

# Student dropout rate low in Farmington area

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

Of the eight Oakland County school districts covered by the Observer & Eccentric, Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills have the lowest dropout rates in their respective student population categories.

Statistics released recently by the Michigan Department of Education for the 1973-74 school year show that in districts with more than 5,000 students in grades nine through 12, Birmingham had a dropout rate of 2.42 per cent. This is the lowest dropout rate in the state for districts having 5,000 or more high school pupils.

Bloomfield Hills has the lowest dropout rate of the eight districts with 1.34 per cent but the district falls into the category of fewer than 5,000 students in grades nine through 12.

The remaining six county districts include Farmington in the more than 5,000 student category in grades nine through 12 and Avondale, Southfield, Troy, West Bloomfield and Rochester

with fewer than 5,000 students in grades nine through 12. Farmington had a 1973-74 dropout rate of 3.86 per cent. Southfield's pupil count fell just seven short of being in the more than 5,000 bracket and the dropout rate there was 4.77 per cent.

**DROP-OUT RATES** for the remaining four districts are as follows: Avondale, 3.41 per cent; Troy, 6.00 per cent; West Bloomfield, 3.17 per cent; and Rochester, 4.88 per cent.

These figures compare with an Oakland County dropout rate of 5.99 per cent and a statewide figure of 6.85 per cent.

Birmingham superintendent Dr. Donald Freckenbaugh attributed the low dropout rate in the Birmingham schools to the high esteem in which education is held in the district and to the motivation of pupils.

He also pointed to graduation requirements that recognize achievement in a number of academic areas and to the success of the district in teaching fundamentals in the early grades.

"We try to gear all of our instructional programs to meet the needs of individual students," said Dr. Fred D. Thorin, Bloomfield Hills superintendent. "If we are able to do this and to challenge the students, we can keep them in school until they finish a workable career plan."

"THAT HAS been the thrust of the learning resource center programs, remedial programs and career education programs as well as our work with the gifted because they too can become frustrated and withdraw themselves," he added.

A statistical report on dropouts from public high schools in Michigan has been prepared annually since 1953-54 by the State Department of Education. The stated purpose of the report is "to assist Michigan educators and citizens in better defining the school dropout problem and in planning and implementing educational programs to prevent and correct the dropout problem."

The report includes a breakdown of statistics by grades nine through 12, by sex and by school district and county.

Dropouts include all students removed from the school membership roll prior to graduation for any reason other than cases such as transfers to other schools, death, illness or injury affecting attendance through the close of school.

Statewide dropout rates in the 12 years that the statistics have been compiled were the highest in 1965-66 with 7.02 per cent and the lowest in 1970-71 with 6.02 per cent.

Three Michigan school districts showed no dropouts in the 1973-74 sta-

istics. They were Portland Public School District, South Grafton Area Schools and North Muskegon City School District.

The three districts in the state with the highest dropout rates for the same year were Highland Park, 15.91 per cent; Detroit, 14.77 per cent; and Hartford, 14.66 per cent.

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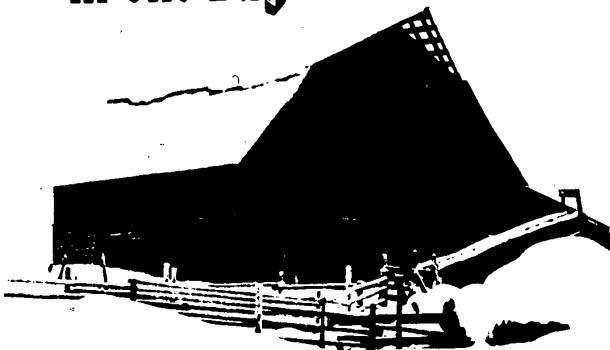
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