

Schools Begin Pilot Program For Elementary Counselors



Elementary children at four schools in the Farmington School District will have counselors available in their buildings for the first time next fall. The additions will be made to implement a pilot program at four elementary schools in the value of providing counselors in the lower grades.

IF THE PILOT program establishes the value, elementary counselors may be provided at all schools in the district. The experiment was approved at the last meeting of the school board following a report from a special study committee commissioned by the board's curriculum committee.

The curriculum committee was formed in 1967 at the suggestion of Mrs. Ruth Strong. In a report to the board, committee members stressed counseling is a continuing process and a part of development, and that which is started in elementary schools will yield profits in secondary grades.

Trustee Gary Lichtman, chairman of the curriculum committee, explained that the pilot program will be organized by Supt. Roderick J. Smith, the administrative staff and must be made by trustees before it could be expanded to all schools.

Lichtman said the cost of providing counselors for all elementary schools would be somewhere between \$50,000 and \$60,000. This cost includes not only salaries but office space. The counselor should not be part of the school's own staff and the committee recommends a separate office, away from the principal's office. For students, Lichtman said, there seems to be a stigma on going "to the office" to see a counselor.

There is a possibility federal funds might be available to finance the program if it is implemented in all schools. If available, the federal government would pay 40% of the cost in the first year, 30% the second, 20% the third, 10% the fourth and then bow out in the fifth year.

"But I would prefer that we think of the program aside from the possible availability of federal funds," stressed Lichtman. "The program should be good enough on its own merits and not dependent upon availability of federal funds."

TRUSTEE KENNETH PERRIN said he agreed with study committee.

PERIODIC REPORTS will be given to the board as the program progresses, said Lichtman, and a final assessment of placing emphasis on prevention rather than punishment.

Lichtman said the committee hopes the counselors will spend time with the handicapped and gifted child, and that employment of the counselors on the elementary level "might bring to ahead the addition of a gifted child program."

Walter Jablonski, principal of Longacre Elementary and a committee member, says the program must be child-oriented and decisions made on the basis of what will help the child and not the administration or faculty.

The elementary counselors can help coordinate existing programs in the system such as special education, added Jablonski, and polish them to a finer degree.

The counselors will speed up existing programs which sometimes get bogged down because administrative responsibilities are manifold while a counselor is a specialist, he said.

A problem which must be faced, he continued, is that the counselors will wear a white hat and the principals a black

hat as far as students are concerned. Trustee Richard Frankel recommended a centralizing of the counseling function with a vertical relationship established between schools for counselors.

JAMES BURGER, principal in a Southfield school and resident of Lincolnshire in Farmington Township, reported to the board on the elementary counselor program in Southfield.

"The secret of a successful program, Burger said, is to recognize there is a great difference between elementary and secondary counselors and careful recruitment is vital.

Burger said he wished Southfield had the background and information available that Farmington does before implementing its program for nine schools three years ago.

Burger commended the board for establishing the study committee and spending a year to research the question.

Dr. Smith said the recommendation had his hearty support. He said the program is "a preventative one rather than healing the sores after they have taken place."

Motion to approve the pilot program passed 5-0.

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11:15 a.m. Worship Service
6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
7:30 p.m. The Evening Service
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ELSIE A. JOHNS, Minister
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SUNDAY SCHOOL - 9 a.m.
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Schoolcraft College attorney Edward Draugelis said Plymouth agreed that "an act of the State Legislature will be required to extend the ruling's application to Michigan."

Coban said he is not yet prepared to render an opinion, either formally to the Legislature or informally to the public, because he has not yet read the text of the Supreme Court ruling (Thursday).

In general, Supreme Court rulings have the effect of setting law for the entire nation, but Draugelis said the circumstances of the Kansas City case may narrow the type of districting affected.

"NO, I DON'T" think it will affect Schoolcraft Community College, is my initial reaction. But I haven't read the full opinion yet," said Draugelis.

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"What's really germane," said the attorney, "is the way the community college was organized in Kansas City and the language of the decision. "The surface facts in a news story are understandably limited and cannot always reflect the actual import," said Draugelis.

IF SCHOOLCRAFT Community College is affected by the ruling, the five concerned local school districts are going to have to keep better district population records than at present.

Only one of the five could tell Observer Newspapers its total population. Only two could give exact figures for its voter registration at the June 1969 annual school elections. All could give accurate K-12 enrollments, however.

Based on these three years of statistics and some "educated" guesses, the Livonia School District alone would be entitled to at least half of the representation on the Schoolcraft board. It outweighs the total of the other four districts combined in all categories.

It has a population of approximately 121,000 persons. The other four districts combined fall short of that.

Livonia had about 44,000 registered voters last year, compared to 17,000 for Garden City, 12,800 for Plymouth, 5,600 for Clarenceville and 5,600 for Northville - indicating about the same ratio.

Dissenters

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to carry out anything the national headquarters say. "It depends upon the area where you live what you do."

Vagnozzi said the adoption of a constitution for the chapter may take care of this question. "There are other groups in our schools with national affiliations. Shall we take a look at all of them?"

WASHBURN SAID he had no objection to the SMO organizing if they handled themselves in a responsible and mature fashion.

"I don't think peace as an object is anything we should run away from," said Frankel. "If that is what they are seeking, they should be given the chance."

Frankel then volunteered to sponsor the group temporarily if a faculty sponsor could not be found. "If students can discuss Vietnam in American Government or history classes," he continued, "they should be able to discuss Vietnam after school."

Trustee Ken Perrin said he saw nothing wrong with a group meeting with the admin-

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