

Elementary teachers to stage protest Friday

By **DOMINIK KUREK**
Metroland Media Group

Public elementary school teachers and support workers are holding a political protest on Friday, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) announced Wednesday.

The protest is against Bill 115 (Putting Students First Act), which was used by Ontario Education Minister Laurel Broten at the start of the 2013 to impose contracts on teachers and education workers.

A release from Halton District School Board Director of Education David Euale sent to Halton schools yesterday stated all Halton elementary schools will be closed Friday.

"We regret the interruption to students' education and the disruption for parents/guardians this labour action will cause," the release stated. "Schools will re-open on Monday, January 14. Secondary schools are not affected by this day of protest."

"The minister made a deliberate and provocative choice to wipe out the democratic rights of tens of thousands of educators rather than work towards a respectful solution," said ETFO president Sam Ham-

mond, in a news release.

ETFO represents 76,000 elementary public school teachers, designated early childhood educators, professional support personnel and education support personnel. In Halton, it has approximately 3,000 members.

In December, approximately 46,000 ETFO members cast a ballot and voted 92 per cent in favour of holding a one-day political protest should the minister impose teacher contracts using Bill 115, which was passed by the provincial government this past September.

"Our members are standing up to say that democratic values must trump party politics in this province. What happened to educators must not happen to any other Ontarian," Hammond said. "The stain of Bill 115, enacted four months ago this Friday, serves as a permanent reminder of that."

When Broten announced she would impose contracts on educators on Jan. 3, she warned teachers if they walk out of class during school hours when they have a contract in place, it would be an illegal strike.

ETFO leaders on the other hand countered by saying a one-day political protest is legal, even if it is held on a school day.

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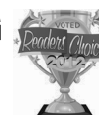
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There are currently two (2) volunteer Director-at-large positions available.

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The positions are open to residents of Halton, who are supportive of publicly funded Catholic education and meet the Foundation's requirements for serving as a Director.

Interested community members should submit a letter of intent, indicating what strengths they would bring to this position by January 24, 2013 to:

Stan Gajewski, Executive Director
Halton Catholic Children's Education Foundation
802 Drury Lane
Burlington, Ontario L7R 4L3

Prospective members will be invited to an information meeting on January 31, 2013 to learn more about the Foundation.



Halton Catholic Children's Education Foundation

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