

For school board

Feldman, Fobbs best picks

Plain and simple, Bobbie Feldman and Terry Fobbs would be fine additions to the Farmington Board of Education. We endorse both candidates and hope voters concur when they cast their ballots Monday.

This has been a strenuous school election with nine candidates, many of whom possess excellent qualifications.

But these are uncertain times in education. Proposal A has failed, and who only knows what's going to come out of Lansing in the way of school finance reform. Hard decisions undoubtedly will have to be made.

And, as current school board members can attest, not everyone will be happy with those outcomes.

Feldman and Fobbs grasp the issues. More importantly, both show a willingness to work with all parties involved and provide a constructive dialogue.

Feldman has been the PTA president at Wood Creek Elementary for the past three years and has been involved in numerous district committees, including the Frameworks Committee that develops goals for student and curriculum outcomes.

Throughout this campaign, Feldman has stuck to the issues. She has reflected an in-depth knowledge of the Farmington district

while demonstrating a level of professionalism that will make her an outstanding board member.

By contrast, Fobbs doesn't have an arm-length list of district committee involvement. That shouldn't be the only criteria, though.

Fobbs has worked with Citizens Against Violence in the Schools, a group formed by Joanna LaFleur. The group was initially met with disdain in school establishment circles, but is now working hand-in-hand with the district in developing violence-prevention programs.

Fobbs, who became the group's spokesman, has helped play a role in bridging the gap between once disparate viewpoints. Instead of divisive rhetoric and threats of lawsuits, he's spoken with genuine concern of how his own daughter was assaulted and how the school and law enforcement were responsive.

In his grassroots campaign, it's also apparent Fobbs is very aware that 80 percent of the people in the Farmington area do not have children in the schools. Yet, more than half of their tax dollar goes toward education. We believe Fobbs when he says he will listen to their concerns as well.

We thank the nine candidates for their interest in serving on the board of education and remind voters to cast their vote Monday.

Anger won't bring school aid

Ugly sounds of retaliation are emanating from Gov. John Engler and the "bipartisan legislative team" after voters last week rejected Proposal A.

Their target appears to be "Detroit" or, when they stop to spell it out, the metropolitan Detroit suburbs where this newspaper circulates and which voted NO in thunder.

Engler, his staff and vocal members of BLT talked of more Robin Hood tactics in the school aid bill, specifically reducing aid for categoricals and pensions. They attributed a lack of "sense of community" to the area east of US-23 and south of M-59.

The governor and BLT should cool off.

To begin with, more than three counties said no to Proposal A. Nearby Washtenaw County said no. Three counties in the I-75 corridor — Genesee, Saginaw and Bay — said no. Six counties around Marquette in the Upper Peninsula said no. Detroit, a potential beneficiary of Proposal A, said no.

So let's quit beating up on the supposedly "rich" metropolitan suburbs.

Some suggested Proposal A was so complicated that voters didn't really understand it, and when they don't understand something, they automatically vote no. We can't speak for all 1.1 million Michiganians who voted no, but the evidence suggests they knew what they were doing.

In this area, they saw Proposal A giving them minuscule school property tax cuts of zero to eight mills while giving fringe and outstate districts whopping cuts of 14, 16, 20 mills or more. They saw Proposal A hiking their sales tax by half, but where did the money go? This area's schools got 3 percent hikes while outstate schools got 10 percent hikes, with 10 percent more for some in future years.

Senior citizens saw themselves paying a 50 percent higher sales tax and seeing their minute property tax cuts washing out their homestead exemptions.

In short, Proposal A's deck was stacked against the metropolitan suburbs and in favor

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of the "team" that hatched it in secret.

Since the 19th Century, the metro Detroit area and outstate have coexisted uneasily. Outstate resents the way Detroit's machinations shovel tons of money into the big city and the way we view their area as tree stumps.

Clearly, however, metropolitan area voters saw through the take-all-give-nothing thrust of Proposal A.

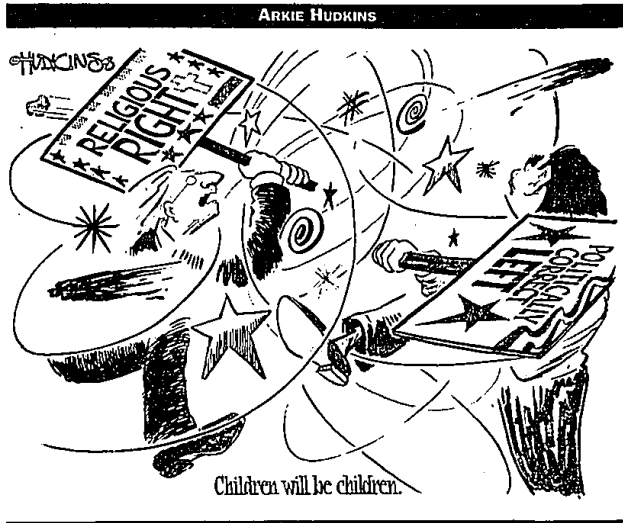
Engler asked, seriously, What kind of school finance system should Michigan have? Our serious answer:

- Everyone needs substantial property tax relief.
- Instead of manipulating assessments or rates, the relief plan should cut total tax bills.
- Lost school revenue should be replaced by the state.
- Many outstate and city schools do need more money, but not \$4,800 per pupil from the state treasury. Spending should be geared to the cost and wage realities of Michigan's several regional economies.
- These malicious Robin Hood schemes — taking away our pension contributions and industrial tax base — should be scrapped and forgotten.

Meanwhile, Lansing must not lose sight of the need to use its monetary leverage to improve school performance. School quality means more than a generous paycheck.

Finally, all regions of the state should recognize we have too many tiny, economically anemic, high-overhead school districts, and consolidation is in order.

That's our plan. And everyone can benefit.



Children will be children.

LETTERS

Strong statement

It's wonderful to hear about kids and their teachers stretching for the big one and winning.

Your story May 17 about Dean Cobb's TV 10 class at North Farmington made a strong statement.

To compete nationwide and win among 230 schools for a creative, ambitious production is high achievement. We are fortunate indeed to excel with top-rated teachers, motivated children and dedicated parents. It's never enough to talk in superlatives. It's all too often that we hear the negatives.

Glenn Papper, Farmington Hills

Ax chaplains

I'm really serious about cutting the budget, why don't we include an ax job on the Congressional Chaplains.

I understand they each make more than a hundred grand a year for five minutes of session-opening holy balderdash.

This may be of some hallucinatory solace to those of your colleagues who lack faith in the power of their own intelligence, but trust me on this one: If "God" is aware of our meager dabblings into honest-to-goodness rationality, She surely can't be relied upon to bail us out of the deficit we created.

I can comprehend how we might possibly amuse Her, but I am unable to divine how we could conceivably induce Her to intervene in the solution of a math problem.

We could likely persuade local multi-denominational volunteers to perform the same smoke-and-mirrors incantations free of charge anyway. Some might even bring their own incense (or incense).

Tracey Ann Martin, Farmington Hills

SAGE is great

I was pleased to read the May 20 article about the successful SAGE (Senior Adults Giving To Education) program in the Farmington Schools.

Coordinated by the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Division at the Mercy Center, SAGE's concept of the older generation sharing its experiences with the younger generation is beneficial to both groups.

The senior adult division is to be congratulated on sponsoring the program which is in its eighth year. However, I would like to point out that SAGE has been in our community longer than that.

It was organized in 1981 by the Farmington Branch, American Association of University Women supported by the Farmington Public School District and Farmington Area PTA Council.

Farmington AAUW recognized the importance of grand-parents imparting their skills and knowledge to youngsters in the schools.

After working on SAGE for almost five years, Farmington AAUW decided a more appropriate venue for SAGE would be at Mercy Center with its many seniors as possible participants.

We approached Loretta Conway, senior adult supervisor, about this change. She agreed and thus the shift to Mercy Center.

I hope that SAGE continues to expand with its volunteers in more schools. SAGE is truly worthwhile.

Phyllis Cummings, Farmington AAUW

Feldman's the choice

As the parent of a child at Wood Creek Elementary School, it has been my privilege to know and work closely with Bobbie Feldman for the past three years.

As president of our parent group, Bobbie has initiated the change from a PTO to a PTA. She brought a sense of team spirit and cooperation to the group which increased parent participation and commitment.

Along with her PTA work, I have seen Bobbie work tirelessly on many district and community committees, always bringing back a fresh perspective to our group.

I have seen Bobbie work in the face of controversy and am always impressed with her people skills and diplomacy. Bobbie always made people feel valued for their opinions.

I appreciate Bobbie's dedication to our school and know her past experiences will make her an excellent, new board member.

Jan Lachman, Farmington Hills

More Feldman

As it draws closer to this upcoming school board election, I feel more compelled to express my preference for the board position. I write you this letter to express my deep commitment in voting for candidate Bobbie Feldman.

Bobbie and I have held a mutual respect and admiration for each other for over 15 years. We are individuals that share the same goals for our children that many other parents have for their children. She is committed to quality education and not only requires it for her children but seeks it for all children in the district.

Bobbie has not limited her commitment only to the school in which her children attend, she has placed many hours on various issues involving this district. Bobbie is an individual who demonstrates the ability to comprehend much, reacts with reason and has much empathy for others.

I urge the voters to place their trust in Bobbie Feldman. I always have and have never been disappointed.

Anita Bogorad, Farmington Hills

Feldman again

As consistent voters in the school elections and viewers of the recent school board debates, it is very apparent that there is one candidate who stands out as the most prepared, most experienced and most approachable — Bobbie Feldman.

Please vote Monday, June 14.

Chip and Jayne Wochoimurka, Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: What advice would you give to people graduating from high school and college?

'To have a lot of perseverance. Don't give up because it will probably take a long time to get what you want.'
Carol Breneau
Farmington Hills

'Get in a field you like and enjoy.'
Linnea Norman
Farmington Hills

'Work hard, try hard. And go to college and get an education.'
Terri Strauchman
Farmington Hills

'Don't take a year off. I took a year off, and it turned into three years.'
Daryl Lanson
88 Farmington grad

We asked this question in downtown Farmington.

The Farmington Observer

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