

HDSB adopts Closing the Gap policy

By **TIM WHITNELL**
Metroland Media Group

Halton District School Board says there is a widening chasm between have and have-not schools in terms of the features offered within their respective instructional environments, and that it will require a lot of money to bridge those gaps.

The board of trustees voted unanimously to seek approval from the education ministry to use money in a board reserve fund to address what board officials say are inequities between newer and older schools.

The board has dubbed the program Closing the Gap.

Those differences are infrastructure elements that are considered to have an impact on student learning such as ventilation, heating and cooling systems, the electrical supply for electronic devices and air conditioning, and the enclosing of classrooms in formerly open concept schools.

The board says it has identified about \$65 million worth of such improvements that could be made at many of its elementary and high school schools.

But Education Director David Euale said the board's request to use \$8.4 million in its proceeds of disposition fund toward a multitude of projects identified with Closing the Gap was rejected with the Ministry of Education only approving the use of up

to \$4.2 million.

"This is very concerning. We had a plan to bring the standards of schools in older communities up to standards of schools in newer communities.... We have kids in schools that are 50 years old," Oakville trustee Don Vrooman told his colleagues.

"This is a significant setback and an unfortunate position for the (province) to take. We can't do it all (improving older schools) by selling (board) property," he added.

The board had already started to create a fund to be used for Closing the Gap and was hoping the ministry would approve additional money from the proceeds of previous board property sales.

Euale emphasized that proceeds from the sale of board lands isn't the only source of funding they can use.

Board chair and Oakville trustee Kelly Amos said more than half the public board's schools are 40-plus years old and that they are the lowest funded board in the province.

Board facilities superintendent Gerry Cullen told trustees it is important now to prioritize a budget for Closing the Gap and identify what projects will be and won't be on that list for improvements. Closing the Gap is not part of the board's operating budget. Staff will bring back the funding level and project list to the board, hopefully before the end of the current school year, said Cullen.

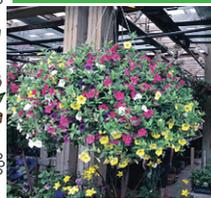
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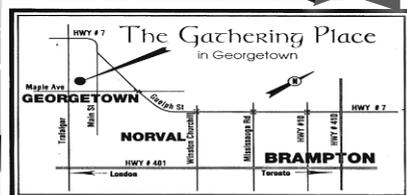
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HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF THE PASSING OF AN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW BY THE HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TAKE NOTICE that on the 3rd day of June, 2014, the Halton Catholic District School Board (the "Board") passed Education Development Charges Amending By-law, 2014, which amends the Education Development Charges By-law, (2013) of the Board.

AND TAKE NOTICE that any person or organization may appeal the said amending by-law to the Ontario Municipal Board under section 257.74 of the *Education Act* by filing with the Secretary of the Board on or before the 14th day of July, 2014, a notice of appeal setting out the objection to the amending by-law and the reasons supporting the objection. The appeal may not raise an issue that could have been raised in an appeal under section 257.65 of the *Education Act* of Education Development Charges By-law, (2013).

The said amending by-law comes into force on June 8, 2014, and increases the education development charge on residential development to \$1,839.00 per dwelling unit and the education development charge on non-residential development to \$0.47 per square foot (\$5.06 per square metre) of gross floor area. No other amendment to Education Development Charges By-law, (2013) has been made in the amending by-law.

A complete copy of the amending by-law is available for examination on the Board's website at www.hcdsb.org and at the offices of the Board located at 802 Drury Lane, Burlington, Ontario, L7R 2Y2.

For further information, please contact Frederick Thibeault, Planning Officer, (Phone 905-632-6314, Ext. 107).

Dated at the City of Burlington this 6th day of June, 2014.

Diane Rabenda, Chair of the Board,
Halton Catholic District School Board

Paula Dawson, Director of Education
Halton Catholic District School Board