

Students and teachers face new reality in Georgetown schools

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

The Georgetown Gemini
They're back!

Georgetown and area students returned to class yesterday to face the realities of a cash-strapped Province and local Board of Education.

The reality includes the loss of lunchroom supervisors in the elementary grades, the loss of swim programs for almost all students and low teacher moral.

There are bright spots as well — the Board-wide move to hook all students up to the World Wide Web, the early literacy programs in elementary schools and the newly mandated school councils.

With an average daily enrollment of 41,400 in 69 elementary schools, 17 secondary schools and one adult high school, the Halton Board has 2,572 teachers and 347 full-time equivalent instructional assistants.

To kick-off what promises to be a very interesting and controversial year with major changes in the way the Halton Board of Education and Province deliver education.

The Gemini spoke with the principals of the Georgetown schools and asked them to introduce their new staff and outline their priorities for the coming school year.

GEORGETOWN HIGH SCHOOL

There are 10 new faces among the 80 staff at Georgetown and District High School which has a projected enrollment of 1,380 students, down slightly from last year.

Principal Marie Jacobs said that moral will be a big issue this year.

"Teachers are feeling very bashed and it's hard at this time of year, when they are feeling so excited and so committed to the kids, to open a newspaper or turn on the television and hear all these bombs dropping about what might happen to our education system," Jacobs said.

"Our goals include increasing information technology, keeping abreast of curriculum changes and the Board's proposed grade re-configurations," Jacobs said, noting that Georgetown will have both the existing parent advisory group and the Provincially-mandated parent council operating at the same time.

CENTENNIAL

Enrollment at Centennial Middle School is up considerably — to 675 — due to growth in Georgetown South.

Principal Don Warren welcomes six new staff this year — four Grade 6 teachers including Raquel Black, Malorie Borbath, Patty Hall and Bruce Chambers. Jeff Hodgins is the new librarian and Cynthia Rhodes-Foley will teach Grade 6 and 7 French Immersion.

GEORGE KENNEDY

There are three new teachers at George Kennedy, which has an enrollment of 560 students, half in French Immersion.

Evan Robinson is the new Grade 3 and 4 French Immersion teacher, Patti Doyle-Uberig is the new Core French teacher and Joanne Nimigan will teach the special education resource cluster class, replacing Diana Stuart who retired in June after 30 years at Kennedy.

Kennedy also welcomes back Barbara Baron who returns from a one year leave to teach Grade 3 English.

Principal Rick Nodwell said one of the most exciting things for the school year are the advances in technology.

"We had our school wired in August for technology, which means that every classroom will be able to access the Web."

GLEN WILLIAMS

Early Literacy programs will be the main focus at Glen Williams Public school this year. With 17 total staff Glen Williams has a student enrollment of 245, down slightly from last year.

"We'll be using some of our professional development days to discuss the best ways of implementing that program," explained Principal Patte Campbell.

"Another focus will be technology and we hope to have some of our classes networked by January."

New staff at the Glen include Donna Mae Fleet who is teaching Grade 5, Michele Porter who will handle planning and James McKerracher who is the new music teacher.

PARK AND JOSEPH GIBBONS

There will be 168 Kindergarten to Grade 5 students at Park Public School this year due to an influx of students from Georgetown South.

Al Zanatta, principal of Park and Joseph Gibbons schools, which were twinned last January, welcomes three new staff members.

Teacher-librarian Sharon Mashinter, who worked full-time at Gibbons last year, will divide her time between the two schools.

Patti Tufford, just back from a leave where she taught in the Dominican Republic, is back at Park on a half-time basis covering planning time and spending the other half of her day at Harrison.

At Joseph Gibbons, the new faces include Jan Murray, who will teach Grade 1 and 2; Carolyn Reist who will teach Grades 3 and 4, Heather Ryan, who returns from a leave to teach Core French; and Mike Oldenburg, a special education teacher.

Principal Zanatta said Park and Gibbons already have their chairs in place for the

new school council and are ready to implement the procedures and write the constitutions for the new group.

"We are also focusing on technology this year and the Board's decision to network all the schools is a great leap forward," Zanatta said.

LIMEHOUSE

The only staff change at Limehouse this year is the return of Kindergarten teacher Julia Neilson who was on maternity leave.

With an enrollment of 165 and a staff of 12, Principal Gary Nott said they are all proud of their "little rural school."

"We will continue with the thrust to be polite, respectful and work hard and 99 per cent of our kids do just that. We are really proud of them and there is something special about our small school," Nott said, adding that they will also focus on early literacy and technology.

Nott said the Board of Education's decision not to have lunchroom supervisors in the classes will mean teachers will have to do the job.

"I'm not sure where the energy is going to come from to work with the clubs and choirs if they are supervising the playground and classes during lunch," Nott cautioned.

PINEVIEW

With a steady enrollment of 206 Kindergarten to Grade 5 students, there are no staff changes at Pineview school this year.

Principal Carl Hamilton said their school growth plan focuses on instructional technology with more computers being moved into the classroom from the computer centre.

"We hoping to continue all of the music and sports activities we had in the past but it's going to be more difficult without lunchroom supervisors, which will increase our teacher workload by about 35 per cent.

"If they are supervising children they can't be running the activities for students," Hamilton said.

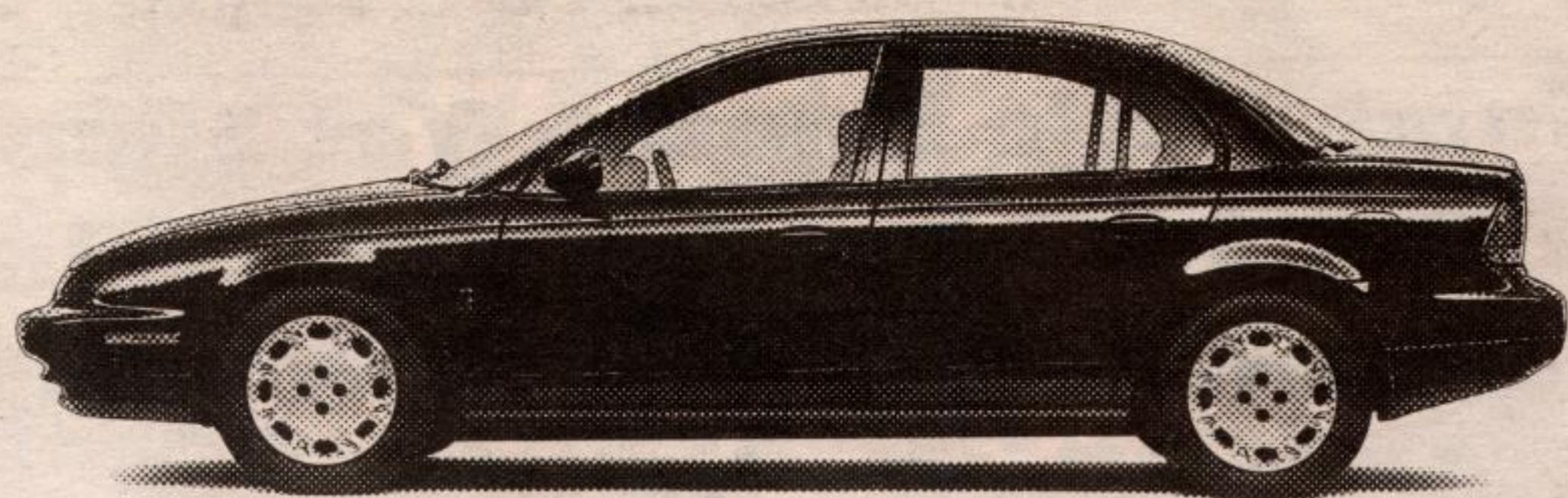
STEWARTTOWN

There are a lot of staff changes at Stewarttown this year following the retirements of five teachers in June.

The new faces at the K-8 school include Tim Black and Craig Featherstone who both will teach a Grade 6 class, Sue Butson who will teach the gifted classes, Brian Cosgrove who will teach Grade 8 and science, Leslie McNabb who will teach Grade 8 and girls' phys. ed., Scott Reed who will teach Grade 7 and science and Hub Kennedy who is replacing Michelle Bruist who is on maternity leave.

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