

GREBENC: PUBLIC EDUCATION THREATS WILL BE CHALLENGED

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Newly acclaimed chair of the Halton District School Board Andrea Grebenc had a message for the province.

"As trustees we will continue to vigorously support student achievement and well-being and to challenge threats to public education," said Grebenc in her address to the board after accepting the gavel at its annual organizational meeting Dec. 4.

"We will continue to demand empirical evidence in the face of changes to

our system and implore the government to see us as partners in improving education, to seek appropriate and transparent funding and to fight for the schools we need."

Due to "huge cuts in funding" the board was forced to pass a deficit but compliant budget last June that saw the stripping down of central staff, the loss of which is frustrating but not unexpected, she said.

"As we head into next year we must look to short and long-term goals; the immediate labour issues are not small issues but are also not ones that we



HDSB photos

Left, Andrea Grebenc, chair and right, Tracey Ehl Harrison, vice-chair of the Halton District School Board.

cannot overcome. We value all of our staff and know they put their heart into their work every day."

Pressing issues of the next decade will include the environment and mental health crises, said Grebenc.

"As trustees we know we don't have all the an-

swers and are willing to listen to student and staff voices, as well as our parents, guardians and the broader community for input and direction."

As well as looking forward, Grebenc praised the diligent work of the board over the past year: being the first board to react to

the controversial changes to Ontario's Autism program model and actively outlining the detrimental effects of the Ford government's education cuts, particularly as they relate to class size and e-learning policies.

Trustee Tracey Ehl Harrison was also ac-

claimed to the role of vice-chair for 2019-20.

"It is my honour to support the trustee team as vice-chair as we work together to raise up the students, staff and community of the HDSB locally, and to have a positive impact in education beyond this board," said Harrison.

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