

Taxpayers group gives school board an 'F' But it gets a 'B' for effort

By TIM WHITNELL
Special

The Halton Board of Education has failed to make the grade.

That's the opinion of the Halton Taxpayers Coalition Inc. The watchdog organization issued an overall grade of 'F' to the 18 trustees and the board's administration in its annual report card.

"Two-hundred and seventy-two million dollars, 60 per cent of your property tax, is spent on education, under the control of the Board of Education. Labor content is \$210 million, voted on by trustees—several with spouses and relatives employed in the system," stated the report card, signed by Taxpayers Coalition president Hugh Doull.

"There is constant conflict between the current director of education and many trustees. Who is the boss, the board or the director?" were a couple of other criticisms as

the coalition gave an 'F' grade in the area of administration.

Management also received an 'F', while the best mark, a 'B', was given in the category of effort.

Special attention was devoted to a 10/8 division of trustees into two camps, as perceived by the coalition: 10 traditionalists who believe more money solves problems and eight

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Chair Linda Glover

reformers who seek change in conjunction with cost-consciousness.

"This board, with its 10/8 split, has failed its year financially, educationally and professionally," the report card concludes.

The unflattering failure mark, and generally unflattering comments, don't come as a surprise to some

trustees.

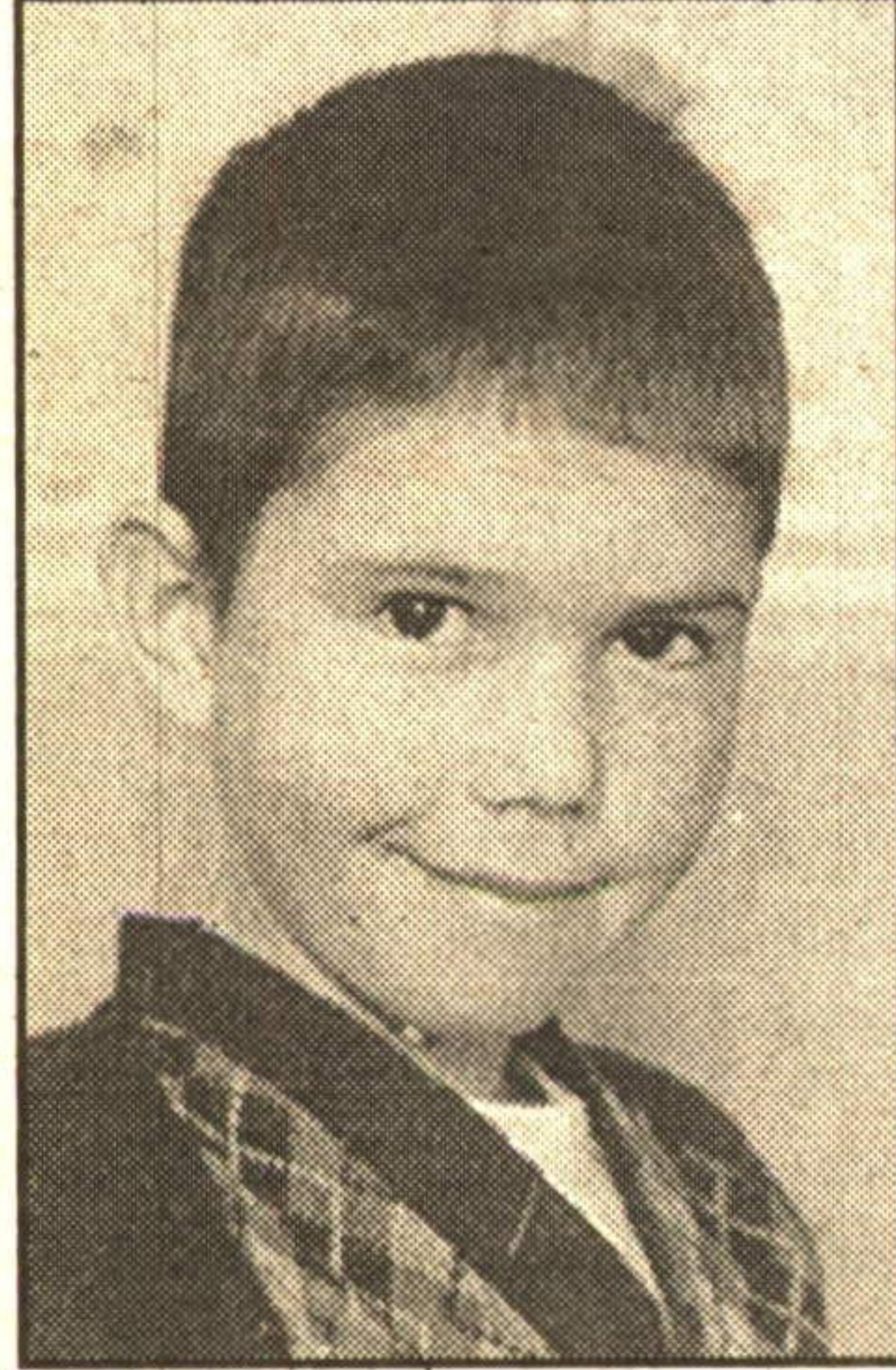
"Their philosophy is to keep coming back and whip them (trustees), whip them, whip them, and not give us any credit for anything. But I don't expect anything else," said board chair Linda Glover.

"If they looked at what we did each year, instead of harping on issues five or six-years-old, they would have more credibility," said Glover, referring to specific criticisms by the Taxpayers Coalition which she said relate to money issues going back to the early 1990s.

Halton public board vice-chair Penny Siebert termed some of the coalition's criticisms, "silly."

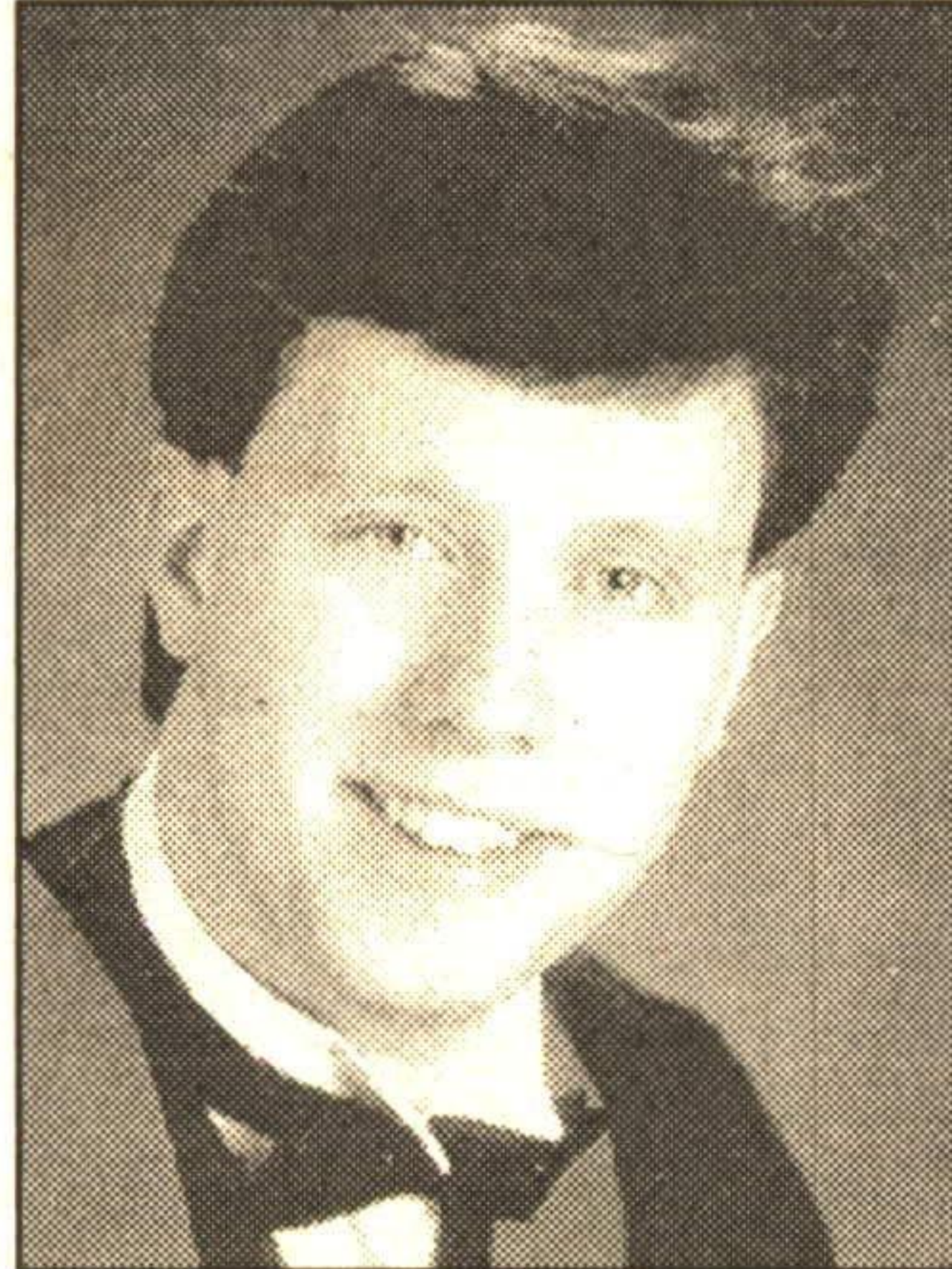
Siebert did say there is a role for organizations like the Taxpayers Coalition.

"The fact (the coalition) comes out to meetings and talks to trustees, that's legitimate. But when they use the press to raise public clouds over trustees' heads, that works against their credibility."



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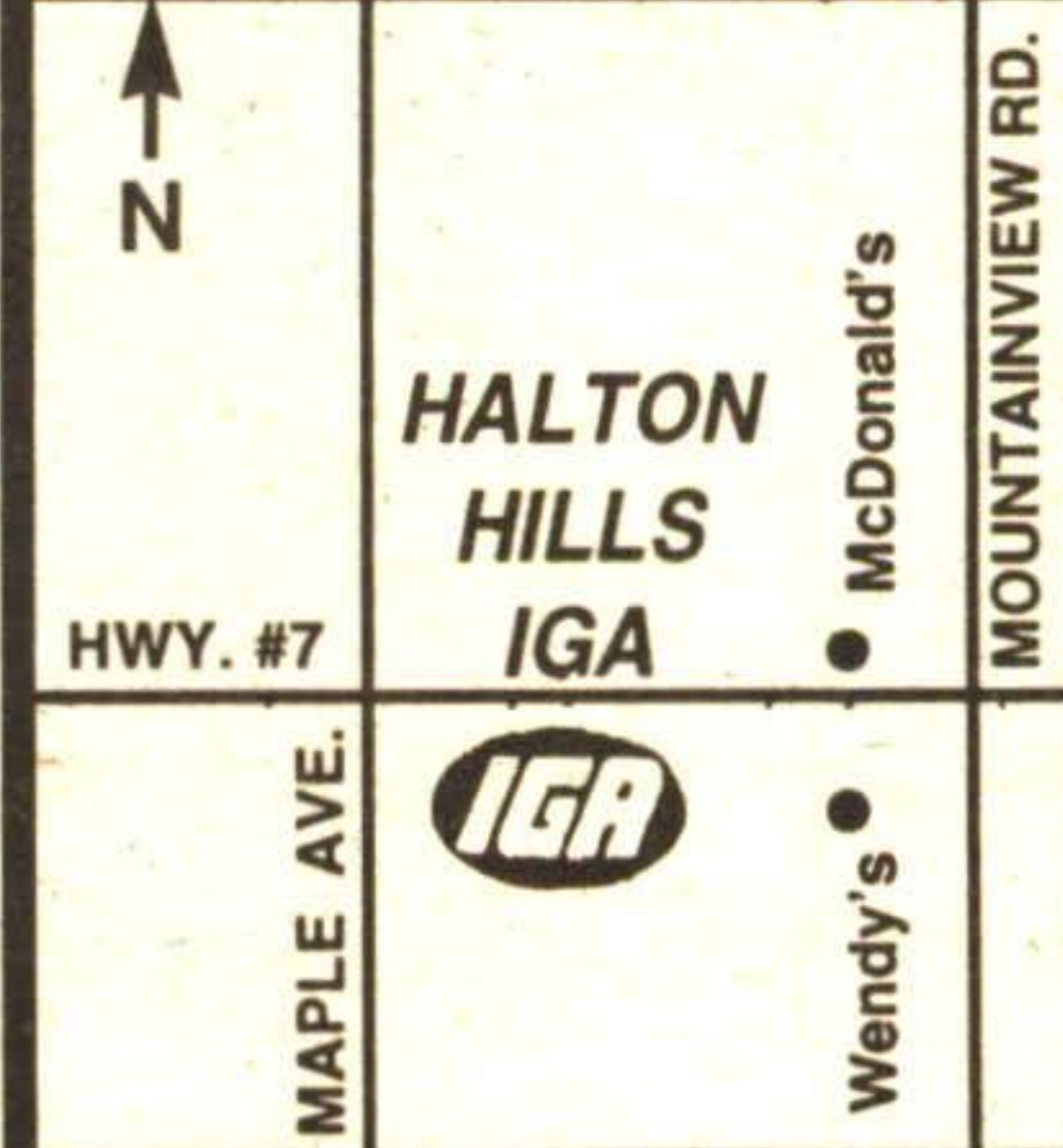
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