Community education: To be or not to be?

By JONI HUBRED STAFF WRITER

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In a 5-2 vote, Clarenceville School officials gave a struggling community education program one, last chance for survival

Thursday.
But board members Bryan Bent-But board members Bryan Bent-ley and Gary Garrison found it impossible to lend their support, since only 28 percent of the people who responded to a user survey live in the district. Additionally, the district seneral fund budget has to subsidize community ed to the tune of \$20,000 a year to keep it in the black.

A task force charged with evaluating the program presented its report and recommendations in ating the program presented its report and recommendations in January; however, board members asked for more detailed information. The expanded report included seven specific recommendations, ranging from increasing fees and re-evaluating vendor arrangements to surveying Clarenceville residents about potential new course offerings and evaluating classes for profitability. However, task force and board member Sharon Simpson said, "We really didn't feel as a task force it was our job to say what was to be done."

The group felt that district administration should look at the recommendations and develop a plan for change to be presented by May 31. Simpson said, it might take a couple of years to make community education as self-sushing program.

community education a self-sus-taining program.

Task force and board member John Kanyo said the group didn't find much information in program history, but looked at classes offered in other districts. "Most are offering more classes...and their attendances are higher. I think we really do need to raise

Board chair Matthew Boettcher stressed officials weren't making a move toward eliminating commu-nity education, but wanted to move forward and make it prof-

itable.
Not all board members agreed,

Not all board members agreed, however.

I think it's time we look at dropping community ed and go with something different, but I don't know what that is, said Garrison. 'Were already subsidizing it, and there's going to be a 26 percent reduction with the loss of the pool. So to say give it another two years, I have a problem with that. The district decided in January to close the high school pool, which needed thousands of dollars in repairs and upgrades. About 26 percent of these responding to the user survey indicated they took classes that involve the pool.

Garrison suggested going directly to parents and students, asking them what kinds of classes they wanted.

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One of the report recommendations was to evaluate methods of advertising. The task force noted the 445 participants in the program were the result of distributing 28,000 brochures. However, community education manager Rose Govig pointed out that some classes advertised directly with hyers showed large enrollment increases.

Simpson felt dropping community programs would fly in the face of the district's philosophy of lifelong learning.

of the district's philosophy of life-long learning. "I think we're sending a double message here," she said.

Board member Jenifer Carbon-neau felt the primary problem was that people weren't aware of pro-grams offered. "I learned that on the pool task force. People didn't know there was open swimming."

the pool task roce. recipie thank know there was open swimming."
While Boettcher shared the financial concerns, he placed "great weight" on the recommen-dations and wanted to wait and see an administrative evaluation of whether the program could be profitable.

I'm not prepared to dismiss the task force recommendation without further recommendations from the administration," he said. **Optimistic Futures**



S BY DOLL DRES Speechlfying: The Farmington Hills Optimists held their annual mus Optimises lead the annual speech contest early Wednesday morning, at the Farmington Training Center, under the direction of club President and Farmington Director of Public Safety Gary Goss and Diane Bauman, communications coordinator for Farmington Public Schools. Eight girls took part in the competition; girls took part in the competition; the boys will compete next week. Taking the top three spots were Bonnie Smith (top), Gold medat; Nina Bihani (above, middle), Sil-ver medal; and Kelsey Twigg (right), Bronze medal. Their speeches centered on how they would change the world.







CLARIFICATION

A Sunday story about the State of the Cities Breakfast should have quoted School Board President Cathy Webb as saying, "Each student comes to school with a unique set of personal characteristics, family background, life experiences, abilities and aspirations."



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