

Reid from page A1

students from the region.

It is costing 9 percent more per year to operate special ed programs, "which far outstrips the rate of increase in state funding for both the foundation grant and categorical grants."

In 1997-98, the total special education budget for Farmington schools - including the center programs - was nearly \$23 million, which represented 19.1 percent of the district's total \$97.6 million budget. Also, the state provided \$2.9 million in revenue to the district for the '97-98 special ed program, but that was nearly \$3 million short of the state's mandated fund obligation.

Oakland Schools does partially reimburse the district for the state shortfall.

Reid added that the combination of less state special ed funding and spiraling costs results in taking money from the general education budget.

"Eventually, the costs for these services and programs will cause us to eliminate programs," Reid said, "which will cause a great deal of dissatisfaction among



Frank Reid

parents ... and create an unnecessary and unfair adversarial position between groups of parents.

According to Reid's testimony, the district anticipates special ed costs will jump to \$32.4 million (24.4 percent of the total budget) in 2002-2003.

Reid, elected to the Farmington school board in 1997, said special ed programs are those that "have demonstrated positive

effects on student achievement for all of our students."

But, he continued, these programs "cannot be offered in an environment where the rapid expansion of non-reimbursed costs will fully consume nearly 25 percent of our total budget" as projections indicate.

"It is imperative that we find a solution to this funding problem, consistent with the state Constitution, which addresses these problems in the Legislature where they belong, before they become a crisis in our school district and districts all across this state," Reid said.

The board member said he hoped that Stille and the subcommittee "have had the opportunity to observe first-hand" how special education programs and services are delivered.

"Once you have," Reid said, "I believe that you would agree that the present posture ... in which the state counts the foundation (per-pupil) allowance as part of the Headlee guaranteed minimum funding obligation for special education is absurd."

Refugees from page A1

ganges from that region.

The U.S. government is offering to fly refugees to the country. Once here, tasks would include finding them a place to live, jobs and getting kids into schools, Unick said.

Money is a major hurdle.

Unick figures to adopt one family of four could run up to \$10,000. That would include an apartment, utilities, clothing and food.

Those who attended Tuesday's meeting suggested a number of ways to raise money, including a request to parishioners at St. Fabian Church.

School officials have told Unick that Kosovar refugees could take crash courses in English during the summer. To get a Kosovar family here could take 20 to 60 days.

"If 400 people showed up here tonight, I'd have called the woman (to get a family) right now," Unick said.

KOSOVO

Part of the plan would be to help the adults find jobs, too. Since there is a worker shortage in Oakland County, Unick doesn't feel that would be much of a problem.

Unick tried to dispel any illusions of what might be involved.

"We're talking about a crap shoot here. We don't know who we're going to get," he said. "We don't know if it's going to be a doctor, a lawyer, a farmer or a ne'er-do-well. It's kind of a warts-and-all-type of a thing."

Refugees are going to need time to adjust, said a woman who attended the meeting. Many are likely to be traumatized.

"There's going to be some serious transitional issues," said Eliza Litvin of Farmington Hills. "Whoever comes over may not be capable of doing much for three

weeks."

Litvin and others heard about Unick's efforts through St. Fabian. Organizers want the effort to be community-wide opposed to being limited to a single church.

The next meeting is 7 p.m. Thursday, June 3, in the church social hall.

Unick is encouraged 26 people turned out but would like to see the ranks swell to at least 100, "so no one breaks their back," he said.

Like others who attended the meeting, Sara Stump is shaken by images of displaced families she sees on television nightly. "I just wanted to do something," Stump said. "This is a good way for people to get involved."

Prom from page A1

comfortable with the way you look you probably will have a better time," said the Farmington Hills resident.

In fact, looking for the dress and getting ready play a big part in the excitement.

"It's an amazing night and a way to end the year great," said Sloan, who chose a black dress with straps.

While most girls at the prom wore black in past years, this year some girls are choosing from a rainbow of other colors such as blue, pink, mint, light gray, silver, taupe, stone and charcoal. More girls opted for long, instead of short, dresses this year, too.

After the dress there's concerns about hair styles, jewelry and shoes. Popular neck accessories are multi-strained chokers; invisible necklaces with pearls, colors or rhinestones. Sandal-type shoes are also popular.

"This year it was every color and I haven't seen that in 20 years," Levenson said, adding that the contours of the dresses were softer and more flowing this year, too.

Students are also keeping a tighter hold on their wallets compared to their predecessors. The average price girls were spending for prom dresses at Guy's is \$450 this year was \$120 to \$300. And most were choosing from designer

names like Laundry, Parallel, Vera Wang and E.C.B.C.

"It's one of the most important things in a girl's life beside her wedding," Levenson said. "You want to look pretty and feel pretty. A lot come in after with their prom pictures. Some of their mothers used to wear our clothes and it's like family. They trust our opinion."

Some girls start looking for the right dress eight months to one year before the prom, but most launch their search shortly before they go on their senior trips. And there are always some who wait until the last week or even a few days before the prom.

"Some don't like what they bought earlier and they want to repurchase," Levenson added.

There's a lot less hassle for the girls' dates. The biggest concern is having the vest match the color of her dress.

This year a lot of customers at Rainbow Tailoring and Tuxedos asked for single-breasted tuxedos with a high-cut breast and button covers, said Marie Warra, part-owner of the Farmington Hills store.

Euroband ties that wrap around the neck and come down like a regular tie are becoming as popular as the usual bow ties of previous years. The color of choice is

black. Fewer choose white and ivory tuxedos. And every now and then boys who run away from the pack request yellow, powder blue and pink tuxedos, Warra said.

Because Rainbow Tailoring and Tuxedos carries basic black, white, boucle tooth, ivory and gray tuxedos, she tells these adventurous style setters (or breakers) to keep looking.

"But they won't find them unless they go to a shop that sells real old clothing," she added.

Rental prices range from \$59 to \$85.60 for everything from coat to pants, shirt, vest and shoes. Tuxedos are also sold at the shop, but Warra said, she has never sold a high school student a tuxedo for a prom.

While waiting to the last minute probably isn't the best idea, Warra said she can help even the worst procrastinator.

"They can come in as late as the morning of the prom and I can get them fitted," she said, estimating that about 10 percent fall into this tardy category. "I do a lot of one-day services on tuxes."

The Farmington North high school proms will be June 1, while Harrison's will be June 2.

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