

# Halton school system dealing with varied issues

When Bob Williams, Director of Education for the Halton Board of Education, reflects on the past school year, he finds somewhat of a contradiction in that most school student's attitudes are positive but there is also an apparent increase in the number of students who have serious psychological and social disorders.



**BOB WILLIAMS**

"It has been an excellent year. When I visit the schools, I'm regularly thrilled by the great things going on and the positive response from students," he said. "But I continue to be concerned by the relatively large number of kids who have serious psychological and social disorders."

He said the school system is finding that many of the students aren't being treated by the medical, social and psychological network. "We do have some child counsellors and psychologists but they don't have the expertise of child psychologists and we don't have the numbers to deal with these children," he said. "There

aren't enough resources available to treat these kids."

In a study the board received three years ago concerning the problem, it was revealed that between 18 and 20 per cent of students have treatable psychological and social disorders, he said.

Presently, the school system is also dealing with the return of older students to the education system due to the economic situation.

"School begins to look attractive again when there aren't any jobs for them," said Mr. Williams. "This places stress on school resources since these are the students hardest to serve."

The present economic situation also affects the school in another way, he said. "When there is a recession, the demand on schools increases perceptively. The kids come to school noticeably more upset and frustrated and they begin, like society, to look at the bad instead of the good."

Yet despite these difficulties, Mr. Williams is optimistic about the future of Halton's schools.

He said the implementation of "Toward 2000, Strategic Directions" has had a positive impact on the schools. 1991 will see the third year of implementation of the five-year plan.

"We're going to continue working on our three priorities," said Mr. Williams. "These include classroom instruction where we will continue to build up the repertoires of teacher's skills; school-based planning and decision making where we'll continue to foster the idea that each school is responsible to the needs of the community they serve; and staff resources."

"I'm excited about the continued implementation of our strategic plan," he said.

**A LOOK AT BOARD OF ED OVER PAST YEAR**

• New Schools: Pilgrim Wood

Public School in Oakville, River Oaks Public School in Oakville.

• Major School Renovations: Thomas A. Blakelock High School in Oakville, Pine Grove Public School in Oakville, and Sunningdale Public School in Oakville.

• 1991 Policies: 1) Staff Resources: This policy directs the Board's employment practices. It ensures that the Board

conforms with all current Federal and Provincial legislation. 2) Opening Exercises: This policy establishes the singing of 'O Canada' followed by an inspirational and age appropriate reading as the daily opening exercises. 3) Trustee Use of School Newsletters: This policy sets guidelines for trustee's uses of school newsletters. 4) Adult and Continuing Education: This

policy recognizes adult education as a significant component of the Halton Board of Education. 5) School Based Child Care: The Halton Board will accommodate Child Care programs where space is available.

• Fast Facts: There are 67 elementary and 16 secondary schools in Halton. Enrolment is 25,915 at the elementary level, and 16,196 at the secondary level.



Glen Williams Public School junior grades staged a Science Fair and many thoughtful exhibits were included in the exposition. Definitely fitting the bill in the thoughtful and caring sense

was the exhibit "The Affects of Acid Rain" put together by Grade 4 students, Kristy Shall (left) and Melissa Casson. (Herald Photo by Colin Gibson)

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