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STUDENT PRESIDENTS TAKE ISSUE WITH CATHOLIC BOARD LEADERSHIP

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Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) trustees have received criticism from the very people they represent.

Three students speaking on behalf of a collective body of HCDSB student council presidents — from Halton Hills and across the region — delegated at the May 18 board meeting about what they say is a persistent tendency by trustees to ignore the student voice.

Emma Knynenburg, student council representative of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Secondary School, said the board needs to do a better job of considering the students when making decisions.

"A culture of personally motivated and personally biased behaviour and decisions is rampant in board leadership. It is extremely disheartening and counter-productive to be part of a board in which the trustees clearly don't work for their constituents, but rather their own self-interest," said Knynenburg.

The students highlighted three board decisions over the

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years that they felt demonstrated this tendency.

They pointed to the 2011 decision to not allow gay-straight alliances, and the 2018 Sanctity of Life motion, which restricted school fundraising to charities that do not support — either directly or indirectly — abortion, contraception, sterilization, euthanasia or human embryonic stem cell research. Both those decisions were ultimately reversed following a public and student outcry.

Earlier this year, the board voted on a motion that prevented the Pride flag from being flown at

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IN REMEMBRANCE



Graham Paine/Metroland

Alysha (left) and Bonita Uzoruo of the Halton Hills Alliance for Social Change look over the memorial they started up at the Gellert Community Centre in memory of the 215 Indigenous children whose remains were found at a former residential school in Kamloops.

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