

9 are in running for 2 seats on Farmington school board

THE NAMES of nine candidates for the Farmington Board of Education will appear on the June 11 Farmington Public Schools ballot, at which time two non-partisan seats will be filled.

Of the nine contenders, eight returned an Observer questionnaire about issues surrounding this year's race. Those whose answers are featured on this and the facing page are challengers Cathleen Webb, Allen Warner, Laura Myers, Robert Ranney, Sharon Hanke, Richard DeVries, Kim Jaske and incumbent R. Jack Inch.

Another candidate, James Barnes, said he did not intend to actively campaign but missed the deadline to remove his name from the ballot.

All have filed to run for one of two four-year terms, which become

Name: Allen P. Warner
Address: Perrys Crossing, Farmington Hills
Employment: Faculty member, Department of Accounting, Wayne State University. Teaches senior and graduate courses in accounting and information systems. Coordinator, School of Business Administration's MIS Program.
Length of residence in district: 1 1/4 years

Why are you running for the school board?

The board needs qualified members, who will work responsibly with the parents, teachers and community, in overseeing an effective administration, to provide our children with the best education possible.

I have those qualifications: involved parent of two young schoolchildren; involved neighbor, board member of the Rolling Oaks Homeowners Association; involved citizen, having served on the Farmington Hills Year 2000 Task Force; educator for almost 20 years; a CPA with national experience as an auditor and chief financial officer; a master of science in computer science, with 20 years' experience in systems.

What special qualifications do you bring to the job?
As an involved parent, I have



election '90

available when the terms of Inch and Janice Holnick expire June 30, Inch, the board treasurer, has served three four-year terms. Holnick, the board secretary, is not seeking re-election after 12 years of service.

PRESENTED HERE are six questions asked of each candidate, with their verbatim answers except when editing was required due to excessive length. Other questions will be featured in upcoming editions of the Observer.

To vote in the June 11 election, residents must register by today,

first-hand experience with the educational process, attending local school functions, meetings of district-wide groups, and board meetings. An involved citizen, I served on the Finance Committee of the Farmington Hills Year 2000 Task Force, which I developed the city's first strategic plan.

As a university faculty member, I have almost 20 years' experience in classroom teaching, curriculum development, innovative techniques, and student motivation. As a CPA and former chief financial officer, I have extensive experience in finance, taxation, and budgeting.

What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the current board? What is their role?

The board's role is to: represent the electorate; set policies; oversee the administration's carrying out of those policies; support the teachers; exercise fiscal responsibility; and represent the district's interests with respect to the state and other organizations.

The board needs to: reduce the taxpayers' heavy burden; develop a strategic plan, and carefully assign appropriate committees within that framework; and continue to support the superintendent in restoring an efficient and effective administration.

How do you feel about public education, its role and how Farmington measures up?

Educating our children is critical to preparing them for the future. It is probably the most important func-

Monday, May 14. Voters also will fill three seats on the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees from among four candidates. A candidates forum has been scheduled for tonight at 7:30 p.m., at Farmington High, 32000 Shawwassee, sponsored by the American Association of University Women-Farmington Chapter and the League of Women Voters-West Bloomfield/Farmington area.

A candidates night scheduled for May 22, and sponsored by the Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills, has been canceled.

The Farmington school district includes all of the city of Farmington, most of the city of Farmington Hills and a portion of West Bloomfield Township a half mile north from 14 Mile along the Middlebelt corridor.

tion or our local government. Until every school in the district is accredited, MEAP scores are higher, and our students earn more academic honors, we should not feel that we measure up.

What are the top three things on which the district should focus in the next four years?

1. Finances/long-range planning: We should support the Patterson/Anderson Amendment, which would require the state to maintain their share of education costs. A blue-ribbon advisory panel of district officials, teachers, community leaders and citizens should be called to scrutinize the budget.

2. Computer technology: Enclosed CD-ROMs at seven schools and a new computer-based curriculum at Forest are but a first step. Our second step should be local area networks, E-mail, shared data bases, and online access to other school districts, universities and educational sources.

3. We need to refocus the gifted program. (see below).

There is currently a study of the gifted education programs in Farmington. How would you propose changing this program?

The gifted cannot, and should not, "take care of themselves." I know from first-hand experience that their needs are different, and cannot be addressed through curriculum only. We should note that improvements in the gifted program will cascade throughout the other programs.

Name: Laura Myers
Address: Shawwassee, Farmington
Employment: Bookkeeper, Jimco Realty
Length of residence in district: 8 years

Why are you running for the school board?

We need parents of school-age children on the school board. As a parent volunteer, I see how board policies affect the way an individual operates. I want to help establish those policies. With Mike Flanagan as superintendent, the climate is right for broader community involvement. I will truly represent the community, respond to its desires and support the needs of its children.

What special qualifications do you bring to the job?

I have eight years of experience leading school and community groups. I have worked effectively with administrators, staff, parents and students. I was PTA president of a community depends on its schools. I moved here because the quality of



Name: Richard I. DeVries
Address: Chesapeake Court, Farmington Hills
Employment: structural optimization engineer, Ford Motor Co.
Length of residence in district: 10 years

Why are you running for the school board?

Our district is an affluent community, its students come from good homes, and it spends nearly the highest amount per student in the state; however, while it is a good school district, it falls short of its potential to be the best. We can improve its performance and reduce its escalating costs by explicitly defining the district's objectives and measuring performance against costs.

What special qualifications do you bring to the job?

I've been an active "school board watcher" since 1987 and am knowledgeable with respect to the state of our schools. I have a balanced perspective of public education as a parent, 10-year homeowner



force and Community Forum. My children attend all three levels; elementary, middle and high school. I'll be available to students, parents and school staff by continuing to be an active volunteer in the schools.

What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the current board? What is their role?

Our board tries to include parents in the policy-making process. They hire and promote administrators with effective "people" skills. They have the foresight to introduce the technology that effective education now requires. They need better contact with students, parents and school staff. They should reflect district priorities in school spending. The school board sets the tone for the district and provides a sense of continuity through changing administrations.

How do you feel about public education, its role and how Farmington measures up?

I am impressed with the professionalism and dedication of our school employees. The staff, facilities, course offerings and student opportunities provided by Farmington Public Schools outshine any private school in our area. The success of a community depends on its schools. I moved here because the quality of

and taxpayer, and spouse of a teacher. I am inclined to approach decision-making in a rational and reasoned manner and will demand more accountability and professionalism of the central administration.

What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the current board? What is their role?

The role of the board includes clearly defining the goals of the district, supporting the faculty and staff in achieving those goals, and critically evaluating the district's progress against these objectives. Although the current board is responsive to public input, it has not been very responsible in improving the schools, exercising fiscal responsibility or defining a set of district goals related to student outcomes.

How do you feel about public education, its role and how Farmington measures up?

The quality and equity of public education sustains our democracy and shapes our future in a global economy. It should be the priority of every level of government. With one of the highest per-pupil expenditures in the state and with significant demographic advantages, Farmington should begin to live up to its potential and produce comparable student performance.

our school system makes this community an attractive place to live.

What are the top three things on which the district should focus in the next four years?

We must focus on managing our burgeoning school population. To handle the increasing number of students, we may need to put additional on both our elementary and secondary schools. We need to help students and staff keep pace with the new technology and integrate it into all classrooms. We must produce graduates with marketable skills and a realistic view of higher education and the job market.

There is currently a study of the gifted education programs in Farmington. How would you propose changing this program?

Some of the curriculum choices piloted at Highmound should be offered at all of the elementary schools. The secondary schools need more gifted enrichment. My sons participate in the gifted (DELTA) program. In my experience, we need to recruit, counsel and communicate with DELTA students and their parents to encourage them to participate in the extracurricular activities, scholarships, and special programs that are available.

What are the top three things on which the district should focus in the next four years?

First, the district must clearly define its goals in terms of student outcomes: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant goals and a timetable for implementation. This includes curriculum alignment and better assessment procedures.

Secondly, it must balance these goals against its finances to achieve increased student performance and greater fiscal responsibility.

Finally, it must satisfy all North Central and Michigan accreditation standards at all of its schools.

There is currently a study of the gifted education programs in Farmington. How would you propose changing this program?

The goals of the program should be more clearly defined and the instructional strategy less rigid. Consideration should be given to better integration with the regular curriculum, adding components of curriculum acceleration vis-a-vis horizontal enrichment, more flexible selection criteria to include the "talented student," and better quality and quantity of services. All students, including gifted, would benefit from more individualization of regular classroom instruction.

Name: Robert Ranney
Address: Greening, Farmington Hills
Employment: consulting engineer, Michigan Consolidated Gas Co.
Length of residence in district: 2 years

Why are you running for the school board?

I am running for the school board because I can make a positive contribution to this district. I believe that with a program of continuous self appraisal, our school district can attain its full potential and deliver an equally excellent education to every child. Such a program will also benefit our taxpayers, for we will be able to make the best use of our money.

What special qualifications do you bring to the job?
My most distinctive qualification is the districtwide view of the issues. I have gained through my regular attendance at board meetings and as a participant in the Community Fo-



rum. Additionally, I am an engineer in private industry, working with technology, budgets and schedules daily, as well as a teacher's husband and the parent of present and future Farmington students.

What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the current board? What is their role?

The role of our school board should be to insure that the school administration serves the best interests of the entire district. Our school board's strengths are its desire to perform that role, as well as the increasing preparation, thoughtfulness and tolerance displayed by its members. Its weaknesses are an overconcern with image, which discourages the acknowledgement of problems, and an underconcern with expenses.

How do you feel about public education, its role and how Farmington measures up?

Public education should give every child the basic educational skills (reading, writing and mathematics) needed to become a productive member of society, plus knowledge of science and the arts. For this reason, we should evaluate public education on the results, not the cost. In

the case of Farmington, our schools are good, but should be better for the resources we expend.

What are the top three things on which the district should focus on the next four years?

First, we must bring ourselves into compliance with PA 25, as failure to do so could cause the state to take control of our schools.

Second, we must begin an impartial, objective assessment of all our programs, so we can concentrate on what works best.

Lastly, we must improve our planning. Both Hillside Elementary and the gifted education study will finish late this year.

There is currently a study of the gifted education programs in Farmington. How would you propose changing this program?

Any changes I would make would be done only after carefully reading the report of the gifted study committee. I would consider offering a program that allows a student with a great aptitude in a specific area to develop his talent in that field. This would be a supplement to the current Delta program, which broadens the gifted students' horizons.

Name: Jack Inch
Address: Meadowlark, Farmington
Employment: economics professor, economics-political science chairman, Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge Campus
Length of residence in district: 30 years

Why are you running for the school board?

I am running for the Farmington school board because service on this board represents the commitment I feel toward public education. Being a member of this board gives me the opportunity to contribute to my community in a field of endeavor that I have developed some expertise in as a parent and a teacher. Being a member of this board is a paycheck for me for the benefits I have received from my public education.

What special qualifications do you bring to the job?

After 12 years on the board, I have the experience to know my way through what are some very complex problems. Having taught for over 30 years in many different educational settings, I have learned to evaluate problems from all sides.



My experience as a parent of four children with very different goals and aspirations allows me another facet of experience that would prove of value to the Farmington Board of Education. Unlike Harold Hill in "The Music Man," I know the territory.

What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the current board? What is their role?

The greatest strength of the present board is its ability to put as the highest priority the objective that does the most good for the entire school system, and not be caught up in single-issue personal objectives. This board also has shown strength in its ability to listen and work with individuals and groups in the community. Communication is an objective that this board must continue as a goal if it is to be an efficient policymaking institution.

How do you feel about public education, its role and how Farmington measures up?

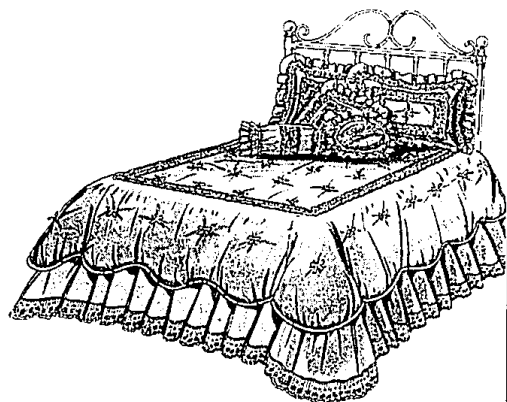
I feel that public education is the institution that can give all members of our society the chance to have a fair start toward a meaningful and successful life. As the nation has become more heterogeneous in the second half of the 20th century, it is public education that must make sure that all members have the opportunity to be all that they can be. During my service on the Farmington

board, I feel that we have opened the window of opportunity to all of the students serviced by this district. What are the top three things on which the district should focus in the next four years?

The number-one goal in this district in the next four years should be to have the best reading program that can be developed. It should be a reading program that not only teaches students to read but one that stresses an appreciation and desire to read. Second goal should be program continuity from K-12 with consistency of goals and objectives to motivate all. My third goal would be to develop both a meaningful gifted program and a program to stimulate underachievers.

There is currently a study of the gifted education programs in Farmington. How would you propose changing this program?

The Farmington school board is currently doing a study on gifted education programs. I feel we should have the courtesy to look at the results before forming theories. One sure way to destroy community participation is to form a committee to select a decision before the report is presented. The first change I want in the program is already in process and that is study of the program to define where we are now. Next, there should be no. Theories without facts are meaningless.



HEIRLOOMS FOR TOMORROW

Meet Kay Eaton, owner and designer of Lamb's Quarters quilts, folk art of the past
Thursday, May 17, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Livonia
Friday, May 18, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Rochester
Inspired by the work of pioneer women who transformed everyday necessities into an art form, Lamb's Quarters bed furnishings are a tribute to excellence. Handmade comforters, quilts, priscilla curtains, balloon valances, neckrolls and toss pillows are unique in their quality and workmanship. Come see the collection, adaptable to any decor.

Jacobson's

We welcome Jacobson's Charge, MasterCard® and VISA®
Shop until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.