

Farmington schools to study language courses

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Farmington schools will review its entire scope of teaching language, after a parent voiced concern last week over the apparent lack of interest in an introductory high school Latin class — which will not be taught this fall.

One school official said the district's Latin offerings are "hobbling on very weak legs."

Superintendent Graham Lewis said May 16 he would appoint a committee to study language education throughout the district, and promised to try to protect the Latin program from extinction. "It's (the study) got to go back to the entire spectrum of language instruction," Lewis said. The language issue "has been cooking for years and years."

"It's (Latin) not eliminated from the curriculum. It's on hold. We will attempt to protect it. We will re-evaluate it . . . appropriately," he added.

PARENT CAROL Afterbaugh brought the issue to the school board after she became aware Latin I would not be taught this fall due to lack of enrollment. School officials paid only nine students districtwide showed any interest in the introductory class, which has been taught at

Farmington High School. Upper level Latin will be taught in the coming year.

"This is a quality program taught by an outstanding educator and is one of the reasons the Latin program would be to remove excellence from Farmington High School as well as from the Farmington school district," Afterbaugh said in a letter and in comments to the board.

"Latin is not a dead language. It is alive and well and a foundation for the English language. I hate to see Latin slip away from us."

Afterbaugh suggested the board consider protecting the class, despite the low enrollment, and do a better marketing job of languages in general, especially at the middle school level. She also suggested the language program be strengthened at all three high schools, possibly using the Teacher on TV concept which allows remote cablecast at all three high schools.

LANGUAGE IS offered at all Farmington-area public high schools, with choices of French, Spanish, German and Latin. Languages have also been offered to all three high schools in recent years. Lewis said he would like to consider the introduction of other languages, including Japanese, Chi-

nese or Russian.

Any change the language program will likely be brought to a school board curriculum committee meeting in the near future, at the suggestion of school trustee and committee chair Janice Rotnick.

Trustee Helen Prutow also believes a discussion of protecting language programs is in order "so we don't dismantle what I think has been a good language program. I would hate to see it dismantled, or even come close. Maybe we need to protect it for a year."

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT for curriculum Judith White said the Latin program is currently "hobbling on very weak legs" and suggested the district do a more thorough study of what it should be offering.

Trustees were surprised with Afterbaugh's comments on the program, indicating they were not aware of the dwindling interest, or that the introductory level Latin would not be taught this fall. One trustee, James Abernathy, asked that the board be kept better informed of such changes.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Tulsa bound

After placing first in the state for his work in graphic arts, North Farmington High School senior Ken McQuillan heads for Tulsa, Okla., in June for the U.S. Skill Olympics, sponsored by the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America. Pictured with his state and regional awards, McQuillan poses in the Farmington High print shop, where he has been on-

rolled in the graphic arts program for three years. American Speedy Printing corporate offices, American Speedy Printing of Farmington Hills, Plates Plus of Farmington Hills and the Detroit Club of Printing House Craftsmen all contributed money to pay for the student's summer trip.

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