

## Curriculum from page A1

was approved by the school board in December — comes at a time when Michigan children are being criticized as being out-of-shape.

Too many youngsters across the state aren't being pushed hard enough by school physical education programs, said a recent report published by the American Heart Association.

The AHA report stated:

■ that Michigan children in kindergarten through fifth grade receive less than 160 minutes of physical education each week;

■ that high schoolers are not required to take more than one semester of gym;

■ that more public school districts are allowing "non-aerobic" activities (including band) to be substituted for physical activity.

The Farmington district is moving forward, but it doesn't entirely escape those findings. Elementary-school students take 60 to 85 minutes of physical education each week, with instruction on motor skills, fitness and nutrition as key components.

Team sports are introduced in the middle schools, where the subject is taken for three semesters. Swinehart said Farmington's high school requirements call for two semesters, involving team sports, weight training, swimming and health issues.

But the district might get off on a technicality when allowing non-aerobic activities to be substituted for aerobic activities.

Students at North and Harrison can receive a half-credit physical education waiver if they can prove they take a "rigorous academic and special interest" schedule.

However, that opportunity ends as soon as block scheduling is implemented, in 1999-2000 at North and 2000-2001 at Harrison, Swinehart said. Block scheduling is already in place at Farmington High.

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The fitness level of Michigan children "is not a new problem," Swinehart said. "But (the AHA report) could be our springboard for promotion of a program we think we can develop."

Farmington High physical education teacher Sheltown said society — not just children — needs to work harder at staying fit and trim, particularly in the computer age.

"That's not to say technology is bad. I think it's good," she said. "But we must make sure we're exercising our bodies. It's an ongoing battle."

The intent of the district's new physical education curriculum is to develop a health-conscious stance, and not be a recreational outlet said Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield.

"What the ... committee has worked on is emerging in that direction," Maxfield said. He did acknowledge that Americans are "a sedentary people. None of us gets the exercise we should."

**Timed:** This student is getting her exercise. That's not the case for all students, according to Farmington school officials and an American Heart Association study. Right now, students at North and Harrison can receive a half-credit physical education waiver if they can prove they take a "rigorous academic and special interest" schedule.

## Budget from page A1

Maxfield said it will cost about \$550,000 to implement block scheduling at North this coming year. That cost includes the addition of eight teachers and one paraprofessional to enable the high school to go from six class periods to seven.

"What you see is, we're delighted that it works as well as it does, is a budget that allows us to sustain some of the new initiatives, like the elementary study, block scheduling at North," the superintendent said. "So it's a budget that allows us to complement the (1997) bond issue and take care of other capital needs. The appropriate time to do it is now."

Before the school board's meeting on May 18, the budget was presented by Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for business and operational services, and Mary Reynolds, business director.

Cannon said the budget includes revenues of \$120.4 million and expenditures of \$123.8 million. Even after taking nearly \$3.4 million out of the fund equity balance, there still would be about \$27.4 million in the account.

The property tax would drop: from 14.476-to-14 mills for one-home owners (homestead); from 20.12-to-20.06 mills for those who own businesses or more than one residence (non-homestead).

In an introduction to the budget, Maxfield wrote that the district is maintaining good financial health because of various cost-containment measures. Those include staff retirements.

A projected enrollment increase of 190 students, coupled with an \$186 jump in per-pupil spending (from \$9,029 to \$9,215) from the state, also alleviated any financial pinch.

But clouds on the horizon could begin forming, such as special education funding from the state and potential for an economic slump.

"This is a decent year for state aid, and the legislature did a good job and provided a two-year budget that allows us to meet our basic inflationary needs," Maxfield said. "The big concerns are will that always continue if there's a downturn in the economy?"

Available to review

The budget is user-friendly, containing a glossary of terms, for example. There also are numerous bar graphs and charts, and an at-a-glance breakdown of different categories.

"It's more than a budget, it's really a picture of the entire district's programs and aspirations," Maxfield said. "So there's lots of other useful information in it."

Residents can review the budget for themselves. It is available at the district's administrative offices, 32500 Shiawassee, just east of Farmington Road. School buildings and both branches of the Farmington Community Library also have the document.

The Farmington Hills branch of the library is located on 12 Mile Road, between Orchard Lake-Farmington roads; the downtown Farmington branch is located on Liberty Street, one block west of Farmington Road and one block south of Grand River.



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