.

She's constantly asking herself what's missing in the information she receives. An ongoing concern is knowing the right questions to ask and where to go for information.

"Parents need to know what to do, and you have to say it again and again," Heath said.

TV COVERAGE

While elementary age children won't have access to television coverage of the war,

older students may.

"TV coverage is obviously not appropriate for elementary school students," said Sue Zurvalce, assistant superintendent for staff and community services.

"In middle school, it will depend on the age and curriculum. In the high school, it may be appropriate in current events and global issues class. We trust the judgment of our staff to know when that's appropriate and how much."

North Farmington High School has had an assembly recognizing there are students who have relatives in the Middle East and in the military. "We have to be a sensitive school community," Zurvalce said. "We have to be sensitive to the tensions and the worries students bring to us."

SAFETY MEASURES

Michaelson attended a Michigan Homeland Security meeting in Lansing and then met with local public safety officials.

She heard recommendations about stocking up on plastic sheeting and duct tape and stockpiling three days' worth of food and water for every child and employee, measures the district is not likely to take.

"I'm not minimizing those recommendations," Michaelson said. "There might be areas of the country where it might be imperative."

Michaelson said school officials will respond to a potential

exposure to a dangerous chemical by getting employees and students inside their buildings. "(We will) shut down all heating ventilation and cooling systems, close and secure all windows and doors. The neutral atmospheric pressures created by those actions would create a barrier and help to keep chemical agent from leaking into the building," she said.

Because the lock-down would likely be short-term, there would be no need to stockpile food or water.

The Red Cross would coordinate with public safety agencies if the problem were long term, she said.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

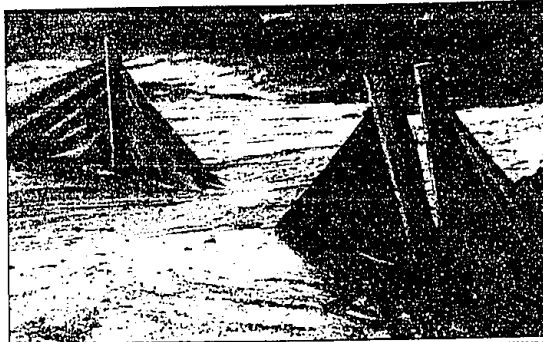
Farmington Hills officers will go into each school building at least once a day meeting with the staff and reassuring them.

"We've had a positive relationship with the schools for decades," Dwyer said. "I feel positive that we will keep the schools safe. We will be proactive."

The framework is already there with the schools, Dwyer said, now it's a matter of making the adjustments.

Public safety agencies and the schools have a comprehensive plan that has been recognized statewide and serves as a model, said Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss.

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ALL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The recent quick thaw overwhelmed the silt fencing.

RIVER

FROM PAGE A1

Five neighbors on the west side of Power worked together over the years to build culverts that divert excess water from the undeveloped hill to a retention pond, she said.

Since the culverts were built, a developer has torn down trees and reshaped the land for 27 houses, and water is pouring into their yards, she said.

The responsibility goes back to the city for approving the development in the first place, she said.

"They knew that eventually it would be a problem," she said. "We know there's going to be a lot more problems."

Residents in the subdivision made a claim to the city; the city's insurance company is investigating.

Tom Biasell, director of Public Works for Farmington Hills, said the warm temperatures over the weekend caused flooding in many areas along gravel roads like that section of Power.

He said drains froze in some of the culverts, and city workers have been busy flushing them out to allow proper drainage.

Biasell agreed the silt fence-

ing to keep excess run-off from the development had failed over the weekend, and water was flowing through on Power.

The developer was contacted and workers are repairing the damage, he said.

The development was the subject of a lawsuit that resulted in a consent judgment agreed to by the city and developer. As part of the agreement, the developer was to install an underground sewer behind the Power residents' homes, Biasell said. "Residents wouldn't allow it, so it was never done," he said.

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Leach works to reassure Clarenceville parents

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

Clarenceville Superintendent Cheryl Leach has faced a great many challenges in her first year, the latest of which may be the most difficult.

How could she reassure parents and students that school officials are well prepared to keep kids safe in the event a war breaks out?

"We sent letters to every home at the end of February...to assure parents we are taking every necessary precaution," Leach said.

District officials are monitoring world events closely, she said, and remain in close con-

tact with the Livonia Police Department. Clarenceville serves students in Farmington Hills, Livonia and Redford.

"We had our security plan reviewed by an independent firm this year," Leach said. "We received a positive report."

Administrators have also drafted a plan to house students in the event they would be endangered by leaving school buildings, as well as guidelines about releasing children if their parents come to pick them up.

School administrators also determined parents will be the best people to explain what's going on in the world.

"In our elementary and mid-

dle school buildings, there will not be television sets on in the rooms," she said.

Leach and Clarenceville High Principal David Simowski will decide whether to turn on television sets. Students who are already taking courses that involve a study of current events will likely be studying the situation in Iraq, but no special classroom considerations will be made.

The idea is to keep things as normal as possible. "We're not interrupting the course of study to make it an issue," Leach said.

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BUDGET

FROM PAGE A1

2003 and the same ratio of staffing (currently 24.1 district-wide), the total deficit picture from 2003 through 2007 runs upwards of \$14 million.

Reynolds said the administrative finance committee recommended dipping into the "rainy day" fund balance in both the coming and following years. Because of favorable turns in conservative predictions over the past few years, the district has a little over \$20 million in reserves.

School officials have been reluctant to use those saved funds for budget shortfalls, because it's a one-time fix. Reynolds said fund balance

monies would be used for one-time expenditures, like updating computer software and replacing several district-owned vehicles.

Supt. Bob Maxfield said officials have to ask themselves, "Is it raining now?"

"We're in wonderful shape, and yet you see what it's going to be like for the next five or six years."

In the past, the district has been able to weather financial storms, he said. An early retirement incentive last year helped balance the budget, but spending the fund balance was always part of future plans.

Maxfield said the district's Blue Ribbon Financial Futures committee has recommended keeping an 8 to 12 percent fund balance. The committee is an off-spring of one formed to study in preparation for a 1997 bond

issue; it consists of parents, teachers and administrators.

However, Maxfield said, those dollars should be used carefully.

"You don't want to get lulled into complacency and slam on the brakes when you get to 12 percent," he said.

Using the fund in 2003-2004 "lets everything level off and lets us see where things stand as we go into the next year. If these projections were to hold true, it will be extremely painful," he added.

The issue of layoffs hasn't been addressed, said Assistant Superintendent of Staff and Community Services Sue Zurvalce. Administrators are still looking at enrollments, which will determine staffing levels.

She said she doesn't anticipate many retirements, because of last year's incentives.

HomeTown Heroes™

OF OAKLAND COUNTY

Do You Want to Honor a HomeTown Hero?

Your Observer & Eccentric, Mirror and HomeTown Newspapers, in conjunction with the United Way Volunteer Center of Oakland, are calling for nominations for the HomeTown Heroes™ Awards, which recognizes, encourages and rewards outstanding volunteers who have given selflessly of themselves to support non-profit organizations in Oakland County. Nominees and awardees will be recognized at the Fourth Annual HomeTown Heroes™ Luncheon that will take place on June 4, 2003 at Marriott Pontiac at Centerpoint in Pontiac, Michigan. For a complete description of the nominating categories, please visit www.unitedwayoakland.org.

NAME OF NOMINATOR _____ IF GROUP, CONTACT PERSON _____

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP _____

DAY TIME PHONE _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

NOMINATING CATEGORY _____ DIRECT SERVICE _____ SENIOR _____ YOUTH _____

GOVERNANCE _____ FAITH-BASED _____ BUSINESS _____

NAME OF NOMINEE _____ AGE _____

(Must volunteer for an Oakland County non-profit organization)

ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP _____

DAY TIME PHONE _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

SCHOOL AFFILIATION (if appropriate) _____

PLACE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE _____

YEARS OF SERVICE _____ AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKS PER MONTH _____

TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED _____

On a separate sheet, in 200 words or less, tell why you have nominated this individual, group or business. Describe the nominee's major accomplishments, commitment, self-motivation, problem-solving skills, and measurable impact upon the community. Entries must be typewritten. Do not staple pages. Include a photo (no larger than 5" x 7") of the nominated person or group, or for Business nominees, include a photo of persons participating in the volunteer activity.

Entries must be received by Wednesday, April 16, 2003.

Mail or fax forms to: HomeTown Heroes™ Awards • c/o United Way Volunteer Center
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For questions, further information, or more applications go to www.unitedwayoakland.org or call 248-874-1633.

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