

Clarenceville eyes tax-shift proposal

BY MAHE CHESTNEY
STAFF WRITER

Clarenceville is just one of many Michigan school districts where administrators must decide if they'll gain from the school funding reform plan called Proposal A on the June 2 ballot.

Clarenceville administrators won't back the plan, which would reduce school property taxes and raise the state sales tax, until the district gets all its questions answered, said Superintendent David Kamiah.

"We have lots of questions and we're waiting for answers, especially how it would affect adult education," Kamiah said. "We'll wait for these answers before we take a position."

If the statewide school tax shift is approved by voters, Clarenceville's millage would drop from its present 42.25 mills to 27.85 mills, a 14-mill decrease.

That means that property taxes would drop \$648 for a Clarenceville house with a state equalized value of \$46,000 and \$864 for a house with a SEV of \$60,000, according to figures released by administrators.

On the other hand, the state estimates a family with a yearly income of \$35,000 will pay an extra \$249 each year if the 2-cent sales tax increase is approved.

The plan would also roll back

this year's property assessment increases and limit future increases to 5 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. Those changes, if approved, would become part of the state constitution.

Homeowners can juggle the sets of numbers to figure out which benefits them the most. From now until June 2, backers of the plan will work to convince taxpayers that a higher sales tax is a fair exchange for lower property taxes.

But for school administrators, the decision whether to back the plan is not so easy because many of the details remain a mystery.

For example, Clarenceville last year lost \$295,000 in state aid for adult education. Kamiah doesn't know if a similar loss will again occur in 1993-94.

"On the surface, the plan looks like it will solve problems, but we don't have a good interpretation of it yet," Kamiah said. "Right now what we have is guess work."

Due to this financial uncertainty, Clarenceville recently gave layoff notices to eight teachers for the 1993-94 school year.

Administrators have put together a preliminary 1993-94 budget of \$10.9 million. The final budget won't be enacted until after the June 2 election, after it's known whether voters approve the tax reform proposal.

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scribes himself as a onetime juvenile delinquent and functional illiterate. Then he met a friend, who used to take him fishing and turned him on to Christ.

McHann said he taught himself to read, using the King James Bible and a dictionary. Today, he has a doctorate from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

McHann credits a spiritual lifestyle for his success. He believes it has a firm place in education.

"It isn't a strange thought," said McHann, who lives in Bloomfield Hills with his wife and two children. "The question is not, 'How can you teach ethics and values in a unified world view?' The question is, 'How can you not?'"

History proves his point, he said.

Christian education up front

Colleges and universities were Christianized in medieval Europe. Ivy League schools Yale and Harvard started as clergy colleges, he added.

Christian education has always been at the forefront of William Tyndale College since it opened as Detroit Bible Institute in 1945. Classes were initially held in several locations, including Highland Park Baptist Church, before a permanent site was found in northwest Detroit. The name changed to Detroit Bible College in 1950.

Detroit Bible College moved to Farmington Hills in 1978, operating in the interim in Southfield for two years. Members commemorated the move by walking from Southfield to Farmington Hills.

The school changed its name to William Tyndale College in 1981. The transition to a liberal arts college from strictly a Bible insti-



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMUS

tution, though, caused unrest. Some on the board of directors believed a broader curriculum would compromise Christian teachings.

The ensuing strife caused McHann's predecessor, William Shoemaker, to resign.

McHann replaced him in 1990. McHann was previously the president of the International School of Theology, the seminary of Campus Crusade for Christ in San Bernardino.

McHann stresses the school is still very much Christian-centered, though offering 12 majors in such things as business administration and music as well as theology.

Campus life: Above, William Tyndale College students (from left) Shannon Holmes of Brighton, Bob Mathison of Garden City, Jayson Ruff of Lapeer, and Darla Stevens of Vancouver, Canada socialize in a campus courtyard. At left, in her dorm room, Nesa Wilkerson of Detroit studies French, a subject added at William Tyndale College last fall.



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