

OPTION TO NAME SCHOOLS AFTER PEOPLE REMAINS

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Naming schools after individuals remains an option despite division among trustees of the Halton District School Board to continue the policy.

Following a lengthy debate at a recent committee-of-the-whole meeting, there was more discussion at the Oct. 26 regular meeting of the board before the majority voted to retain the status quo of the school naming and renaming policy, which had been under review for months.

The decision was not without its detractors.

"We know there are a lot of great individuals, but we only know one aspect of them and not everything, and that speaks to our ability to mitigate risk," Oakville trustee Joanna Oliver said.

"The obvious thing that comes

to mind is the what if? Humans are fallible," she said at the earlier COW meeting.

Nowhere in the policy does it specify "we will absolutely name schools after people," countered Milton trustee Donna Danielli.

"There seems to be a perception that we will definitely be naming schools after people; all this does is leave the door open," said Danielli.

In addition to being against naming schools after people, student trustees Cindy Wang and Ethan Ruggiero said students should have a voice in how school names are chosen, an opportunity that doesn't currently exist.

Students are the ones who wear these names; they are probably the most relevant stakeholders at play, said Cindy.

Burlington trustee Leah Reynolds said the lack of a "rigorous" vetting process of names leaves



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It was not unanimous, but HDSB trustees have voted in favour of allowing schools to be named after people after much discussion.

the board and schools vulnerable to the risk of having to rename a school.

Halton Hills trustee Jeanne Gray agreed, saying she was unsure of the depth at which the board could investigate a person's name to ensure it was appropriate to adorn a school.

"I feel like nobody has changed their mind over the last number of months and weeks. I don't see us coming to a landing on this," said HDSB vice-chair Tracey Ehl Harrison who voted in favour of the motion to maintain the status quo, which "in no way precludes the next board from taking a look at this again."

PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD CONSIDERS BOUNDARY REVIEWS

To address accommodation pressures and population growth, Halton District School Board staff have recommended three boundary reviews, one each in Halton Hills, Burlington and Oakville, to take place during the current school year.

The following are the proposed boundary reviews:

- With increased pressure at Ethel Gardiner public school in Halton Hills, due to new development and numerous program offerings at the school, a review would be undertaken with the intent to distribute enrolment pressures and explore program

relocations to other schools.

- A boundary review for the newly funded Oakville NE #3 and NE #5 public schools, would encompass the following elementary schools: Palermo, Forest Trail, Munns, Sunningdale, Post's Corners, River Oaks, Falgarwood, Oodenawi and Dr. David R. Williams.

- Glenview public school in Burlington is approaching its maximum school capacity with additional development expected over the next few years while Maplehurst public school is projected to remain underutilized. Staff will study how Maplehurst can offset pressures at Glenview and avoid a potential re-direction of students.

Trustees will vote on whether or not to proceed with the recommended boundary reviews at the Dec. 7 board meeting.

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