

Robert Little preps for Early Learning

Play-based learning offered at Robert Little School

The entire south side of the south wing of Robert Little School has been gutted to make way for three new Kindergarten rooms for four-and-five-year-old children enrolled in the province's Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten (FDELK) program.

Principal Bob Tadman, whose Kindergarten classes benefited from parts of the early learning program in the second half of the last school year, said play-based learning will have the "biggest and longest lasting impact on kids, and their learning" of any educational initiative.

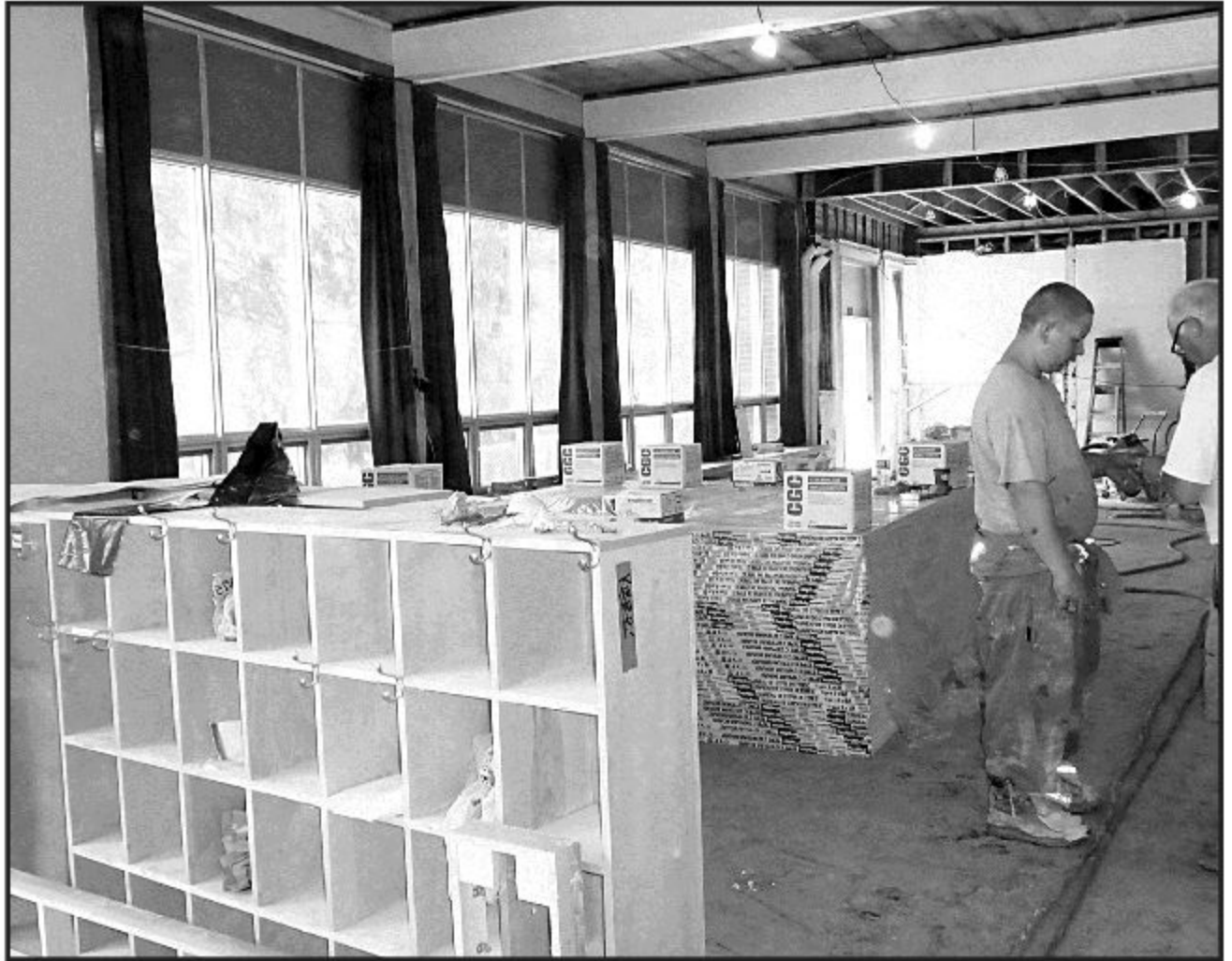
Tadman said play-based learning increases learning expectations, and is very engaging. "Kids are there every day, and instead of just sitting there and being told what they need to know, they're playing within their environment and learning while they are doing that," Tadman said on Thursday, adding the Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators become "guides on the side" and not the traditional "sages on the stage."

He said students involved with play-based learning showed a marked improvement in their learning skills and in their achievement, and now educators need to carry the momentum into Grade one, and beyond.

"When do you do your best learning? When you're engaged in what you are doing and you find a purpose for it—that is when you do your best learning and really apply yourself," Tadman said, adding cross-grade information sharing will make consistency easier.

The Halton District School Board budget to implement Full Day Early Learning in 19 schools this September is \$13-million—the construction budget at Robert Little School is \$550,000, plus 15 per cent for permits, fees, furniture and equipment.

The Acton design will be used as a retrofit template as additional schools begin to offer the Ontario early learning plan. Construction at Robert Little will be complete by the start of the school year in September.



PLAY LEARNING SPACE: Three new Kindergarten areas are being built at Robert Little School, one of 19 Halton schools to provide the province's early learning Full Day All Day play-based program in September. — Frances Niblock photo

Hedging bets

At the suggestion of Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, Halton staff will set up meetings with the Opposition parties at Queens Park, not just the sitting Ministers, during the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference next month in London.

At various Halton committee meetings recently, Chair Gary Carr reminded councillors to advise staff if they want to discuss an issue with a particular minister. Mayor Bonnette wants Halton to hedge its bets as the province heads into an October election.

"We have such key issues to discuss—the GTA Corridor, the Niagara-GTA

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corridor—I'm wondering if it wouldn't be very prudent to meet with the opposition leaders as well..." Bonnette said, adding the polls may say one thing and the actual vote another.

Lifesaving medal

Congrats to Paul Stover, the Town's Manager of Facilities, who recently received a Centenary Medal from the Royal Lifesaving Society. In offering congratulations, Mayor Rick Bonnette said Stover's 39-year career spanned from guarding pool patrons to overseeing construction of the multi-million dollar Gellert Centre.

The medal commemorates the Society's 100 years of saving lives in Canada, while paying tribute to those who have, or are, making a significant contribution to the mission of the Society.

Rates and fee increases?

The proposed fees and rates charged by the Town to do municipal business or use Town facilities would be "considerably higher" for most development applications if a new five-year full cost recovery schedule was implemented, according to Hemson Consulting rep. Stefan Krzeczunowicz.

Hemson was hired by the Town in January to review all user fees and to calculate what fees the Town would need to charge to cover the costs of providing the services, and to identify areas where fees are currently not being charged. The first phase of the three-phase study focused on Development Fees for each type of development application, and Krzeczunowicz told Council recently that the Town has been subsidizing development fees

"to a considerable degree"—sometimes as much as eight per cent—with tax dollars.

Krzeczunowicz said going to full cost fees would move the Town from the low-to-mid cost range into the upper range when compared with neighbouring municipalities, but Halton Hills would still be "quite competitive" with Oakville and Milton. The full cost fee for a typical 100-lot subdivision development application would be \$210,900, not the current fee of \$111,312.

Asked if there is a downside to full cost fees, Krzeczunowicz said he was specifically asked not to deal with that issue, but there it brings into question, with certain kinds of applications, about the ability of the applicant to pay the fees and the development might not get built.

Mayor Rick Bonnette pointed out that no increases would be approved until after another report to Council in September. Phase two of the fee and rate study will review Building Permits fees, and Phase three will look at all other fees the Town may charge under the Municipal Act.

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Congratulations & Best Wishes!

Congratulations Kelly
on the completion of your
Honours Psychology
degree and receiving an
Award of Excellence
from the
Canadian Psychological
Association.
Good Luck in your
graduate studies!
We are very proud of you!

Love: Mom, Dad, Michael, Cassie, Kyle, Laura, & Mylea