

Area Schools Face Budget Crisis

A News Roundup

All of Observerland's school districts have announced their plans for dealing with a hard-hitting fiscal crisis which has necessitated budget and staff cutbacks.

Teaching and administrative cuts are the most drastic reactions to the problems of a shortage of state aid and failure of voters to provide relief in the form of increased property taxes.

One district has given notices to more than one-third of the teaching staff, while two have found it possible to hold the line on teacher firings in their attempt to solve local financial problems.

At least two districts, South Redford and Farmington, will be asking voters to approve millage increases in the next few months.

MORE THAN one-third of South Redford School District's teachers were anxiously awaiting the outcome of a millage election Tuesday (yesterday) in which voters were to decide on a six-mill renewal and a two-mill increase for operations.

Those without firm jobs for next year include most instructors with less than five years seniority. If the millages pass, most of the 126 probationary and tenured teachers will be rehired.

South Redford is also plagued by the uncertain future of the state's "grandfather" clause money. A major portion of the district's expenses are underwritten by the aid.

Only 37 first-year probationary teachers in Redford Union schools stand to lose their positions next year if local financial problems

are not resolved. They were told that their contracts would be withheld.

FARMINGTON PUBLIC schools have given notice to 70 teachers that they may not have jobs when schools open next September.

The "may" will depend on whether voters in June approve a district request for 4.5 new operating mills to be levied for four years.

School officials in Farmington have said that if the millage is denied and the 70 teachers do not return to work, a proportionate number of administrators will also be laid off.

Farmington's projected 1971-72 operating budget will be \$17 million if the 4.5 mills is approved. Prior to giving notices to the 70 teachers, the district had already reduced its facility size by attrition.

Eliminated some athletic activities, dropped some music and art consultants and reduced work periods for counselors and librarians.

Business Manager William Prisk estimates that state aid will bring in \$5.5 million and local taxes \$9.5 million this year leaving a deficit of \$1.8 million.

Besides reductions in state aid, Farmington schools must also absorb about 200

secondary students caused by the closing of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic High School in Farmington.

LIVONIA SCHOOL District administrators say the system faces a \$5.9 million deficit at the end of the 1971-72 fiscal year if the 3.5 mill levy for operations is not renewed.

Livonia has notified 299 first year teachers that they will not be offered contracts at the usual time, the largest area staff cut in numerical terms.

Fifteen administrative positions will also be eliminated with the employees involved reverting to teaching positions.

In addition, Livonia district officials estimate 150 teachers will leave the system for normal reasons making the total cut about 400 teachers.

The board is considering other cuts in services and program, such as elimination of the hot lunch program for elementary schools and a curtailed bus schedule.

Officials say most of the 299 staff cutbacks. The board did not take any specific action on the matter, but refused to send layoff notices to teachers by the April 15 deadline, thereby assuring that all staff members will be back next fall.

PLYMOUTH, which has had a teaching staff of 439 during

the current academic year for its 54-square-mile school district, is attempting to hold the line without any 1971-72 reductions.

By specific resolution April 5, the Plymouth school board authorized hiring teachers up to the 439 level. The rehiring of 428 members of the present faculty has been approved.

With the other 11 vacancies yet to be filled.

Plymouth expects to benefit from an increase in state equalized valuation which has

come about through property reassessments and which may reach \$60 million.

CLARENCEVILLE School District will be forced to reduce its teaching and administrative staff by 10 to 20 persons as a direct result of declining state aid.

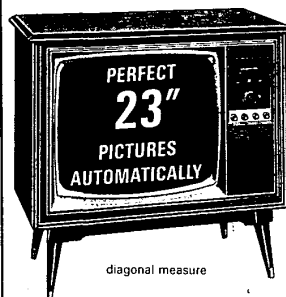
Supt. David McDowell said the state's portion in the budget has declined over the past five years from 50% to 34%. The anticipated revenue for the district in this school

year is \$3,387,000 while expenditures are estimated at \$3,483,000, leaving a \$96,000 deficit.

In order to protect the school district if it does not get enough state aid for 1971-72, the district notified about three dozen probationary teachers that their contracts will not be renewed.

McDowell said the district may be able to hire some of the teachers back before the close of the school year if they get the revenue.

BERRY'S FOR 1971 Magnavox



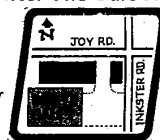
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Tree-Eater Aids Rouge Cleanup

Wayne County's Board of Commissioners has approved purchase of a huge tree-eating machine which will be available to local communities to help deal with the mounting problem of disposing of dead trees.

The machine will reduce a large tree to salable wood chips within minutes.

Cities and townships will be able to use the machine on a cost basis. Many localities face a serious problem in disposing of elm trees killed by Dutch elm disease.

The machine will take logs in any condition. The Road Commission hopes to have delivery in June. That would be in time to use the machine in the Rouge River clean up campaign planned for this summer.

THE BOARD of Commissioners already has appropriated \$10,000 for use by the county drain commissioner in clearing debris from the Rouge River this summer. The drain commissioner plans to

coordinate his efforts with the "Rescue the Rouge" citizens' group which turned out 1,400 volunteers last year.

Mounted on a flatbed truck, the machine will pick up and devour logs up to 20 inches in diameter at a rate of 100 feet a minute. Sale of the wood chips for use in wood and paper products is expected to partially offset the cost of operating the \$7,000 giant.

Purchase of the machine was approved by the Board of Commissioners April 13. The machine will be operated by the parks and parkways division of the County Road Commission.

The Board of Commissioners also voted, 21-1, not to hold three regularly

PURCHASE of the tree-devouring machine was recommended by the board's Public Works Committee after consideration of a Road Commission request. The machine, called a Chip-

vester, is built by Morbark Industries, Inc. of Winn, Mich. Morbark submitted the only bid for the job.

"We believe this equipment will be a big help in alleviating the pressing problem of tree disposal in the county," said Commissioner Ervin A. Steiner, Jr. of Grosse Pointe Farms, D-District 3.

Steiner also pointed out that availability of the tree-devouring machine will alleviate air pollution by enabling local communities to avoid open burning of dead trees.

The Wayne County Division of Air Pollution Control has warned both county agencies and local communities that it will strictly enforce the ban on open burning.

The next meeting of the full Board of Commissioners is scheduled for 2 p.m. Monday, May 3 in the City-County Building auditorium.

Mother's Day is May 9 LAST 5 DAYS



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Dearden Will Close 3 Schools

Three area Catholic parochial schools will definitely close next year, according to the Detroit Archdiocese, and another 10 high schools and elementary schools have been hard hit by the financial crisis.

Schools that will not open next year are Farmington's Our Lady of Sorrows High School with almost 200 students, Wayne's St. Mary's High with 145 students, and Westland's St. Bernadine Elementary School enrolling 230 students.

Included on a list of 31 Catholic schools that will curtail programs next year by limiting enrollment or dropping one grade are: Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth, Our Lady of Loretto in Redford Township, St. Bede in Southfield and St. Damian in Westland.

Archdiocesan officials have not decided the fate of another 26 Catholic schools, including St. Raphael in Garden City, Livonia's St. Edith and St. Maurice Schools, Redford's St. Agatha high school and elementary school, St. Hilary, and St. John Bosco.

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