

Only 1.5% increase in '83 grants

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff Writer

Although operating grants from the ministry of education to Ontario school boards increased by about five per cent, they only went up by 1.5 per cent for the Halton board of education.

The 1983 ministry grant, announced Friday, is \$62,210,520, treasurer Ron Warren told members of the finance committee Monday night.

Trustees had been forced to cancel passage of their 1983 budget March 17 because grant information from the ministry was late. The budget is expected to pass tonight (Wednesday).

Mr. Warren said Halton taxpayers have to raise \$70,255,977, an estimated increase of 6.5 per cent to the net levy for the mill rate. Of the total sum, \$36,870,165 is for elementary education, and \$33,585,832 for secondary education, he said.

Few boards will qualify

A ministry of education offer to keep increases in the education mill rate to nine per cent if Ontario school boards hold increases in per-pupil operating expenses to nine per cent was called a non-gift by the Halton board of education treasurer.

"I don't think it will apply to us because our mill rate is below nine per cent," Ron Warren told members of the finance committee Monday night. The board has calculated an average increase of 6.8 per cent in the 1983 mill rate.

"It also seems most unlikely other boards will be able to use it," he said. "The Halton board is

In terms of total revenues coming to the board, elementary grants are up 2.3 per cent and secondary grants, including those for the trainable mentally handicapped, by 0.7 per cent, Mr. Warren said.

"Our ordinary grants, the basic grants by which we're expected to run the system, have decreased," he said.

This means the levy increase in the elementary panel is up 9.7 per cent and at the secondary panel 7.2 per cent, Mr. Warren estimated.

Provincial grant increases last year to Ontario boards averaged 10.9 per cent. However, Halton only received a 4.3 per cent increase for 1982 in ministry grants.

Relative to the rest of the province, Halton is judged wealthy and the province deems it better able to pay its education costs. Since 1972, provincial grants have been decreasing for Halton.

Grant pays 75% of computer costs

Ministry wasteful: trustee

By ANI PEDERIAN
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The ministry of education is wasting taxpayer money, charged a Halton board of education trustee Monday night.

Trustee Bill Priestner told members of the board's finance committee he was upset about a ministry announcement Thursday giving school boards a grant of 75 per cent off the purchase cost when they buy microcomputers that satisfy new Ontario specifications.

"I think we should quite succinctly tell the ministry that we think it's totally off-base and it's throwing away taxpayers' money," Mr. Priestner said. "I'm pretty upset about it. That's a joke, really."

Superintendent of schools Gary Crossman said a lab of 30 16-bit machines will cost the board \$27,000.

"They're going to 16 and 32 bit computers. I'm not convinced why," Mr. Crossman said. "They're great for business and industry, but at the present time, they have very little application to education. They're very powerful machines, and very costly to produce."

The ministry has announced it will buy \$10 million worth of micro-

computers for the province's schools and will spend another \$5 million to develop software for the computers.

With the ministry grants, the 32-bit computers would cost the board \$44,000.

"I'm a little suspicious about it," Mr. Crossman said. "With the 32K machine, from my professional background, I would think you're going in the wrong direction."

Although no mention was made by the ministry about maintenance costs, Mr. Crossman said he assumed it would be carried wholly by the board.

"If you take the normal 15 per cent maintenance cost, again that puts it in favor of the smaller machines," he said.

Director of education Wally Beever said a 90-day guarantee is available for the ministry computers, but the board has to pay for it. He noted the present computer equipment owned by the board has one-year free labor.

"This speech (by the minister) is almost word for word the same speech as was said two years ago," trustee Anne Fairfield said. "I wouldn't want to see this board get roped into thinking we're going to get the equipment into the schools and usable very quickly."

The ministry had announced a plan to give grants for school computers in 1981, but it was delayed by financial problems among many of the computer companies that

were to collaborate in the design of the Ontario machines. Ontario school boards have already purchased about 9,000 microcomputers without provincial grants.

Groups get extra funds

Halton's purse strings were loosened a little last week, coming up with \$4,000 to be split between two social services groups.

Although grants to the Halton Consumer Credit Counselling agency and North Halton Hospice Care group were scratched by regional council three weeks ago, Brad Clements, chairman of the region's health and social services committee, encouraged his fellow councilors to have a change of heart.

Earlier last Wednesday afternoon, a representative from each group appealed for more funds before regional council.

Consumer Credit provides financial counselling for residents with over extended budgets and the North Halton Hospice Care group of 25 volunteers, helps terminally-ill patients and their families.



The North Halton Hospice annual meeting was held Monday night at St. John's United Church in Georgetown. Representing the new executive are (Front row, left to right) Karen Ferguson, volunteer co-ordinator; Marguerite Koehnel, president; Diane Little, secretary; (Back row, left to right) Karen Hall, board member; JoAnne Brear, board member; Vera House, board member. Absent: Dianne Allen, Elizabeth Kiddle, Arlene Dero, treasurer.

(Herald photo)

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First-aid course

Georgetown and District Branch of the Red Cross is holding a standard first-aid course commencing Tuesday, April 5, 1983. The location is at the Georgetown Ambulance Hall at the corner of Guelph and Chappel Streets. The course will begin at 7 p.m. and run for six consecutive Tuesday nights at a cost of \$20 including books. For more information and registration call the Red Cross office at 877-5233 or Gord Kearsy at 877-7964.

Free course opens hurts of unemployment

"Coping with unemployment in 1983" is the topic of a six-week course for men and women being presented by Halton Family Services and the Milton Canada Employment Centre.

The course, intended for men and women coping with the stresses and uncertainty of unemployment, will focus on short and long-term unemployment and career retraining.

Although there will be lectures, group participation is encouraged as information about unemployment insurance, the Canada Employment Centre, legal issues, financial stress, budgeting, bankruptcy, debts, effects on the family and individual self worth, job retraining and career change is shared.

Halton Consumer Credit Counselling Service counsellor Janice Josiak and Oakville lawyer Darlene Yewer will give advice to participants.

Open to all Halton residents, the free course is being held at the Milton office of Halton Family Services; at the E.C. Drury School, Regional Centre for the Hearing Handicapped senior girls' residence, 255 Ontario Street. It will be held April 12 to May 17 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

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