

New policy expected to ease families' financial burden

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out diminishing schools ability to offer the enhancements and the extras that make school fun," said Tuck Kutarna. "HDSB is to be commended for putting an extra \$20 per elementary student, and \$35 per secondary student annually back into the classroom so that programs can be fully inclusive as well as enriching. Our new policy also ensures greater opportunities for communication, parental input and transparency when it comes to asking families to contribute financially to the activities and events at school."

Board staff expects the new policy will ease the financial burden on Halton families.

HDSB director of education Wayne Joudrie said in secondary schools the issue was many schools were charging students related to courses they were taking towards their graduation diplomas. For example, fees were being charged at some schools to cover the costs of materials for family studies courses, fashion, drama, visual arts, photography, and some physical education classes.

Joudrie said he feared that, in some cases where fees were being charged, some students were choosing not to take a course because they couldn't afford it.

The goal of the elimination of the fees from a secondary perspective was so every student could take any class without cost, said Joudrie, adding the average

cost was \$33.

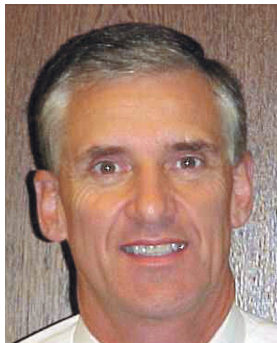
"This is a significant change in practice," said Joudrie. "It is very clear the Education Act does not allow us to charge course fees that currently exist in Halton and likely across the province. I expect the minister and ministry will be looking at doing the same kinds of things we are doing in Halton straight across the province."

Joudrie said in the case of Acton High School the principal there ensured they "weren't charging in most cases compared to some of the other schools."

"We were not charging some of the fees other schools were charging," said Acton High School vice-principal Mary Jane Farrish. "We were really well aligned with the philosophy of providing education for students with no cost."

Georgetown District High School principal Nick Varrichio said the school will continue to "offer the wide variety of programs that we have in the past, and in fact we're offering more programs moving into September with our renovation and increased facilities."

"Some of the course fees we used to have in place, for example— fees associated with workbooks in French— kids will no longer be required to pay those fees but that will not affect their program at all because the board is reallocating money to offset some of the costs that were associated with those workbooks as just an example," said Varrichio.



WAYNE JOUDRIE

Rowe challenges for Catholic board seat

It's now a two-person race for the Halton Hills Halton Catholic District School board trustee seat.

Mark Rowe of Glen Williams filed his nomination papers Wednesday. He is running against incumbent Ro-

sanna Palmieri.

The deadline to file as a candidate in the October 25 municipal election is Sept. 10. To find out more information go to www.haltonhills.ca/elections.



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