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Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper

Parents to get a break on public board school fees

By **LISA TALLYN**
 Staff Writer

Parents should notice they won't have to open up their wallets as often this upcoming school year after the Halton District School Board cut student fees.

Fees for items such as textbooks and course materials-like wood and fabric- will be a thing of the past at public schools when children head back to class.

The board approved a new student fee policy back in February to come into effect this fall that eliminates charges for registration, textbooks and course-related materials at both the elementary and high school levels.

Fees associated with physical education/outdoor education credit where a fieldtrip such as Algonquin Park is a component of the course can still be charged.

Schools can also still charge Student Engagement Fees/Activity fees (for example for a motivational speaker), however, what the money will be

used for has to be available to parents and if a student can't afford to pay, they can't be turned away. Elementary schools can also still ask for money for field trips.

Through the new policy, elementary schools will receive \$20 per student from the board. High schools will receive \$35 per student. This is a total cost of \$670,000 at the elementary level and \$600,000 at the secondary level, with a combined price tag of \$1.27 million. This cost will be added as an annual line item in the budget.

The funds will go to the schools and will be at the discretion of the principal to allocate.

Halton Hills trustee Gillian Tuck Kutarna put forward the motion last April asking the board to look at what schools can and should ask parents to pay for.

"Staff who helped develop this policy worked hard to reach a balance between making the core school curriculum accessible to everyone, with-

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Sharing a cob

Nine-year-old Luna Cardenas (left) and seven-year-old sister Cecilia enjoy some of the corn at the Mexican Fiesta held at Andrews' Scenic Acres Sunday. The annual fiesta is held to honour the many Mexican farm workers who come to Canada and Ontario each year to work on farms.

Photo by Jon Borgstrom

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