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Halton Region Chair Gary Carr issued a not-so-subtle ultimatum to the provincial government over funding concerns relating to growth targets under the Ontario Places to Grow Act.

Graham Paine/Metroland News Service

Rebels no more?

GDHS exploring dropping school team moniker

By Graeme Frisque
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Georgetown District High School is in early discussions about possibly changing the school's sports team name from the Rebels to something else.

While discussions are in only the early stages, a petition against the idea being circled online has already attracted hundreds of signatures.

According to Kyle Stewart, a teacher at GDHS, the discussion arose as part of Halton District School Board's multi-year values plan, which partly focuses on equity throughout the region's schools.

We're in the investigation part of that possibility at this point in time, said Stewart. We have an equity committee at the school, so a lot of this has come out of that equity committee where we're focusing on inclusion.

According to Stewart, the issue has come up numerous times over the past 20 years and was most recently brought to the school's leadership team from the equity committee.

Some of it is obviously tied to the negative associations with the word rebel. Whether we're looking at that through a historical context through the U.S. Confederacy or we're looking at just the connotations of the word in general, said Stewart.

Does that represent the inclusive aspects that we certainly want to promote at this school and is the term rebel positive terminology in today's society? he said.

There is no question of ties to Confederate symbolism. GDHS teams wore Confederate-branded uniforms and took team photos with the school's very own Confederate flag for decades before dropping the association.

However, in an interview with the *Toronto Star* in July 2015, Dennis Martel — the man who designed the original Confederate-styled logo while still a student at GDHS in the early 1960s — said the name was not chosen by students at the time to reflect any kind of racist or politically motivated sentiments.

We wanted to be Rebels Without A Cause, he told the *Star*.

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Region threatens to ignore provincial edict

By Graeme Frisque
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The provincial government has responded to an announcement made by Halton Region last week threatening to walk away from provincial legislation if the region's concerns aren't met.

On Jan. 27, the region posted a release on its website demanding the government meet funding obligations it says are owed to Halton residents.

The province is presently breaking its agreement with Halton on what it is supposed to be funding in

transfers, said Halton regional chair Gary Carr in the release. If they don't provide sustainable funding that includes the cost of growth, then Halton Region is not going to implement the Places to Grow Act, and we will refuse to increase growth in our region.

The issue, according to the region, stems from the Provincial Places to Grow Act — first passed in 2003 under former Premier Dalton McGuinty's watch — which mandates Halton Region make plans to grow to approximately 1 million residents by 2041, effectively doubling the current population.

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