

School News

Halton board hopes to avoid OMB hearing

"The \$150,000 cost of an O.M.B. hearing and the one to four million dollars in additional costs resulting from the delay in construction are not justified and to proceed on such a course is much less than financially prudent."

That statement was made last Thursday by Vice-Chair of the Halton Board of Education, Dave Coons, as he introduced a motion to fund the relocation of Oakville Trafalgar High School from reserves rather than debenturing. "It's regrettable that some citizens believe that the O.M.B. should be forced to rediscuss the O.T.H.S. issue when a legal decision was reached by a majority of the Board. Our auditor has given me his assurance that our Board is well able to handle the debt itself and our own Business Services have confirmed funding the school from reserves will not affect the other programs and services we offer to students."

The motion followed a statement to the Board by Chair Bill Harrison which focused on the O.M.B.'s inability to reach a resolution on debenturing by May 15, 1991. "In an attempt to be flexible with the O.M.B., our Board successfully arranged a 30-day extension of the existing tender until May 15, 1991, thus protecting

taxpayers' interests by guaranteeing the favorable tender price. It is with disappointment that I tell you that we have been notified by the O.M.B. that it is impossible to reach a hearing resolution prior to the expiry of the extension of the tender," stated Harrison.

Though appreciative of the O.M.B.'s attempts to accommodate the Board by setting aside the week of June 3 for hearings, Harrison emphasized that "In practical terms, the hard facts are that even if the hearing could go ahead on June 3, and even if we could maintain our tender until that date, which we can't, it is highly unlikely that the matter would be resolved in a week. It would also be simply unrealistic of us not to expect the opponents of the debenturing to use whatever resources they have at their disposal to further obstruct the building of the relocated O.T.H.S. This is particularly true in view of their statement to the media that 'it is prudent to delay the construction of the school'."

Harrison stressed that, "The Board reached the decision to relocate O.T.H.S. after an extensive and democratic process of public consultation and involvement. It was a legal decision en-

dorsed by the Ministry of Education and we continue to feel confident that the decision reached is in the very best interests of our students and community. We also have every confidence that a lengthy O.M.B. process would support our decision."

Harrison expressed strong concerns about "What is quite simply a matter of discrimination. We are displeased that as a public Board we have to be subject to an O.M.B. procedure that is not applied to Catholic School Boards. Catholic Boards are not required to seek O.M.B. approval to issue O.M.B. debentures. It is ludicrous that such a double standard exists."

"I want to point out to you that there were less than twenty letters of objection received by the O.M.B. out of the tens of thousands of public school ratepayers that we serve. As a Board, we stated that we might be willing to bear the considerable expense of an O.M.B.

hearing, but would not force our local taxpayers to be liable for the spiralling costs that would rise each day we delayed past May 15. The O.M.B. is clearly unable to meet that deadline."

Harrison warned the Board that "Beyond the \$150,000 cost for a lengthy hearing, the financial penalty for our taxpayers if the project is delayed beyond the extended date of May 15, could well be in excess of one million dollars and as high as several million dollars. Costs are going to escalate rapidly and we have to remember first and foremost the needs of our taxpayers and students."

"It is necessary for us to balance the need for even further public consultation with the very real concern of the significant costs involved to the taxpayers in Halton. We are sensitive, of course, to all points of view, but the bottom line has to be our legal and morale obligations to taxpayers and students."

GDHS students excel in math

You don't need a mathematical mind to know that 8th place out of 15,586 competitors in the Canadian Mathematics Competition is a big achievement for Georgetown and District High School student, Damian Stuart-Hagge.

Damian, a Grade 11 student, placed 8th in the Fermat division of the Canadian Mathematics Competition administered by the University of Waterloo in which a total of 60,748 students representing 1,630 schools participated.

Other G.D.H.S. students also did well. Evan Andrechek was 120th in the Fermat competition while fellow Grade 11 student, Ben Zimmer had an excellent score that placed him in the top three per cent of all students across Canada. Together, these

Grade 11 mathematicians led G.D.H.S. to a first place in Halton-Peel region, 9th place in Ontario and 17th place in Canada.

In the Grade 10 Cayley contest, Bruce Davison placed first and Mary Fry and Joe Hartrick gave fine performances.

The Pascal contest for Grade 9 students was contested by Micah Zarnke who finished in the top one per cent from over 30,000 students. Greg Taylor was in the top three per cent and Kim Timmings contributed a fine score to place the Grade 9 team in the top 15 per cent of all Canadian schools.

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