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THE POLEMIC

Alpena Community College 666 Johnson Street Alpena MI 49707 Vol.3 Issue 4 Nov. 17, 1993

Engler's reform proposals seem to leave schools exposed

By DENISE KONWINSKI
Co-Editor

"The right hand giveth, the left hand taketh away," is how ACC Instructor Chuck Rosebush summed up an aspect of it.

Governor John Engler's proposed educational reform was the topic of a Nov. 8 meeting hosted by area League of Women Voters at the First Congregational Church in Alpena.

The citizens of Alpena were given the chance to air their concerns before State Representative Beverley Bodem.

And air they did.
Rep. Bodem was strongly urged by her constituents to return to Lansing with messages for Engler on slowing down his practice of making seemingly hasty and careless decisions about something that is bound to affect every household in Michigan in one way or another.

Of all Engler's proposals, greatest controversy seems to surround the basis of refinancing public schools. Starting with the 1994-95 academic year, property taxes, which previously provided 66 percent of school funding, were cut as the result of an Aug. 19 bill signed by the governor.

Engler finalized the measure, which will draw over six billion dollars away from K-12 schools, before having a sound plan for replenishing the original funding in place.

While the tax cut may provide relief for property owners in the short run, many people



Photo by Tom Sherrill - Mix

Sue Maxwell of the League of Women Voters (far right) moderates the open meeting on educational reform. Panel members left to right: Alpena Superintendent Ron LaBarre, ACC President Don Newport, Representative Bev Bodem and Superintendent of Alpena Educational Service District Tom Lanaway. WATZ's Don Parteka recorded the session.

fear the long-term repercussions, especially since Engler's proposed solutions are hovering around one powerful word: taxes.

A two percent increase in the state sales tax is slated as a major component in the search for revenue. It is estimated that the proposal increase would generate \$1,830 million, approximately one third of the eliminated monies.

Some of the other taxes mentioned to compensate for severed funding, and the estimated revenue they will generate include:

- An increased property

tax on second homes and small businesses (\$840 million and \$1 billion, respectively)

- A real estate transfer tax of four percent, to be paid by the seller (\$800 million)

- "Sin" taxes on cigarettes, 75 cents a pack, and on beer, 1 cent per 12 oz. can (\$380 million and \$26 million, respectively)

- An increased income tax of one percent (\$1.2 billion)

- Local school taxes (\$585 million)

- An industrial facility tax (\$9.4 million)

In his proposal, Engler is offering a guaranteed base al-

lowance of \$4,500 per student to all Michigan districts. This would move schools with a lower dollar to student ratio, such as Alpena, which spends \$4,250 per student, to a higher level. Districts that already spend more than \$4,500 per student will receive a one to two percent increase in funds.

There are strong negative feelings about base funding by the state, because within the folds of the proposals, it states that overall, the state will be paying less in school operational costs.

"He [Engler] looks like a great champion [about the

\$4,500 allocation], but he doesn't make it clear that it's a damn cent more for education," says Rosebush.

As for direct instruction, Engler has proposed approximately 20 ways to "improve" Michigan schools and standards of education. Two propositions commonly heard of, and perhaps the most controversial, are charter schools and schools of choice.

Charter schools could be run by any public entity. Private citizens, schools, non-profit agencies, teachers and parents could apply for a charter and start up a school.

The \$4,500 base allowance, up to \$5,500 per pupil, would be granted, which seems generous. However, teachers, may not have to be certified, which leaves a gaping hole in the blanket of security.

Schools of choice would allow parents to choose what public school their child attended. Participating schools

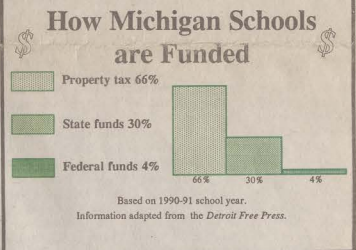
would be required to accept all applicants, and when capacity was reached, students would be accepted on the basis of a lottery.

In this plan, no transportation would be provided, and the select school of the parent would receive the amount of money provided by the students' home district, even if the district where she/he was attending school allocated more to its in-district students. In short, the money would follow the student.

If nothing is decided by Dec. 31, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Robert Schiller says he'll go to court and force the Legislature to put a plan in place.

If no plan is in place by March, the Citizens Alliance for Responsible Education says it will work to repeal the property tax cut through a referendum on the Nov. 1994 ballot.

That would put us back at square one.



Students can now earn LSSU Bachelor's degrees at ACC

By SCOTT REED
STAFF WRITER

Earning a degree in business administration or accounting from Lake Superior State University can be as easy as attending Alpena Community College.

The LSSU 3+1 Program allows students a convenient way of taking Lake State

courses without having to move to Sault Ste. Marie.

The way it works is as follows. ACC instructors, who are also instructors with LSSU, offer specific courses (usually nighttime and weekend courses) which count as credit toward a four-year degree in business administration or accounting at LSSU.

Originally, the students would take the first three years

of courses here at ACC, then transfer to LSSU for the fourth year. Now, for the first time, the fourth year, which consists of ten courses, may be taken at ACC over a span of two years. This change was brought about in part due to a survey of students in and/or interested in the program.

Students do not need to apply or be accepted to LSSU before they begin taking classes they may enroll as part-time students without being admitted. An official transfer credit evaluation will not be made, however, until a student is admitted.

Semester lengthened two weeks

By SCOTT REED
STAFF WRITER

Some ACC students may be in for a little surprise when they go to register for classes next summer, as certain courses will be moving from a six to an eight week cycle.

Both cycles will be run, however, for the summer 1994 semester. The main summer term will be six weeks (June 14 through July 23.) The eight week term will be June 7 through July 29.

The mathematics competency requirement is met in this program with transfer credit in college algebra. The English writing competency requirement is met by passing a three-hour writing exercise.

Thirty-two of the final 64 semester credits, and 80 percent of the required 300-400 level credits, must be earned from LSSU. Students are not advised to start the LSSU program until they have 64 or fewer credits left to complete in the program.

Certain steps are currently being taken to enhance the program, such as creating a four

credit internship to allow students some hands-on experience. Utilizing the interactive TV system is also being considered.

The LSSU 3+1 Program is targeted at people who have a two-year degree but cannot advance in their present job without furthering their education, parents who could not feasibly move to Sault Ste. Marie, and people who are cost-conscious.

For further information on the 3+1 Program, contact Mary Jason, Regional Center director or Linda Suneson, ACC accounting instructor.

Action Line

Why is the Graphic Arts parking lot not lit or paved?

-Jean Kuszajewski

The Graphic Arts parking lot is indeed a mess, a fact not unnoticed by Parking Supervisor Ted Kruse.

It has been called the biggest eyesore on campus, a dust bowl in the summer and a mudhole in the spring. Detailed proposals have been made and submitted, complete with bids and cost projections from contractors. Therein doth the snag lie. COST! With present budget problems, no action has been taken.

Does anyone have some extra boats?

Action Line is a regular, informational column which answers questions posed by students. Questions dealing with Alpena Community College may be dropped at *The Polemic* office in BTC 110, placed in the mailbox located in the lobby of BTC or may be given to any staff member.

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Reminders from *The Polemic*:

- The Student Senate sponsored Family Day has been rescheduled for December 4.
- ACC will close its doors at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 24 for Thanksgiving Break. Classes resume Monday, Nov. 29. Have a Happy Turkey Day!