

Local teachers unhappy about mandatory testing

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Teacher training is fine. Teacher testing is not.

That's the attitude of most Acton teachers to new Ministry of Education rules requiring both elementary and secondary school teachers to take recertification courses, beginning this fall.

The union representing Halton's public elementary teachers advised its members to continue with their professional development, but not to comply with the recertification program, a position supported by 97 per cent of delegates at an Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) meeting last month.

ETFO executive said most members would find the Professional Learning Program "intrusive and insulting," and is working on a joint

strategy to respond to Queen's Park. An ETFO press release advises its members to "engage in ongoing professional development on a voluntary basis by assessing their own learning needs..."

Paul Hynds, ETFO Halton union steward at Robert Little School, said "almost all" teachers at the Acton public school oppose the "whole testing regime."

"We're against testing of kids at every grade

and we're against testing teachers. The kinds of testing that we're doing are really not producing the kinds of results that are helpful," Hynds said on Friday.

"Teachers are getting upgrades continually and are taking courses all on their own to be professionally updated, and here the government goes to mandate something that is being done anyway," Hynds said.

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What's Inside



Halton Catholic School Board is already contemplating another school in Acton as enrolment climbs. See Page 3.



The Quinn family donates some valuable books to Acton branch of the Halton Hills library. See photo on Page 4.



Another Actonian greets that magic Number 90 with a party at her Elizabeth Drive residence. See story on Page 6.



Best way to enjoy Acton Fall Fair? Participate in it. Have no baby? Still plenty of other things to enter. See story on Page 9.

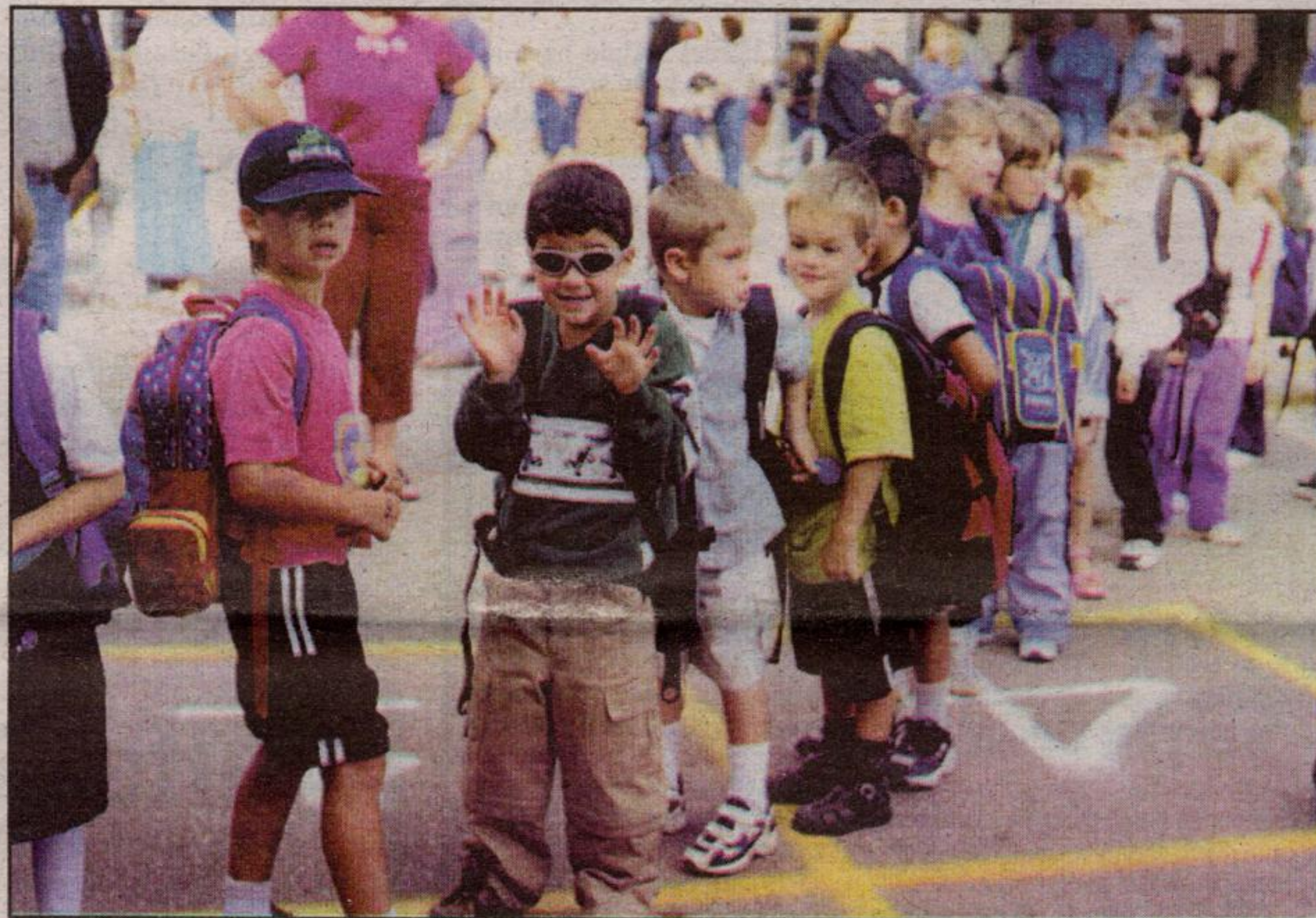
Acton doctor shortage 'acute' - MOH

Native teaching village at Fair

New to the Acton Fall Fair this year is the North American Native Teaching Village, an interactive experience for all ages.

A teepee will be set up right inside the main gates, where the elder, in full costume, will preside over dance demonstrations, teaching programs on the construction of native tools and utensils and explanations on the crop rotation methods for the three most common native foods: corn, pumpkins and beans.

The Village will be in operation all three days of the fair.



First day of school

EAGER LEARNERS: These Grade 1/2 French Immersion in Kerrie Munroe's class at Robert Little School sang "O Canada" on the playground before lining up to head into class on Tuesday morning. — Frances Niblock photo

Need here recognized by all

Acton suffers the most acute doctor shortage in Halton and needs to at least double the number of general practitioners serving this community.

Acton's "profound" shortage of doctors per population was recognized by regional and local officials who met last week to formulate a joint effort to attract new doctors to the area.

Halton's medical officer of health, Dr. Robert Nosal said that it was clear at the meeting that the real "priority, the biggest need" for doctors is in Acton, which recently lost one of its three doctors with the sudden death of Dr. Brian Moore.

"There are more numbers of doctors required, obviously, in Oakville, Milton and Burlington, but if you look at the relative percentage, you need to, at minimum, double the number that are there, and no one else (in Halton) can say that," Dr. Nosal said.

The politicians, doctors, health care providers and hospital staff who attended the meeting decided to set up a sub-group to begin work on a series of short-term initiatives to try to attract physicians.

One of the initiatives is to come up with an attractive incentive package to lure either new or established doctors to the area.

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Sixty Junior Kindergarteners enrolled

Younger students and new housing helped swell the ranks at two Acton schools this fall. Sixty Junior Kindergarten students are enrolled at Robert Little and McKenzie-Smith Bennett Schools.

They and 90 senior kindergartners have classroom visits this week and begin classes in two weeks as the Halton District School Board resumes JK classes for children who will be four this year.

The rest of Acton's 1,336 public school children kicked off the new school year on Tuesday with a mixture of excitement and anticipation.

Most of the 550 JK-8 students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School had no trouble with the earlier morning bell that now begins school 10 minutes earlier at 8:55 a.m.

Principal Elsa Stolfi has 12 new teachers and a new vice-principal, Bob O'Driscoll. The new staff include Tricia Roszczka - JK, Tony Churchill - Gr. 4/5, Lisa Markham, coverage and library, Stefanie Takahashi - Gr. 6 Math and Science, Megan Reid - Gr. 6/8 Phys. Ed., health, Shannon Jones - Gr. 4-8 music, Matt Jones - Gr. 7/8 Science, Scott Dempster - Gr. 6-8 Core French, Phil Hepworth, Gr. 7/8 English, Geography, History & Math, Mareika Lubkiewicz - Science and special ed., M. Paquette, education assistant, Lisa Portelli - EA.

The 400 students at Robert Little School kicked off the year with an a capella rendition of "O Canada" in the schoolyard.

Principal Don Warren welcomed the

new and returning students and staff, noting renovations are complete for the JK (28 projected) and offering thanks to the parents and students who kept the school gardens watered all summer.

New staff at Robert Little include core French teacher Leslie Chateauvert, JK teacher Tanya Cole, Grade 1/2 French Immersion teacher Kerrie Munroe, JK teacher Katherine Nowark and Grade 1/2 English teacher Pam Shepherd.

The enrolment at Acton District High is down slightly to 536 projected students but there were some new students registered the first day.

Principal Greg McPherson said they had a smooth start to the school year, despite some last minute timetable

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