

BERGERON

FROM PAGE A1

survey, to determine support for participating with Farmington Public Schools.

"As a businessman, you want to go with the truth," Bergeron said. "Admitting that he is personally against shared time, he said he wanted a true representation of how parents felt."

"Hearings are good," Bergeron said. "What good are opinions? Why not do a ballot? I have given over \$200,000 (to the church) in the last five years. I feel I have been betrayed. The church belongs to the people."

The accounting firm issued its report Dec. 3. That report indicated that 65 percent of those who returned ballots opposed shared time. The ballots, which were mailed Nov. 12, simply asked parents to check a box, "I support shared time" or "I do not support shared time."

Of 557 ballots mailed, 191 were received as of Dec. 3, a return of about 30 percent. The results: 123 families do not support shared time; 62 support shared time; three were returned marked "no such address/number"; two were comments only, and one had no postage.

"Doeren Mayhew mailed a ballot to every parent with an address listed in the Our Lady of Sorrows Student Directory as published by the Parent Teachers Guild,"

Bergeron said.

In the meantime, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield wonders why more parents didn't attend the grade-level meetings at OLS and is asking those who have been reluctant to speak up to do so now.

Some OLS parents remember Maxfield's statement earlier this year. He said shared time would have to be supported by more than 60 percent of OLS parents.

"Your standard of a vast majority of parents supporting shared time has not been met," Bergeron wrote in a Dec. 12 letter to Maxfield. "You indicated that you wouldn't institute a non-mandatory program at any public school if the majority of parents were against that program. The majority of parents at Our Lady of Sorrows are not in favor of shared time and therefore shared time should not be implemented."

In the Vol. 5 Nov. 14 "School News" letter to parents, Principal James Watson advised parents,

"Any mailing you received from Lawrence Simon CPA/c/o Doeren Mayhew taking a poll on shared time has NOT been authorized or approved by OLS School and should be discarded."

The accounting firm said procedures were in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Doeren Mayhew counted the returned ballots.

Bergeron wrote Maxfield Oct. 9

offering to meet with him to set up a ballot, which Bergeron said he would pay for under the conditions that it be non-emotional, mailed directly to parents from an independent accounting firm and that the ballots be returned to that accounting firm.

Maxfield wrote Bergeron back Oct. 18 with a copy to Hurley. He stated his firm belief that "we should trust the process."

"I believe it would be presumptuous and inappropriate to the school district to conduct an independent survey of the Sorrows parent community," the letter continued.

While Bergeron said the school district had been cooperative, he also called the process "stacked."

After grade-level meetings concluded in early November, Maxfield expected recommendations would be forwarded to the education committee and parents council. Those two groups would then decide whether to resubmit the shared-time proposal to the school district.

"I expect that the recommendations will include an appropriate indication concerning the level of parent support," Maxfield said.

He expected recommendations no later than early January so that the issue could go to the school board in either January or February.

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Monsignor Hurley: Most Sorrows parents back shared time

In response to a request for comment, Our Lady of Sorrows pastor Monsignor Walter Hurley offered this statement: "I am grateful to the Observer staff for sharing the most recent study regarding shared time commissioned by a parishioner. We had not previously received a copy of this study."

"During the months of September through November, Mr. Watson, the principal of Our Lady of Sorrows School, conducted a series of informational grade level meetings with parents. At these meetings, Mr. Watson shared his vision for the school including shared time."

"Parents then had the opportunity to ask questions and share their ideas."

"From a school population of 1,120 students (650 families), approximately 177 parents came with questions, concerns and support for our efforts. A total of 40 individual parents voiced opposition to shared time."

"In a carefully orchestrated meeting of the sixth grade level, a small group came together to launch an attack that was disruptive enough to require the meeting to be terminated. Most parents were offended at the behavior of a few that contravenes everything we believe and stand for."

"It is significant that an earlier study, undertaken by a law firm last spring, was never shared or discussed with the administration of OLS School or Parish. The most recent study by an accounting firm was undertaken only after the parent meetings indicated parental support. The accounting firm refused to identify who

"There is serious question regarding the methodology of the recent study."

Many parents were offended by this blatant attempt to continue a personal crusade against shared time."

Monsignor Walter Hurley, in his letter

had retained them or who had authorized them to use information from the private directory published by the school.

"There is serious question regarding the methodology of the recent study. Many parents were offended by this blatant attempt to continue a personal crusade against shared time."

"Our Lady of Sorrows requested that parents disregard this unauthorized and flawed study."

"From the information we received from the meetings held, we believe about 90 percent of our parents are not opposed to shared time."

"When this is considered, along with approval from both our school committee and our parish council, this represents strong support of our decision to implement a program of shared time. The issue here is about serving children not only today, but into the future."

OAKLAND COUNTY ROAD WATCH

Information for Road Watch is supplied by the Road Commission for Oakland County (www.roccweb.org). Information is subject to change.

WEST BLOOMFIELD TWP.

■ Road: Maple Road, Heather Heath Lane to Rutledge Park Street (between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt) — West Bloomfield Twp. is administering a project to add a center left-turn lane. Motorists should expect delays.

FRANKLIN / BLOOMFIELD TWP.

■ Road: 14 Mile, Telegraph to Franklin — This section of 14 Mile is closed so that the Detroit

Water and Sewerage Department can install a water regulation chamber adjacent to the road.

The detour route is Telegraph, Maple and Franklin. Motorists trying to reach Franklin Cider Mill should use the detour route. Work is expected to be complete in January.

NOVI

■ Road: 12 Mile, from Meadowbrook to Novi. ROCOC is widening this road to a four-lane boulevard.

Partial completion (utilities installed/moved and temporary pavement done) by early December. Full completion is expected in 2003.

WATERFORD TWP.

■ Road: Elizabeth Lake Road, from Cass Lake to Cooley Lake roads. ROCOC is widening this road from four lanes to five. The road is open to two-way traffic, but some side streets are closed at Elizabeth Lake. Work is expected to be complete by Dec. 1.

WEST BLOOMFIELD TWP.

■ Road: Maple Road, Heather Heath Lane to Rutledge Park Street (between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt) — West Bloomfield Township is administering a project to add a center left-turn lane. Motorists should expect delays. Completion is expected Dec. 3.

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