

# M-SB land deal 'beneficial', says Euale

Continued from pg. 1

Bonnette called the sale of the land to the Town "a great day for school parents, sports enthusiasts, and citizens and a sad day for our school board." He said it was "shameful" funds from the sale would go toward building schools elsewhere in Halton, not Acton.

"We had no choice but to buy the land that was gifted to the school board (by then Town of Acton) years ago," said Bonnette.

Acton councillor Jon Hurst said they felt "betrayed" by the board.

"We cannot give away land," said Euale on Monday. "It's not in accordance with our policies from the Ministry of Education." He said the regulation requires the land be sold at fair market value.

He stressed that the Board's relationship with municipalities is very important.

When asked if the Board could be facing an uphill battle in its relationship with the Town following the M-SB issue, Euale said, "I hope not. We will keep the lines of communication open."

"Every year, the Board identifies accommodation needs such as new school construction and renovations. This capital plan has to identify funding sources before it's approved by the Ministry of Education," said Steven Parfeniuk, Superintendent of Business for HDSB. "While the Ministry contributed more than \$290 million to this Board's capital plan, the Halton District School Board was still responsible for funding \$40 million. School boards

only have one option to generate funds, and that's through the sale of surplus lands."

The press release outlined the land requirements for elementary schools— one acre per 100 students. There are approximately 680 students at the Acton school, the site is Halton's largest at 15 acres.



DAVID EUALE

"The negotiated deal between the Board and the Town of Halton Hills has three distinct benefits for the students and residents of Halton Hills," said Euale. "The Board allowed the Town to obtain more land (five acres), ensuring future protection of the property; the Board included the lease of the playing fields at \$5 per year for 21 years, to ensure an additional level of protection to the Town's interests; and the value of the property was significantly reduced (by approximately 40 per cent) from its appraised value."

"The Board is pleased to have struck this deal and continued our partnership with the Town of Halton Hills," said Gerry Ocken-den, HDSB Chair and Halton Hills trustee. "This has allowed the Board to meet its provincial obligations with respect to funding its capital plan, and still continue to provide capital improvements for the Town of Halton Hills."

He said the Board has invested more than \$40 million in capital infrastructure in Halton Hills, "including the most recent \$16 million renovation project at Georgetown District High School, a \$1 million addition at the new Gardiner Public School and the 2003 construction of Silver Creek which was the first new elementary school in Halton Hills in more than 30 years."

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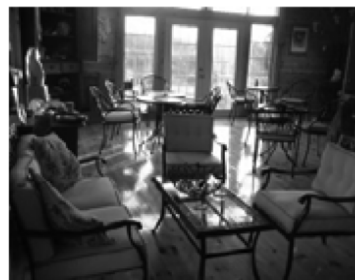
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