

The price of \$chool

Getting a high school education, or at least an active one, is more costly than most people may think.

A recent report from Ontario research and advocacy group People for Education points out course and activity fees are on the rise.

“The prevalence of fees clearly illustrates the many loopholes in Ontario’s Education Act and in current fee guidelines,” Annie Kinder, executive director, said in a news release. “In some schools, students must pay a student activity fee in order to receive their class timetables; in others, students are charged for French workbooks and science lab materials.”

Kidder’s group doesn’t provide a breakdown of the fees by school or school board, so we don’t know how this area stacks up against others. However, there appears to be a large range in fees collected across the province.

The average course fee in Ontario is \$25 this year. How much schools depend on that money varies, pulling in between \$1,000 and \$90,000 to beef up the budget.

Under current Ministry of Education guidelines, schools can tack on a charge for “enhancements or supplementary learning materials” or for “superior products” in courses like woodworking and music.

These costs can add up quickly, and for students, or parents, without much slack in their cash flow, it can easily diminish the quality of education received.

The province must work to reduce these fees and come up with a strict policy on when and how they are applied.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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WEB POLL RESULTS

Would you prefer to see a minority government or a majority government result from this federal election?

- Majority (62%)
- Minority (38%)

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Letters to the editor

Hospital is getting funding fair share

Dear editor,
 RE: Is hospital getting its fair share?, March 17 letter.

Yes, the Georgetown Hospital is getting its fair share. The ministry approval to provide CT Scanner diagnostic services was conditional on the hospital providing the funding for the scanner equipment as well as any building upgrades required.

This is standard practice for ministry approvals of diagnostic services and other hospitals have been treated exactly the same.

The Groves Hospital in Fergus, received CT Scanner approval a couple of years ago. Since then, Groves has built a small addition to their hospital that now houses the CT Scanner, and administration office for operating it. Groves paid for both the scanner and the building expansion out of their own funds, as required by their approval agreement.

However, the Georgetown hospital cannot easily add the space for the scanner. It needs to make a significant expansion to their

emergency facilities that will both expand emergency services and space for the scanner equipment and administration.

The health ministry has been working with Mayor Bonnette to put together an approach that would provide the hospital with funding for its emergency services expansion through the small capital projects program. With the need for expanded emergency services there is a good chance that an approval may be forthcoming in the near future.

Our local MPP knows that a solution is being worked on. It is not to his advantage for the public to know as well.

*Murray Gold, president,
 Ontario Liberal Party of
 Wellington-Halton Hills*

System 'mis-managed'

Dear editor,

RE: Georgetown Hospital funding. This debate is drifting into a non-issue that's questioning the integrity of local residents.

The influx of non-resident patients has increased dramatically over the years. These are the facts and simply should not be up for debate.

The real issue is why am I being

asked to fund a much-needed expansion of services, that is due largely in part to an influx of people from other cities?

The entire system being run by the provincial Liberals is obviously lacking and is being poorly managed.

With the exploding population in both Brampton and Mississauga another hospital is badly needed—THERE.

How can they just keep slapping up thousands upon thousands of homes and condos and not provide the proper services?

I have no problem contributing my provincial taxes to help pay for it, because then everybody pays for it in an equitable fashion.

Of course every hospital is open to every person, but the majority of patients are usually local residents. That's why hospitals are built in populated areas—to serve the local population.

This being the case, then that's where the real problem lies, and if they were to fix those issues, then “our” problem would be solved as well.

Simply put, I should not have to endure further localized tax hikes, when clearly the source of the problem is elsewhere.

*Anthony Montana,
 Georgetown*