

## Professional activity days cut for elementary teacher

In a surprise move Thursday, Halton Board of Education decided elementary teachers will have just seven professional activity days next year but high school teachers will still have nine.

Oakville Trustee Jim Clelland urged trustees support his call for a reduction in the number of professional activity days immediately from nine to seven.

He observed there is little evidence to support administration claims teacher working days (when students aren't present) are of any benefit. Clelland pointed out Halton's teaching staff is very well paid, because of their long years of service and experience, so they shouldn't need much professional development.

He suggested that if teachers worked eight hours instead of the five or six hours, they work on PA days they would only need seven a year, anyway.

Teacher morale is "perplexing" and "hostility" towards teachers is growing so the board could help improve the teachers' image by having them teaching two more days a year, he claimed.

Director of Education Em Lavender, observed teachers handle administrative chores, professional development and program development on professional activity jobs. Administrative chores are mostly consulting with pupils and parents and evaluating pupil progress.

Teachers get paid regardless of whether they are in front of the classroom or on a professional activity day so there is no cost saving in cutting the number of professional activity days. However, having them in the classroom would be better value for tax dollars, Trustee Len Crosier, observed.

Burlington Trustee, Dr. Helen Howard-Lock, asked to have the entire issue tabled until next spring, when the new school year is planned, but wasn't supported by her colleagues.

Professional activity days are needed, Milton Trustee, Ivan Armstrong observed. However, they would be much more useful and more acceptable to the public, if they were in August. He said the public is most unhappy about the professional activity day the first day of the school year.

Reducing the number of professional activity days would likely cause problems at semestered high schools, where days are used between semesters to get the school ready for the new year, Trustee Noel Cooper, warned.

Clelland observed there are lots of leaders in Halton's schools, one in four teachers receives a responsibility allowance so the leaders could handle getting a semestered high school ready for the new term.

It is pretty hard to convince the public they are getting

good value for their tax dollars, Trustee Fred Armitage, declared. He noted teachers work a lot less days each year than most people, so two extra days in class shouldn't be a problem.

Professional development is necessary, but seven days a year would be a more "reasonable" number, Georgetown Trustee, Barry Shepherd, said.

Trustee, Bill Herd, was successful in having Clelland's motion amended, so any reduction in professional activity days would be in 1979-80, and not this year. He said any change in the school year now would be disruptive and inconvenient.

The extra two days of classes are needed since schools are using up two and a half hours each week on squirrel reading sessions and health hustles, Trustee Elsie Hilson, said.

The vote results were the real shocker.

The board voted first on the question of reducing professional activity days for high school teachers, and it lost because it ended in a 10-10 tie.

Trustee Bert Hinton, Shepherd, Crosier, Armitage, Clelland, Hilson, Armstrong, Herd, Cooper and Bill Lawson voted for the reduction while Edna Robinson, L. Auger, Judy Alexander, Bill Priestner, Cam Jackson, Florence Meares, Garry Morton, John Bradley, Elaine Rhien and Howard-Lock were opposed.



SHERIDAN COLLEGE student Lorella DePieri was presented with the \$300 Canada Packers Award this week for her high academic achievement, leadership qualities and contributions to college and community life. The 19-year old Acton resident is a third year Business student majoring in marketing at the Oakville

Campus. She is president of the Oakville campus Student Senate and served as vice president during the 1977-78 academic year. The award, given annually since 1970, was presented by Phil Renouf, right, and Art Devlin, centre, of Canada Packers Ltd., with Rudy Zabel, left, Dean of the School of Business and Secretarial Studies.

## Standard school hours needed

School hours in Halton could be standardized so all students go in and out at the same time.

Trustee Len Crosier has proposed hours be standardized. He noted each school sets its own hours and there isn't much uniformity across the region. His suggestion will be dealt with by Halton Board of Education later this month.

Crosier says classes shouldn't start later than 9

a.m. and there should be at least five-and-one-half hours of instruction daily. There would also be one hour for lunch and a 15 minute recess in the morning and afternoon for elementary pupils.

He says standardized school hours would facilitate bus routes, end confusion for parents who have children in more than one school and facilitate programming of inter-school activities.

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## Decline in enrolment is not as bad as anticipated

Enrolment in Halton's public schools didn't drop as much this year as board administrators expected.

While enrolment as of September 14 is down 976 pupils from 51,201 last year to 50,225 this year, there are 209 more pupils in class than the Halton Board of Education anticipated.

In addition Director of Education Em Lavender told trustees Thursday the administration believes there are still some high school and vocational students who haven't returned to classes yet but will by the end of this month.

In North Halton there were 7,845 elementary school pupils last year and that figure has slumped to 7,559 this year but the board had expected 333 fewer students this year and wound up with just 286 less.

In Burlington enrolment in elementary schools was supposed to slide by 617 pupils

but in fact dropped by just 206.

However in Oakville the decline in enrolment was worse than expected. The board had projected there would be 416 fewer students in Oakville elementary schools this year but actually there are 433.

Across the region elementary enrolment declined by 1,025 pupils instead of 1,366 as the board expected.

High school enrolment is up

in Halton but not by as much as the board anticipated.

There were 19,440 high school students in Halton last year and the board had expected 19,506 this year but up to September 14 there are just 19,474, 32 pupils fewer than anticipated.

Enrolment at vocational schools has not grown as much as expected either. In 1977 there were 1,286 vocational and this year the board projected there would

be 1,418 but so far there are just 1,403.

The board has two fewer trainable mentally handicapped students this year than last year and has five fewer than were expected. There are 152 trainable mentally handicapped pupils.

## Halton students do well in tests

As has been the case for the last few years 60 per cent of Halton students are scoring above the national norm in special tests.

Thursday, Halton Board of Education members reviewed a lengthy report on pupil testing in 1978 and discovered their students are still performing better than most others in Canada on standardized tests. Pupils also take many special tests designed for use in Halton only.

Three board officials, John Cholvat, Dr. Brendan Kelly and W. I. Dick principal Dave Haley reviewed the various test results and what they mean to administrators and teachers.

The board was told test data in Halton and national tests help the administration and schools decide what areas of study must be improved.

For instance, a few years ago the tests showed weakness among students in math problem solving, so teachers started giving that area of study special attention. Since then problem solving test results have shown steady improvement.

Information obtained from test results also is used to design in-service training for teachers and development of teaching materials trustees learned.

Haley explained by the time student leaves W. I. Dick he or she has taken many tests and the results are kept on file.

He said test results determine what type of class and program a student receives, including enrichment and remedial programs.

The information obtained from test results are also helpful to teachers when they talk to parents since the

results are easily understood.

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Teachers and principals also get to compare their test results with those in other area schools.

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**Alexander retires**

The first woman to chair Halton Board of Education will retire at the end of this term.

Veteran Oakville Trustee Judy Alexander announced Thursday she won't be a candidate in this November's municipal elections.

Mrs. Alexander was the first woman elected chairman of the board and is still the only female to have held the post in the board's 10 year history.

She won the chairman's job in 1975 and again in 1976, both years by acclamation.

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