

2 vie for single seat on Walled Lake board

By Darrell Clem
staff writer

Only one school board seat will be at stake Monday when Walled Lake School District voters go to the polls.

Voters will choose between appointed incumbent David Flammer and challenger Jim Fugit in what both candidates described as a low-key race.

Flammer was appointed to the seven-member board in January after former school trustee Kathy Mizzi resigned to make a career move to New York.

Both candidates cited no fiery issues separating them in the race to fulfill the remaining two years of Mizzi's unexpired four-year term.

Flammer, 49, is a Commerce Township resident and an account executive for Michigan Bell Communications. Fugit, 44, is a Wixom resi-

dent and a marketing representative for IBM Corp.

Neither has run previously for a seat on the Walled Lake Board of Education.

Both candidates have said they support the school board's proposal for a Headlee Amendment override in which voters will decide Monday whether to let their taxes rise faster than inflation. School officials have threatened \$3.5 million in budget cuts next year if the override fails.

Flammer was on the board when the decision was made to place the Headlee question on the ballot, though he was not present when the other six school trustees made the official vote.

And though Fugit said the override is necessary because of "bad past choices" made in the school district, he said he appears less enthusiastic about the plan than Flammer.

Walled Lake School District

The Walled Lake district serves students in part of the north-west corner of Farmington Hills.

"We seem to be constantly after people for more tax dollars in our school district," Fugit said, adding that "it's got to stop somewhere."

Instead of focusing on issues on which they agree, Flammer and Fugit stressed their experience during interviews Tuesday.

Flammer said he has "tried to be very visible" during the campaign by attending school functions. He attended Saturday's gifted education REACH fair, for example, and has worked with parent-teacher groups at Walled Lake Central High School

and Glengary Elementary School, he said.

"I feel it's important for me as a board member to get out and be visible at these kinds of events," Flammer said.

Flammer also said his work experience should help him as a board member. He formerly taught for six years in the school district — two years at Walled Lake Elementary and four years at Loon Lake Elementary.

He also coached girls volleyball and track and boys junior varsity basketball at Central, and he has been involved in a business project in which he goes into classrooms and talks about business with eighth-graders, he said.

"I feel that I do have a good understanding of what happens in the classroom," Flammer said, adding that his background with Michigan Bell Communications has given him the necessary business experience he needs to help the school district.

Fugit said he has been involved in the Parent-Teacher Association at Loon Lake Elementary, and he serves as vice president. He also served on a committee that redrew school attendance boundaries for the 1990-91 school year. The redistricting plan was made necessary by the planned opening of the new Pleasant Lake Elementary School and burgeoning enrollment in some portions of the district.

Fugit said he also plans to serve on the panel that will be involved in another redistricting plan that will become necessary as the school district prepares to open yet another new elementary in the 1991-92 school year.

Moreover, Fugit has been involved in a "mission project" at Loon Lake

and various youth programs. And he, too, emphasized his background in business, saying his 23 years of experience in management and administration would help him on the school board.

"I think the school board is a good-sized business," Fugit said.

Both candidates indicated that Flammer's incumbency could help him at the polls — though perhaps not much.

Flammer said being an incumbent has allowed him to make more visits to schools. "Other than that," he added, "I'm not sure if an appointee gets any advantage or not."

Fugit said he appears to be at a "slight disadvantage" because he is not an incumbent. Fugit also said Flammer may have more name recognition because he is a former teacher in the district.

Walled Lake School District voters may cast ballots from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday at the polling places in their precincts.



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