

# Education

## Halton School Board trustees to unveil "early intervention" project

By ELIZABETH GALVIN  
The Herald

A project focusing on early intervention with "at risk" students in Halton elementary schools is scheduled to be implemented in September, 1991, Halton School Board trustees decided Thursday.

The decision came after an Ontario Health Study revealed that 19.5 per cent of students have some sort of psycho-social problem and that only 7.3 per cent of students are receiving any kind of mental health services.

"Once a conduct disorder is in place, it is untreatable," said Garry Crossman, Superintendent of Instructional Services at the board. That is the rationale behind the decision to implement the demonstration project.

The actual program will involve randomly assigning a sample of students in kindergarten and grade one, identified as being at risk for antisocial behaviour, to "intervention and non-intervention groups," the report said. "Children in non-intervention groups will receive the regular school program."

Researchers, Doctors Dan Oford and Michael Boyle of McMaster University, will use the results of the project to "indicate what is the most effective and efficient intervention program to reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviour in elementary school-aged children," the report outlined.

Some trustees raised the concern that the whole issue of conduct disorders was a societal issue and not an educational issue.

"We cannot deny the problem does exist," said Mr. Crossman,

"and (at risk students) are all in our school system.

The issue of whether or not the Board should provide school-based Social Workers and Child Care Workers also came up at Thursday's board meeting, a little more than a year after a pilot project was implemented in eight Halton schools, including Robert Little and MacKenzie Smith in Acton.

A survey of the School-Based Delivery Model, carried out in October, showed overwhelming support for the idea. Ninety-seven per cent of elementary school teachers who responded to the survey felt that the school-based system provided a "greater benefit to students and staff" and 100 per cent felt that it provided them a greater awareness of staff and student needs and issues.

The report also points out that "in a class of 30 students, five to six students will have significant, observable emotional or

behavioural difficulties (and) and additional six to 10 students within the same class, who have difficulty coping with development issues, could be adversely influenced by their more significantly impaired peers."

The report then explained that the Yale-New Haven Primary Prevention Project, a school-based program that has been in operation since 1968, has shown significant results in modifying behaviour and in improving academic performance.

The school-based program proposed by the Halton Board will provide each secondary school with one full-time school Social Worker and two elementary schools with the equivalent of a full-time Child and Youth Counsellor "to work exclusively with the staff and students of the assigned schools."

By the end of the fifth year of the plan, 68 elementary and 17 secondary schools will have come on stream.

### Broadcast standards attacked

Halton Board of Education decided Thursday to write to all local television stations and the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (C.R.T.C.) requesting they adhere more stringently to the regulations set up by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council regarding stereotyping and violence in advertising and television programs.

This was in response to the Renfrew County Board of Education's request for the Halton Board to support their motion on rock videos.

The Halton Board decided to include television programs and advertising as well, Trustee Patty Wilcox explained, because they are all guided by the regulations set forth by C.B.S.C.

Some of the trustees at Thursday night's meeting were concerned the Board "is trying to set standards outside" of their system, said Brian Woodland, communications officer for the Halton Board.

However, the motion to direct the secretary of the board to send the letters was passed without further discussion, he said.

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