

# Boys Republic caught in school growth debate

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Renting facilities, or using "segregated" school-owned facilities, are options being considered in relocating an alternative education program from the Shawwassee Center.

The alternative program educates students who are residents of Boys Republic, a residential treatment facility for emotionally disturbed boys. Some are wards of the state, ordered there through the juvenile court system.

"It's premature to make final plans," said assistant superintendent Mary Lou Ankele, who handles alternative education programs for the Farmington district. "Nothing has been firm yet."

Ankele said she has had "positive contacts" with the directors at Boys Republic for renting classroom

space on their campus, but does not plan to pursue further negotiations until the school board makes a decision on boundaries and facilities.

Faced with a crowding problem at several elementary schools, Farmington school officials have discussed the option of again using Shawwassee as a regular school. It is a former elementary.

The Farmington school district has been required, by law, to educate the youngsters at Boys Republic since a 1975 state mandate. The students were originally schooled on the Boys Republic campus in Farmington Hills and moved to Shawwassee in the fall of 1979.

RESIDENTS in the Highmeadow School area have voiced opposition to moving the Boys Republic students to that former elementary school, which sits in the middle of a

neighborhood. Shawwassee Center is also a residential area.

Options for use of Shawwassee have also been discussed, but school officials are wary of the idea of mainstreaming of the 40-50 youths age 12-17 into the district's three high schools. The rumors are not true, say two school officials.

"There would be no... integration for the majority of these students," Ankele assured parents at a Jan. 19 town meeting where boundaries and facilities were discussed. "There have always been a few who attend one of our high schools or SWOVEC (Southwestern Oakland Vocational Education Center in Wall Lake). These (students) are carefully selected."

Superintendent Graham Lewis said students in the Shawwassee program are handled the same as students in any of the district's alternative programs — with individual

treatment and consideration.

"These students that went into the (general education) schools are the students that really have no hostility — no social problem," he said. "I can assure people there will be no wholesaling of kids into the (general) program."

Two Boys Republic residents began attending school at Harrison High as winter semester began Jan. 18, Ankele confirmed.

Not helping the district in its efforts was a mid-December incident,

in which an administrator at Shawwassee Center was stabbed with a screwdriver as he attempted to stop two students — residents of Boys Republic — from stealing his truck from the school parking lot. The assistant supervisor who was injured, Charles Altry, has been integral in turning the school program around during the past two years, according to past reports.

Both boys have been caught and are no longer staying at the Boys Republic facility, school officials said.

Other police problems have plagued the Boys Republic school program over the years, but not on a regular basis. A fight involving a group of 10 youths from the center broke out during the school day in 1983. At that time, the program was nearly twice as large with more than 70 youths.

School officials say the ideal situation would be to again operate the program on the Boys Republic campus, at 28000 Nine Mile, between Middlebelt and Inkster.

## Neighbors oppose relocating Boys Republic school nearby

Residents in the Highmeadow School area say they are displeased with rumors the school might be used to house an alternative school for residents of Boys Republic.

Highmeadow is north of 12 Mile, between Orchard Lake and Oakbelt roads. First used as Highmeadow Elementary, then purchased by Lutheran Northwest High School, it was bought back by the Farmington district last year and is currently used as an adult and community education facility.

Gall Haynes, Holly Hill Farms Association president, made her group's feelings known at a Jan. 19 school board study session. Her association has invited superintendent Lewis and school board members to attend one of their meetings to discuss the matter, she said.

In an adjoining subdivision, Susan Shapiro circulated petitions opposing the use of Highmeadow for the

Boys Republic alternative program. The petitions were submitted to the school board at the Jan. 19 meeting.

Shapiro, a clinical social worker for 15 years and also a parent, said she has no problems with Boys Republic residents being mainstreamed into the school system in small numbers.

Her concern is with those who cannot be mainstreamed; she does not feel they belong in a neighborhood school such as Highmeadow for safety reasons.

"I'm all in favor of them getting the education," she said. "But I've dealt with a lot of delinquent kids. As far as I'm concerned, your worst

danger is this adolescent group of boys."

Assistant superintendent Mary Lou Ankele stressed that no decisions had been made about moving the alternative education program currently housed at Shawwassee Center.

She visited several facilities, including Highmeadow, but "there are no facilities that have been designated for the Boys Republic (students)," she said.

There will be no such designations, she said, until the school board makes a final decision on boundaries and facilities for the 1988-89 school year.

## New elementary school full of 'hidden' costs

Continued from Page 1

Flanagan would prefer a 7.25 percent bond issue over 10 years, costing \$5.6 million, instead of a 30-year bond issue, which would cost the district about \$3 million more in interest.

The district does not want to dip into its fund equity, or surplus, to build the new school because of future concerns about statewide equalizing of school financing, Flanagan said in a report to the citizens panel studying boundaries and facilities.

"It's inevitable that school financing will change drastically in the near future, and when it does, it will adversely affect Farmington schools to the tune of millions of dollars each year," he said.

Farmington district has been talked about for several years.

It was discussed in 1986 when some minor redistricting was done at the elementary level, today, it is again being considered as an option to helping the crowding situation.

The district owns a 12-acre parcel of land on the southeast corner of Halsted and 11 Mile and a 20-acre parcel on the intersection's northeast corner.

There are currently no school buildings in the area, but Drake, between Eight Mile and 14 Mile, where most of the new residential development has occurred in Farmington Hills.

### clarification

A magnet-type high school was not recommended by a subcommittee studying high school facilities, as reported in a Jan. 21 Observer news story.

John Washburn, chairman of the school board-appointed panel that made a recommendation to the school board, did comment on the magnet concept during a Jan. 19 school board meeting, saying "magnet schools should be pursued for the future."

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No two people are alike. Each person is born with different talents and abilities. It is their responsibility to help our children realize that their talents are not better or worse than another's, but different. We can help youngsters by accepting and developing the talents that they have. We can also assist our children to accept and appreciate the differences in others. Here are some ways to show acceptance of your child as an unique individual and to teach your child to be accepting of others.

**HELP CHILDREN FOCUS ON THEIR OWN STRENGTHS — EVERYONE DOES SOMETHING WELL.**

- Have them make a list of their strengths.
- You make a list of their strengths.

**HELP CHILDREN APPRECIATE THE STRENGTHS OF OTHERS.**

- Have them share the list of their strengths with family members and friends.
- Have them make a list of strengths of others.
- Point out the importance of differences in our lives. "Sara makes us happy when we listen to her sing" or "Joey can help his brother with his math homework."
- Model appreciation by using such statements as, "I appreciate your friend Edward's sense of humor."

**ACCEPT CHILDREN'S FEELINGS AS VALID FOR THEM.**

- Help them understand that it is OK to have feelings and that there are appropriate ways of expressing them.
- At unemotional times explore with them acceptable ways of expressing feelings.

**TAKE CHILDREN SERIOUSLY.**

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