

## MUNICIPAL ELECTION

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move forward. I think the number speaks for itself. I would and will support the stakeholders opinion on this issue.

### CONSEIL SCOLAIRE VIAMONDE

#### PIERRE GIROUARD

*What do you see as the top issue affecting education in Halton and what steps would you take to address it?*

The demand for French language education has been increasing steadily. The student population for Viamonde is up by more than four per cent this year. As the incumbent, I can report that we have secured financing and built one new high school in Oakville and have plans for a new elementary school in Milton.

I intend to pursue the same approach and ensure that we have facilities for all students. Buildings and facilities are not enough. We provide some of the best education and have partnered with technological companies to ensure that students will be well prepared for the future. We also work with the community to ensure that they have access to French culture outside of the school.

*How do you think growing student enrolment can be best accommodated over the next four years in Halton?*

You have noted an issue close to my heart. As I stated in answering your first question, we have and will continue to build new schools to accommodate the growing French



student population. We are looking to the future.

#### DENIS FRAWLEY

*What do you see as the top issue affecting education in Halton and what steps would you take to address it?*

For families from Halton Hills and neighbouring communities whose children attend a primary or secondary French language public school (such as Patricia Picknell for primary) and Gaétan-Gervais (for secondary), I feel the top issue is the great distance they have to travel to attend school, which also translates into having classmates and friends that are not neighbours, and also raises challenges for extracurricular activities.

The reality of French language education in southern Ontario is that the francophone community has a small population spread over a large area. So, our schools will probably always have large catchment areas. But I will work to encourage Conseil scolaire Viamonde to find ways that foster strong bonds between our students and their families both within and outside of school hours. It requires extra effort and commitment, but we all want our children to feel that they are part of a vibrant community, not just a good school, because community invol-

vement and attachment is so important to providing an environment in which our children will flourish.

*How do you think growing student enrolment can be best accommodated over the next four years in Halton?*

Viamonde regularly opens new primary and secondary schools, as it has a growing enrolment, which is great. Considering the growth in Halton and in neighbouring communities like Brampton, a very important consideration is to plan where the next schools will be opened, based on demand from the community. We have to start early and work hard to secure the right locations and budgets, and frankly to make sure that for French-speaking families in these fast-growing areas, enrolling in a French language public school is not just a choice, but the best choice.

I also think it's critical to retain our students through their high school years by offering secondary schools that are strong, in terms of quality, while also offering a broad and comprehensive array of courses, services, activities and supports that is just as attractive as what families find at English language schools.

All of this requires continuous attention and planning. For families that want their children to study in French, wherever they are, they should always have the option of a French language public school that is as appealing to them as what is on offer from the English board.

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