

School board's sex education does not legitimize homosexuality

By DIANE HART
Special to The Independent/Free Press

Fears that Halton Board of Education will legitimize homosexuality in the classroom at some point in the future are groundless, said the school board's health education leader Sue Amos.

Amos, speaking to a crammed standing-only roomful of parents concerned about sex education taught in Grade 9 health classes, said she had been asked if Halton was going to mimic Toronto school board and teach about alternate lifestyles.

"I have said an unequivocal no. We don't teach alternate lifestyles. And we are not hiding it or concealing it in any way," she said.

However, it didn't allay the fears of parents like Ilse Folkens, a mother of two public school students and the representative for the Halton branch of Citizens United for Responsible Education (CURE).

She said the teaching of androgyny — which includes role playing, games and the questioning of traditional gender roles — is the first step towards a homosexual curriculum. "We see the beginnings of this (homosexual) curriculum with the promotion of androgyny," said Folkens.

However, Amos reiterated after the meeting the board has no intention of teaching sexual orientation.

"I think, and this is a personal opinion, that underlying the whole thing is (the fear) that we are introducing that homosexuality is normal. And we have no intention of doing that," she said.

During the meeting, Amos said students do look at traditional gender roles but it has nothing to do with sexuality. They look at things like whether or not a man should feel comfortable getting flowers; or whether or not a woman who pursues a career is a "good" mother. As well, they question traditional beliefs about such things as encouraging assertiveness for males and passivity for females.

"We are looking at social behaviors, not sexual behaviors," said Amos.

The only difference between the proposed new and existing curriculums is the new focus on sexual assault, personal safety and updated statistical information on AIDS, said Amos. The new information was based on student input and concerns.

Superintendent of education Graeme Barrett concurred, stressing the board does not teach sexual orientation or alternate lifestyles and, unlike the Toronto school board, does not teach about commercial sex or prostitution.

Folkens advocated teaching only abstinence in the sex education of Grade 9 health classes.

She called the program irresponsible and inappropriate.

Parents attending the information meeting about the sex education program raised a number of concerns including their own lack of input; instruction on condom use; and not enough emphasis on abstinence as a form of birth control.

Barrett told parents that the curriculum was being revised all the time and it was not up for discussion at the board. A trustee would have to raise the issue at a school board meeting.

In her presentation, Amos said the board was interested in the welfare of the student and is trying to make abstinence a viable alternative. But she noted the statistics of the Canada Youth and AIDS survey that pointed to 46 per cent of females and 49 per cent of males having had sexual intercourse by Grade 11 as proof of the need to address the sex education needs of the whole group.

"We can't cocoon kids anymore," said Amos. "We live in an information age. The kids will get the information. Let's help them deal with it," she added.

TAX TOPICS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT YOUR REFUND

Q. In 1993, I took two one-day courses at a local community college. Each cost \$75. I am told that I cannot claim them because tuition fees must be over \$100. Is this correct?

A. No. Because the total tuition fees paid to that particular educational institution were over \$100 you are allowed to claim them.

Q. I withdrew money from my RRSP in October 1993 to buy a home. I have been told that because of this I cannot make an RRSP contribution to reduce my taxes for 1993. Is that true?

A. You can make an RRSP contribution, but the rules work to prevent anyone who withdrew money from an RRSP under the Home Buyers' Plan from benefiting from an RRSP contribution made during the same contribution made during the same period. If you made a RRSP contribution to your own or a spouse's RRSP during the prohibited period, you must include part of all of your Home Buyers' withdrawal in income on line 129 (up to the amount contributed to the RRSP). This offsets, in full or in part, the RRSP deduction claimed on line 208.

Q. Last year, I incurred substantial medical expenses in modifying my home so that I can move around in my wheelchair. I have been told that I can claim these on my tax return. Can I claim the disability amount as well if I otherwise qualify?

A. Yes. The only medical expense claim which would disqualify you from claiming a disability amount are those in respect of a full-time attendant or care in a nursing home. All other eligible medical expenses, including up to \$5,000 for a part-time attendant, may be claimed without jeopardizing your disability claim.

Q. Last year I paid \$2,000 in tuition fees for my daughter, who is unmarried. Can I claim these on my tax return?

A. Probably. If your daughter does not need the full amount to reduce her tax payable to zero, she may transfer the unused portion to a parent or grandparent. However, if anyone claimed a personal amount for her (e.g. equivalent-to-spouse amount), she can only transfer it to the person who claimed this amount. Otherwise she can transfer the unused portion to the parent or grandparent of her choice.

Q. I purchased a rental property in June of 1991 and sold it in May of 1993 for a capital gains of \$5,000. Since the capital gains deduction has been eliminated for rental properties, does this mean I must pay tax on the full amount?

A. No. For property owned prior to March 1992, the capital gains deduction is prorated on the basis of the number of months the property was owned prior to March 01 1992, compared to the total number of months the property was owned. In your case, you owned the property for a total of 24 months, of which 9 months were prior to March 1992. Your capital gains deduction therefore is limited to 9/24 of the taxable capital gain. Even without the capital gains deduction, only 3/4 of your net capital gains are taxable.

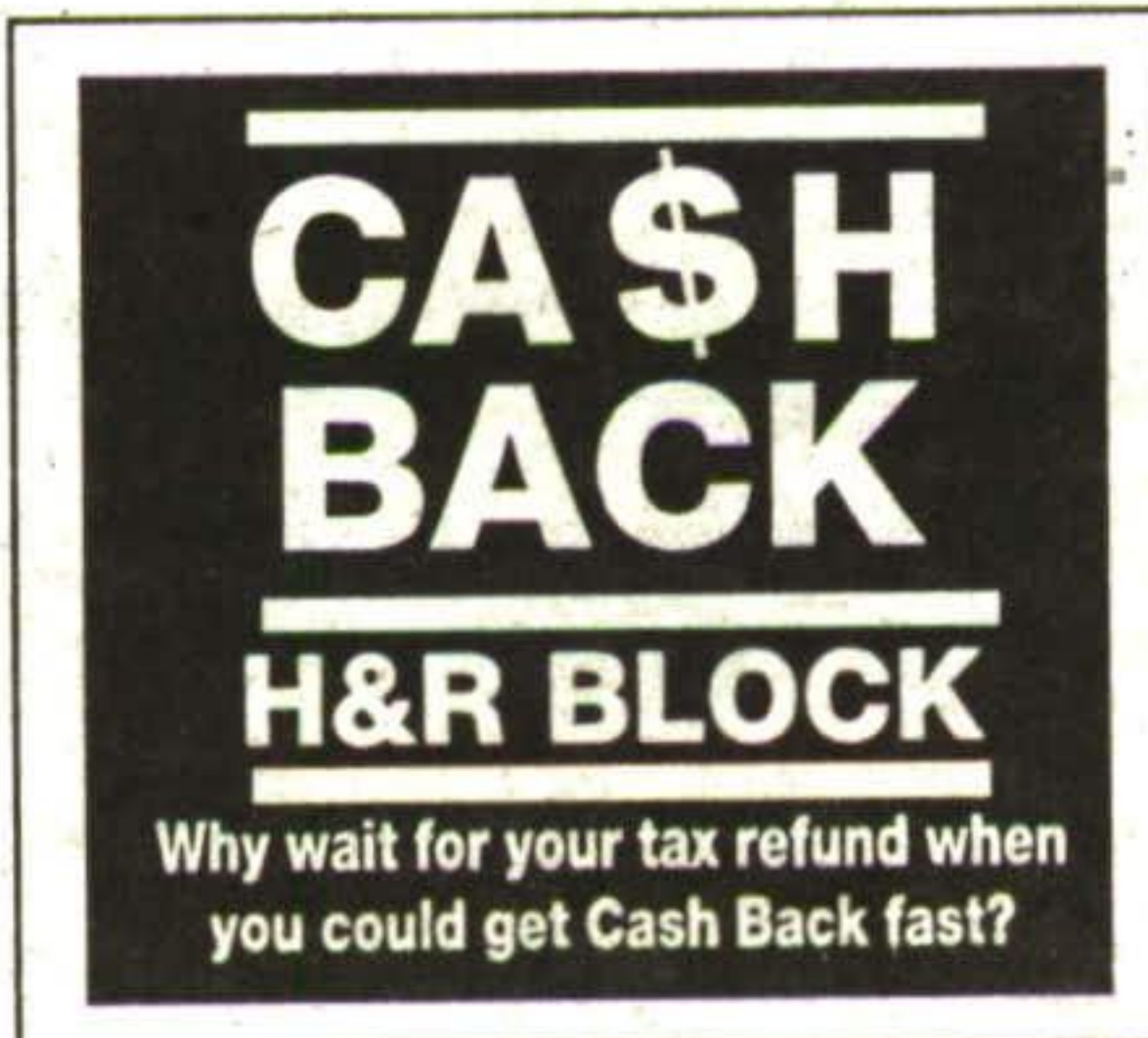
Q. I gave my 10-year-old son a Canada Savings Bond for his birthday. Now I'm told that I have to report the interest it earns on my tax return. Is this true?

A. Yes. You must report the income from any property you give to a child under 18 with whom you're not dealing at arm's length. This "attribution" rule prevents taxpayers from artificially reducing their income by splitting assets among different family members. However, any income arising from investment of the child tax benefit is considered to be income of the child's, provided the money is deposited into an account in the child's name or otherwise invested on behalf of the child.

The implementation of any tax saving strategy is based on your personal financial situation. Professional advice should be obtained before implementing any of the suggestions contained herein.

FREE ELECTRONIC FILING
WHEN WE PREPARE YOUR RETURN

- * NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
- * NOW OPEN MONDAY TO SATURDAY
- * WHILE YOU WAIT SERVICE
- * LOTS OF FREE PARKING
- * OPEN YEAR ROUND



H & R BLOCK

THE INCOME TAX SPECIALISTS

- * FREE REVIEW OF ANY CURRENT OR PREVIOUS YEARS TAX RETURNS

* TRUST THE H&R BLOCK GUARANTEE

* WE WELCOME ALL FORMER I.G. TAX CLIENTS

REFUNDS IN DAYS!

130 Guelph St., Georgetown and 56 Mill St. East, Acton
(905) 873-7855 (519) 853-5612

REFUNDS IN DAYS!

Sharon Anderson C.M.A.

Accounting Services

Personal/Corporate Taxes

EFILE Authorized

Accounting/Bookkeeping

G.S.T./P.S.T./Payroll

(905) 877-8978

Ballinafad

Specializing in small business needs and taxation

STARRET STARRET & MacDONALD
Chartered Accountants

129 Main St. S.
Georgetown, Ont.

Tax Consulting for both personal and business accounts of all sizes.

Electronic Filing

873-1601 846-2561

Business is great, always looking for more.

GOEBELLE MACADAM ALEXANDER

Chartered Accountants

Partners in your community
Serving Georgetown 26 years

Electronic Filing

37 Main Street South
Georgetown, Ontario
L7G 3E3
877-5155

BARRY D. TIMLECK
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

16 Mountainview Rd. S.
Georgetown, Ontario

Authorized EFILE Agent

Personal and Business Tax

Corporate Tax Consulting

Estate Tax Planning

877-6948

Daniel Varanelli
Certified General Accountant

Revenue Canada
Authorized EFILE
Agent

Personal and Business
Tax Returns
Accounting Services

Saturday & Evening
Appointments Available

76 YOUNG STREET, ACTON
(519) 853-4311

This message is brought to you by
Your Local Income Tax Professionals
They have all the answers
- Call for an appointment today.

