

School board delays student advisor issue

By SUSAN AVERILL

FARMINGTON—The issue of having a student member of the board of education has kicked around for three years. It was once again kicked under the table until the board's next meeting.

As chairman of the committee which studied the matter, board vice president William Corliss was enthusiastic, but was met with solid opposition from colleagues and audience members.

"I can see a lot of problems with this. Deciding what are student matters and what aren't is going to take up a lot of the board's time," said Mrs. Mary Wilson of Farmington.

"I can also see the board making decisions that should be the administration's decisions. And the student might speak for the board not only to newspapers, but to other students, and this could cause many problems," she added.

MOST OF THE hour-long discussion revolved around the committee's suggestion to give the delegate all the rights, privileges and duties of a trustee, with several restrictions.

A student delegate would not be allowed to vote on school board matters and he couldn't hold office or initiate and support motions. Nor would he be considered part of a quorum.

"So what rights and duties he does have," board president Gary Lichtman asked.

Lichtman and others voiced concern that the student's ability to put items on the agenda would allow him too much controlling power on the board.

"But any member of the community could put something on the agenda, by calling the superintendent," Corliss protested.

Treasurer William Gravius questioned whether the student would be allowed access to all board information, or whether he might solely be used as an advisor on student matters.

"WE THOUGHT he should not be limited to only specific matters we could foresee. We didn't see him as a school board member or a conduit for student concerns," Corliss explained.

"What is important is that he is not a board member who is trying to remember back more years than he cares to admit since he last walked the halls as a student."

The president, he said, would be able to prevent the student from attending certain grievance hearings and closed meetings, particularly when they concerned teachers who the student might know.

Other problems cropped up when the talk turned to election and representation.

"What about the election of this person? I'm concerned that the successful candidate would be the one from the building with the greatest enrollment," trustee Dr. Mervyn Ross said.

ANOTHER BOARD member suggested a committee of three, one from each high school to alleviate such a possibility, but it was pointed out that the Student Round Table was already functioning in this capacity.

"Some felt the Student Round Table was formed in lieu of a representative to the board. I won't deny that it filled a definite niche in student representation."

"But the establishment of a student representative to the board is meant as a supplement to the Round Table, and not meant to supplant it," Corliss said.

Richard Ringstrom, executive director of the Farmington Education Association (FEA), was concerned that the student might accidentally receive access to confidential information on teacher grievances.

"THE REPRESENTATIVE would receive the same materials as the board members, which gives me a great deal of concern. I would have to be assured that no matter of personnel or grievances would be given to him," he said.

"It would be difficult to police this thing (selective deletion of items), and if some slipup would occur, it could hurt the reputation of a teacher and destroy the whole confidential relationship (between the board and the FEA) that this board has already established," Ringstrom said.

Lichtman agreed, but said he could guarantee nothing of the kind.

"Until we replace human beings with robots, I cannot guarantee it and I will not guarantee it."

LICHTMAN THREW the ball back to the students when he said representation could be made at any board session, and that the establishment of another representative post or additional agenda item would be superfluous.

To Ross' suggestion that a student report item be added to the agenda, Lichtman said, "If we do this, then we would have to establish an item each for the representation of home-owners, FEA, service organizations and what have you."

"Why clutter an already cluttered agenda with these items?"

The board will discuss the matter during the next board meeting, Tuesday, May 20.

New busing suit includes Farmington, 92 districts

FARMINGTON—The off-again, on-again situation with the Detroit bus case is now on again. School Superintendent Marjorie Van Aneyde said at Tuesday night's board of education meeting.

"We have been served through our attorneys," he said, adding that 10 districts more than the original 83 suburban school districts were named as defendants in the case.

The suit as brought by the NAACP against the school district alleges that Farmington and Farmington Hills were contributory to residential discrimination because there was no busing available for blacks.

It also alleges the district has been

selective on a racial basis of who may attend the schools on a tuition basis.

SUCCESSION is not the case, Van Aneyde said. However, the schools are accepting no new students on a tuition basis, just to be on the safe side.

"Our attorneys have advised us to take no more students on a tuition basis, so as not to jeopardize our case in the future."

The school district would appeal to limit the scope of the allegations by the NAACP, he said, and show that the area started out as a farming community in the 1880s, and currently contains few blacks.

It will be 20-30 days before the proceedings actually begin, and Van Aneyde said he expects "harassment and skirmishes before we're dismissed."

He and other council members agreed that the NAACP's quarrel should be with the governmental

units, and not the suburban school boards.

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Opening day is Saturday

FARMINGTON—South Farmington Baseball will hold its opening day ceremony Saturday, May 10.

Norm Cash, former Detroit Tiger first baseman, will be on hand to help begin the season.

The event will begin with a parade at 11 a.m. Ballplayers, league officials and others involved in the baseball group will walk in the parade starting at Farmington Road and Grand River and moving to Warner, Shawawasee and the city park ball diamond. No 1.

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