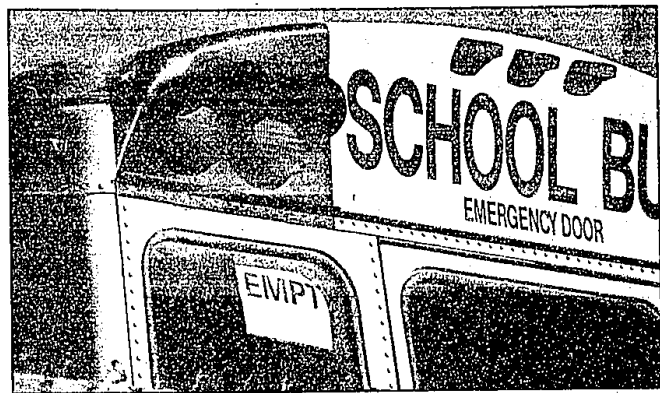


District demotes bus driver for rest of school year



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL SKEDD

BY TIM SMITH
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A veteran Farmington Public Schools bus driver was demoted for the rest of the 1998-99 school year, stemming from a Feb. 4 incident where she went home for a break even though a 6-year-old girl remained on the bus.

Larry Lobert, the district's executive director of personnel, Tuesday said the 24-year veteran won't drive a bus again until the 1999-2000 school year.

For the remainder of this school year, effective Wednesday, she will work as a bus aide, earning about \$10.60 per hour instead of the \$17 hourly wage earned by bus drivers. A bus aide completes a variety of tasks on board, helping maintain order to assist the driver in safely

reaching destinations.

Lobert emphasized that the demoted driver "felt extremely badly about the incident," and accepted the district's decision without any problem. The employee's past record helped her escape a worse fate.

"This is very much done in light of the exemplary performance of this employee," Lobert said.

Asked about whether that track record enabled the employee to keep from being fired, Lobert said termination for such an incident "absolutely could have happened."

On Thursday, Feb. 4, after that morning's final stop (Highmeadow Common Campus), the driver did not follow proper procedure, Lobert said.

She yelled from her seat asking whether anybody remained on the bus, did not get a response, and proceeded to her home for a break before her next assignment.

Apparently, the Highmeadow first-grader was not paying attention and did not hear the driver ask if anybody was still on the bus, school officials explained.

After the bus driver made it home, the girl got off the bus and went to a neighbor's to call her mother. The girl was not harmed and safely made it to school later that day.

Not occupied: When Farmington Public Schools bus drivers finish their routes, they are required to walk to the back of the bus, make sure no child remains on board, and then turn around the "Empty" sign on the emergency door.

WL schools plan for expansion despite decline in enrollment

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO
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WALLED LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The facilities committee is studying whether to continue that practice or even build a lower elementary school to accommodate growth at the elementary level.

This year's state aid funding amounts have already been set. The F.S.D. staff count applies toward a portion of the state aid contribution for the 1999-2000 school year.

The state contribution, currently \$7,399 per pupil, is based on 40 percent of the February 1999 count and 60 percent of the September 1999 student enrollment.

Sandy Motz, executive director of business services, said because of the way the count is conducted the district has to project its revenues for the 1999-2000 school year without knowing what will be forthcoming in state aid.

"It's a six-month lag behind," Motz said. "That's why we've complained."

However, Motz said of student count projections, "We're pretty accurate."

Compared to student enrollment in February 1998, the student population has increased by approximately 415 students.

The district experienced slight increases at the elementary and middle school levels since the beginning of the school year, up a total of 65 students, according to the unofficial headcount. But enrollment at the district's two

Unofficial Student Headcount

	Feb. 99	Sept. 98
Elementary	461	463
Commerco	405	401
Guest	559	561
Dublin	470	484
Glengary	471	463
Hickory Woods	655	648
Keith	517	522
Loon Lake	429	432
Maple	548	541
Meadowbrook	444	445
Oakley Park	583	572
Pleasant Lake	374	374
Twin Beach	425	416
Walled Lake	490	492
Wixom	6,831	6,795
Totals		
Elementary school Feb. 99	828	822
Clifford Smart	821	815
Walnut Creek	783	787
Walled Lake	685	674
Sarah Banks	3,117	3,098
Totals		
High school Feb. 99	1,612	1,641
Central	1,806	1,857
Western	3,418	3,498
Totals		
Others Feb. 99	20	11
Camp Oakland	142	147
Community High	5	9
LATE program		

Note: Kindergarten counts for Glengary and Oakley Park elementary schools were not available.

high schools dropped by 80 students since the last count in September 1998.

"That is historical," Beauchamp said. "If you were to look back in the years, you'd find that pattern is there."

He said the decline can be attributed to transfers to the district's alternative high school, which has experienced an increase of five students since September 1998. Other reasons include students leaving school to go to work or because of family difficulties.

"At 16, students no longer are required to be in school," Beauchamp said, but added that students who leave sometimes return later.

The decline can also be due to families moving out of the district, he said.

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LOYOLA DEAN'S
Maureen Moloney of Farmington Hills was recently named to the Dean's List at Loyola University in Chicago. She is a 1995 graduate of Mercy High School. She will graduate in May and has recently been inducted into the National Political Science Honor Society and the National French Honor Society.

SOUTHERN DEAN'S
Michael Moreland of Farmington was named to the Dean's List at Southern Illinois University following the fall semester.

STUDENT SENATE
Farmington Hills residents Anjali Thakur and Kathleen Surowiec have been elected to the Student Senate at Albion

College. Thakur is a senior majoring in political science and speech communication and Surowiec is a junior majoring in political science.

BRANDEIS DEAN'S
Allison Waller of Farmington Hills was named to the Dean's List for the fall 1998 semester at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. She is the daughter of Frederic and Enid Waller.

ASSOCIATE GRAD
Diane Pachan and Christina Pravis of Farmington Hills both earned associate degrees from Washtenaw Community College.

EASTERN GRADS
The following Farmington/Farmington Hills residents earned degrees from Eastern Michigan University following the fall semester:
Schockrane Altman, David Barlage, Norman Chnsko, Tonya Collins, Navara Dunbeck, Brian Ganterman, Christopher Hope, Melissa Latra, Julie McGrath, Elton Moran, Emily Raymond, Renee Richardson, Amy Wagner, Penny White, Sarah Blehl, Jennie Castro, Steven Friedman, Judith Nachman, Andrew Stoller and Jennifer Westbrook.

DEAN'S LIST
Joseph Barney of Farmington Hills was named to the Dean's List for the fall term at Johnson & Wales University.