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Smith, Baker Respond

Will State Bills Help Our Schools?

By EMORY DANIELS

Farmington school officials are keeping one eye on Lansing and another on local budgets while determining how the local financial condition will

stack up for the next fiscal year. This cross-eyed condition is caused by legislative jockeying in Lansing on the much worked-over educational reform package.

AS SOON AS the reform bills are passed, Farmington school auditors will rush to the calculators to figure out how much additional state aid Farmington will receive. Once the amount of extra

state aid is known, both eyes can be turned on the local school budget for fiscal year 1970-71.

The State House of Representatives has passed a \$1.2 billion school aid bill containing provisions for parochial aid and sent it to the Senate. A conference committee of both houses is now working out a compromise, so it is not known yet what the final version will offer.

But the House version included: \$1.2 billion total, an increase of \$280 million over the governor's recommendation; \$22 million for parochial aid; permission for local school districts to levy a 2% income tax providing property taxes are cut; and an increase in the state income tax.

DR. RODERICK J. SMITH, superintendent of schools, says he has not yet gone into the House version in detail to see how it will apply to Farmington.

Because compromise is expected, Dr. Smith said the local computers won't be engaged until after final passage. But at this point, without deep analysis, it appears the House version will be quite helpful to the Farmington School District, he added.

Dr. Smith listed two vital points to any educational reform legislation.

"First, there must be a shift from the property tax to something else, and the method mentioned most is the income tax."

"The ability to pay taxes is better measured by a person's income rather than the mere possession of property."

Another important point, Dr. Smith said, is whether the school bill will include parochial aid.

"I have very strong feelings that parochial aid should not be made part of legislation concerning public education funds."

Parochial aid is dangerous, Smith added, not only in terms of breaking tradition but because it involves the use of public funds for programs not supervised or inspected by public agencies.

It is unfortunate, Smith said, that legislators have put many people in the position of having to choose between wanting more money for public education and parochial aid.

DR. SMITH EMPHASIZED the need to reform the method of financing public education by pointing out that in 1965-66 state aid accounted for nearly 66% of Farmington's total school budget.

Yet, last year, state aid accounted for only 40.5% of the total revenue received by Farmington Schools, he added. Because budgets have gone up, Smith said, local revenue has increased 15% during this period.

"There has been a significant change in where the money for education is coming from. The state aid formula itself has decreased the amount of money we're getting from the state because our assessments have gone up."

"I'm saying we need a very definite shift from our dependency on local taxes back to a greater state participation in our educational program."

Smith was asked how he felt about Rep. Raymond Baker (R-Farmington) voting against the House version. "I do support Rep. Baker at

this point for voting 'no' because of the inclusion of parochial aid," Dr. Smith said.

BAKER TOLD THE Farmington Enterprise & Observer he voted no because of the parochial provision, but other factors were involved.

"I'm not in favor of financing two school systems," Baker says, "and do not think a second system should be financed at the expense of public taxpayers."

Both state and federal constitutions require a public educational system, Baker added, and it is this system on which legislators should concentrate their efforts.

Baker said he was concerned too that the bill contained \$280 million more than the governor's recommendation. The extra money must be raised from some level, he added, and one of the bills calls for an increase of 0.9% in the state personal income tax.

"I'm not in favor of passing more taxes onto the general public in the form of an income tax at this time."

Baker said that although the bills upgrade programs for some school districts throughout the state, the same is not true for Oakland County.

IF THE HOUSE version passes as written, Baker explained, the Oakland County Intermediate District would have to downgrade some of its programs.

An example he cited is the county special education program which would have a direct effect on Farmington and Clarencville schools.

Baker said the county Intermediate District would be much opposed to the House version, even if it did not include parochial aid.



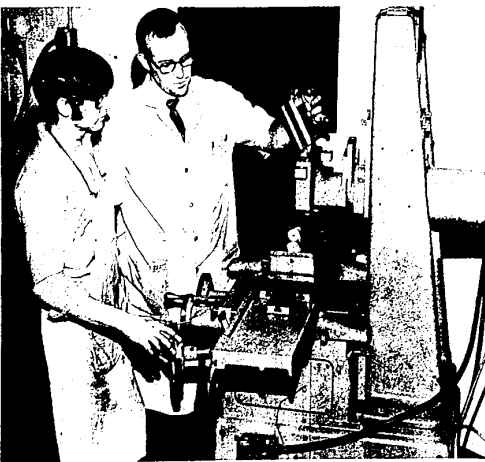
CONCENTRATION—Tim Richardson works at the vertical mill, part of the industrial equipment in Farmington High School's new machine shop. (Evert photo)



CUTTING UP—Randy Hotz cuts his way through a solid metal block on a large industrial saw to be found in Farmington High School's machine shop. Students frequently carry a process through from raw material to finished product. (Evert photo)



MEN FROM MARS?—Roger Emerson and Charles Schems are the two incognito high schoolers disguised in protective clothing. Students in the machine shop at Farmington High School, they're pouring molten metal, an extremely hazardous occupation. The boys are making usable vites from scrap pieces of raw aluminum. (Evert photo)



WORDS TO THE WISE—John Summers of North Farmington High gets some pointers about proper operation of a milling machine from shop instructor Gary Gray. The Farmington High School facility housed in the new addition will serve all three of the district high schools. (Evert photo)

Learning Earning Is Task

Preparing high school students for the nuts-and-bolts business of making a living is the job of Gary Gray at Farmington High. His province is the industrial arts and vocational education department.

Gray is himself a journeyman millwright with a bachelor of science degree from Central Michigan University, where he majored in industrial arts. He is working toward a master's degree in vocational education at Wayne State University.

WITH THE completion of the new high school addition last year, 4,032 square feet were devoted to machine shop and welding.

In planning how best to use the facilities, Earl Baumunk, director of vocational education, called in leaders from

local industries for consultation.

Members of the welding craft committee included William Henderson, president of Detroit Gas Products Co.; Louis Rosner, purchasing agent for HML Industries; Ray Tune, purchasing agent for Jackson Products Co.; and James Manning, manufacturing superintendent of State Fabricators.

The vocational machine shop committee was made up of Don Greenbury, president of Arrowsmith Tool & Die; Alvie V. Fox, president of Index Manufacturing Co.; George Kern, president of Kern Industries; and Ronald J. Monfette, apprenticeship coordinator for Schoolcraft Community College.

Working with school personnel, these committees produced guidelines for the optimum operation of successful vocational education programs in both areas. Relevance and reality were the results of teamwork between educators and active executives.

"We're dealing with people's lives here," said Gray. "Students from all three high schools will come here to get the necessary technical and learning experience in industrial know-how."

"We do have the additional help of the county vocational school which is being built at Walled Lake," he continued. "But at best, it will only be able to accept three or four students from each of our high schools." Even with both activities available, not all of Farmington's vocational needs can be served at present.

Wins Letter

Russ LaFevre of Farmington was one of 25 Ferris State College students awarded varsity letters for indoor track recently. It was the second letter at Ferris for the Farmington athlete.

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