

Clarenceville board gives high marks to Proposal A

By MARY LOU SONG
STAFF WRITER

The Clarenceville School District has jumped on the bandwagon, passing 5-2 a resolution supporting Proposal A.

A determining factor in favor of support was budgeting concerns, said Superintendent David Kamish. Proposal A would bring a decrease of consistency to school budgeting.

"We would know what state aid is going to (be) year to year," Kamish said. "It certainly would be more beneficial to the Clarenceville School District than not having it and not knowing what we're doing year to year."

Clarenceville includes northeast Livonia, southeast Farmington Hills, and northwest Redford.

Trustees Dale Weighill, Vernice Dunkle, Lisa Burr, Linda Brandemihl and Linda Ahnert all voted to support Proposal A, a statewide ballot proposal to cut school property taxes, cap annual

property assessment increases, and raise the state sales tax from four percent to six percent.

Board president Gary Gassar and treasurer Wilson Bowden did not sign an resolution to support the proposal.

If the proposal on the June 2 ballot passes, the millage rate for property taxpayers in the Clarenceville district would plummet from 42.25 mills to 27 mills — about 34 mills.

A mill is \$1 of tax for each \$1,000 of assessed property value. Proposal A caps the millage rate at 27 mills.

According to Ralph Skrocki, assistant superintendent, if the assessment of a home is \$30,000 the present property tax is about \$1,267.50. With Proposal A, property taxes would be about \$835, a savings of \$432.

If the assessment of a home is \$100,000, the present property tax is \$4,225. But under Proposal A, property taxes would be \$2,785. The property owner would save

\$1,440 on property taxes. Trustee Ahnert admits that tax issues always have a down side, but said Proposal A is "a more equitable way of taxing because everybody has to pay."

Under the plan, 60 percent of the sales tax collected and all the lottery money would go to education. This guarantee would be put into the state constitution. Michigan's sales tax would increase 50 percent, from 4 cents on the dollar to 6 cents on the dollar.

"It is constitutionally guaranteed, it has to go for education," Ahnert said of the sales tax. "So many people are put off by what happened with the lottery that they don't trust anything that has to do with the state."

If Proposal A fails, the school district may face budget cuts. Skrocki declined to comment on the nature of the cuts and said only that the superintendent would call a special work session to come up with potential cuts.

McKendrick from page 1A

McKendrick's manner is direct without being pushy. She finances are attached with reasoning and investigation, a byproduct of her career as a legal nurse consultant.

McKendrick contends she was happy with the schools, pleased with the education her son has received.

Then came the busing issue. As a result of \$10 million lost in state "recapture" of aid money, Farmington school officials made cuts. Some \$1 million was trimmed from the transportation budget.

Bus stops for middle school and high school students were moved to major roadways to save money.

McKendrick and other parents in the newly formed Citizens for Transportation Safety protested. After meetings with the board, her group is still unsatisfied.

"We're not trying to get the \$1 million added back to the budget," she said. "We wanted to compromise and bring the buses in one block. We asked cost per mile. We asked for the cost of gas. . . We asked them, 'What would it cost?'"

Answers haven't been forthcoming, she said. The experience has been a catalyst in her running for the board.

McKendrick is critical of how the school board deals with parents such as herself. She blames the system more than members themselves, though.

"Then you go to the school board meetings and you put in your public comment card and you get up and talk, they say 'Thank you' when you are finished and you sit down."

"There is no response there. They don't ask you questions. They don't ask you to elaborate."

Her concern has led her to probe other issues such as school finances. She believes wasteful spending can be eliminated.

She's not specific, though, adding there is not a good line-by-line description of expenditures in the budget her group has looked over.

Some costs already raise her curiosity. McKendrick was present at a recent board meeting when bids were awarded, one being for nearly \$20,000 for Base Ten Blocks.

"That is not a big issue. I'm not saying anything about children learning how to count. Children

need to learn how to count. But do we need \$10,000 worth of blocks to accomplish that?"

Along with cuts, McKendrick lists what she would like to see added. She encourages the involvement of 80 percent of residents who don't have children in the schools.

She favors a more cooperative relationship — citing the busing issue as an example — between the cities and the schools.

The issue of multi-culturalism should be handled through the violence prevention programs the district is working on, she said.

McKendrick has been asked to head the safety committee through her involvement on the Citizens Against Violence in Our Schools. She's also president of Normandy Hills Homeowners Association, where her family lives.

McKendrick was asked to serve on a committee for the city of Farmington Hills, which is examining the feasibility of a new ice arena. Her involvement there perhaps mirrors her knack for exploring things further.

She's a competitive figure skater, having only taken up the hobby a few years ago.

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