

# Parents keep battling state school aid cuts

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Some Farmington-area area parents expect to hold governor-elect John Engler to his repeated campaign commitment to education.

"It would make an impression if it were one of the first grass roots efforts that goes up there and reminds him that education has to be at the top of his priority list," said Debbie Lukasiak of Farmington Hills.

Lukasiak, Kerry Kelly and Jan Bennett — parents of Gill Elementary students — continue circulating petitions urging state legislators to oppose further cuts to out-of-formula school districts, such as Farmington, to improve financing in poorer districts.

With thousands of signatures on

their petitions so far, the three plan to travel en masse to Lansing before the year's end to present Engler with the petitions before he takes office.

"We may come with a whole school of children," Kelly said.

When new legislators take office in January, the trio will return to Lansing with their petitions. "We don't want to hit the lame ducks now," Bennett said.

THE THREE have petitions around the school district, at all the schools, central office and churches. "We've even been to craft shows. We've hit as many people as possible in Farmington and Farmington Hills," Bennett said.

The Gill parents are opposed to the way the state Legislature in July decided abruptly to improve financ-

ing in poorer school districts by reducing \$72 million in categorical aid to 40 districts. The Farmington Public Schools lost \$5.8 million.

School district officials support the parents' effort. "If their drive has made the community much more aware of what's happening at the state level, people are getting behind their efforts," said Pam O'Malley, assistant to the Farmington district superintendent.

The petition drive is turning heads but the three are not content to stay in the district to make their message heard. "They met with the statewide Coalition of Michigan Parents, another grass roots effort that shares the same goals with the Farmington Hills parents. "COMP is a viable group. In time, it will be effective in changing

school financing," Kelly said.

The parents also sat in on a superintendents association meeting in Lansing to get the scoop on what is happening in the state with education financing.

"The actual state money given to education has declined so much, we need a change in the system," Kelly said.

THROUGH THEIR petitioning efforts Kelly, Lukasiak and Bennett are aware of taxpayers' frustrations. "Some people are afraid. They believe an obvious result (of change) is a tax increase. That scares people to death," Bennett said.

Information is what the three Gill parents are trying to spread to taxpayers. They are convinced that recapture doesn't work. Not only does

it take a chunk away from districts like their own, but from what they hear, the in-formula districts didn't benefit all that terrifically from the recapture either.

"The Robin Hood act is not helping anyone, so people are saying," Bennett said.

Consider, the parents said, that there are more in-formula districts in the state than out-of-formula. But the out-of-formula districts represent 30 percent of the state's student population.

The three also expressed frustration at news that the state Court of Appeals dismissed a lawsuit Nov. 9 on the Robin Hood school aid cuts. Fifty-six school districts sued the state for the massive funding cuts enacted this year.

"What is happening. What are they

doing," Bennett asked. "The judicial system is a major hurdle."

They aren't too happy with the state Legislature either. "The Constitution says the state is prohibited from reducing funding to the schools. But they do. The legislature makes their own rules. The laws are constantly being ignored."

The parents hope for continued support and wouldn't mind some help. Anyone interested in signing a petition can visit their home school, contact Gill Elementary at 489-3690, or call the district's School/Community Relations Office at 489-3349.

# Kroger to open new store in Farmington Hills

The Kroger Co., the nation's second largest supermarket chain, will hold a grand opening celebration Sunday, Dec. 2, for a new store at 3750 W. 12 Mile Road at Halsted in Farmington Hills.

The expanded Kroger store, located in the Halstead Village Shopping Center, will occupy 43,000 square feet. More than 250 people will be employed at the store.

An invitation-only open house for area residents, Kroger staff and officials will be held Saturday, featuring product samplings, entertainment and other special events.

"The expanded store will enable us to bring The Kroger Co.'s latest innovations to the

Farmington Hills area," said Joel Greenstein, president of the Kroger Co. Michigan marketing area.

"This 'state-of-the-art' supermarket offers shoppers an exciting and attractive shopping environment, providing them access to a number of new customer convenience departments."

Among the specialty items and departments in the Farmington Hills store are:

- A seafood department featuring varieties of fresh seafood including shark, lobster, salmon, oysters, seafood salads and smoked and fresh fish.
- A custom meat department offering more than 200 kinds and cuts of meat trimmed

to the customer's specifications at no extra charge.

- A full-service flower shop with more than 250 varieties of fresh-cut flowers and customer-designed floral arrangements available for weddings, anniversaries and any other occasion.
- An expanded Kroger Produce Department with an extended selection of more than 350 varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables, including specialty items like baby-bunch vegetables and 14 varieties of lettuce.
- A wine shop with more than 1,000 varieties of wine and a complete selection of domestic and imported beer.
- A cheese shop carrying more than 250

varieties of domestic and imported cheese.

- A delicatessen with selection of cheese and luncheon meats, party trays and hot carry-out items, including hand-made pizza with pan, thin, wheat and croissant crust cooked fresh on the premises.

In addition, the Farmington Hills store will offer customers an in-store bakery and pastry shoppe, salad bar, fax and copier service, greeting cards, video rental, photofinishing. All major credit cards are accepted.

Kroger has been part of the Michigan grocery store scene since 1917. The company now operates 78 supermarkets in Michigan and more than 1,200 nationwide.

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Thousands have highly acclaimed this conference for its dissemination of information not available from any other source. During the two-hour session, participants will review full-service preretirement and retirement living concepts through a color slide series of communities from the east to the west coast.

In addition, a new and different concept in active retirement/preretirement living being considered for Farmington Hills will be discussed to determine its potential for active adults desiring a full menu of services from home and yard maintenance to security and health/fitness programs. The concept offers options not found in life-care, entrance fee, expensive rental packages, or resort communities. Each participant will be asked to complete a simple written survey to provide direction for the development and the public's acceptance of this community.

The conference is free of charge. However, seating is limited and will be by reservation only.

Please call Naney Fees (313) 442-9860, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or write for reservations for you and your friends to RETIREMENT CONFERENCE, 30405 Folsom Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48336 for one of the times and locations below:

- **Hilton Inn — Novi**  
21111 Figgery Road  
8 Mile Rd. Exit off I-275  
Novi, MI  
**Tuesday, Dec. 11**  
10:00 A.M. or  
2:00 P.M.
- **Botsford General Hospital**  
Administration & Education Building  
28050 Grand River Ave.  
Farmington Hills, MI  
**Wednesday, Dec. 12**  
10:00 A.M.
- **Botsford General Hospital**  
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**Thursday, Dec. 13**  
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