

# State court 'spanking' ruling will have little effect locally

By CAROL ANDERSON

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing teachers and administrators to spank students over parental objections will have no effect on area school districts' policies.

The court affirmed, without comment, a lower court decision allowing spankings as a last resort in the case of a sixth grade pupil in North Carolina. The student's mother had objected to this kind of discipline.

Districts including Livonia, Clawson, Wayne-Westland, Garden City, South Redford and Plymouth agree that corporal punishment is used, but only as a last resort.

"I never touch a child," said Wayne-Westland Supt. Timothy Dyer. "I don't think it's effective."

Garden City Supt. Bracken Snow also includes parents in any disciplinary action from a warning to suspension. "We only do what a normal, prudent parent would do," he said.

LIVONIA DEPUTY Supt. Paul Johnson consults with parents if there is a major problem but feels most teachers can control normal misconduct through interpersonal relationships in the classroom.

The general Livonia policy is to find alternate means of discipline such as allowing students greater voice in determining rules of behavior or sending pupils to the principal or helping teacher, who is specifically employed to aid classroom teachers with discipline.

Livonia also has a committee, under the direction of the principal, for investigating the behavior of chronic misbehavior. Recommendations often include referral to a psychologist or social worker or a special room assignment for slow learners.

MOST ADMINISTRATORS don't like to admit it, but corporal punishment is used at times. "Human nature being what it is, it (spanking) does happen," confesses Johnson.

Most often, a principal will administer a spanking in the presence of another adult, to insure that it is not extreme. Elementary school pupils are usually the only ones to feel the sting.

Occasionally, a parent will complain when a teacher grabs or restrains a student in the hall, said Snow. Even a tap on the head could upset some parents, he said.

Livonia's policy recognizes that corporal punishment is a possibility, but it should be used only as a last resort. It must have a positive effect on the student's behavior and not be done for punitive reasons, Johnson explained.

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ONE OF the first steps taken by area districts in disciplining a student is to call his parents and involve them in the decision. Plymouth's code of conduct involves parents quickly and replaces the antiquated corporal punishment method, explained Supt. John Hoben.

Due process is given each student, said Hoben. The parents, principal, teacher and student are involved in the final action.



REP. Wilbur V. BROTHERTON AND TOM FREDERICKS

## Hills youth serves as state senate page

Tom Fredericks, a 1972 graduate of North Farmington High School works as a page in the State Capitol five days a week, while attending classes at Michigan State University, where he is a senior, seeking a degree in communications.

In his spare time Fredericks helps State Representative Wilbur V. Brotherton (R-Farmington), who serves constituents in Southfield and Farmington, communicate with his constituents. His job with Representative Brotherton is a volunteer position for which he receives college credit, but no pay.

Fredericks says his work with Brotherton is a project sanctioned by one of his instructors, but at the same time he will gain valuable on-the-job experience in his field of study.

"I expect to be doing a lot of work in the 64th legislative district, which Brotherton represents, making contacts with people and seeing what we can do to help them or obtain more information for them about what's happening in Lansing," Fredericks said.

Brotherton adds that, "I feel really good about having a personable young man like Tom, who has lived in Farmington nine years and is studying communications helping me improve communications with my constituents. I'm convinced that lack of communication is at the root of much of the lack of confidence people express in government. We are determined to establish a two-way system of communications between people in the 64th district and their representative in Lansing."

During his past three years at MSU, Tom Fredericks has been an active young man. In 1972 as a freshman, he was a member of the Spartan Varsity Football Team since 1973 has been a member of the MSU Marching Band.

Newsstand price to be raised

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers plan to raise newsstand and dealer rates to 25 cents effective Nov. 3.

The price increase is necessary, circulation manager Fred J. Wright explained, because of continuing increases in the cost of printing and distributing newspapers. He added that the price increase will offset the added cost of purchasing newsstands.

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