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Teachers say extra class 'a killer'

Continued from pg. 1

"I'd like to think it's possible in Halton. Some boards have solved the problem creatively," said Bain, who has taught for 27 years. "I don't think Halton has shown that creativity."

Marklew insists the board is negotiating in good faith.

"We're willing to listen to any creative solutions," she said. "But some of the things they want us to do, we can't because of regulations or the funding formula. We will not agree to a contract that can't be funded or that robs money from other areas."

The main issue, according to most teachers on the picket lines, is the addition of a 76-minute class to their schedules.

"Bill 160 stipulates an extra 25 minutes but that doesn't fit into our timetable so they added an extra class which is 75 minutes," said Laidlaw.

Moe Leeking, who has taught English at Georgetown District High School for more than 20 years, said along with additional teaching time comes the extra students.

"I have 120 students instead of 90 because of teaching the extra class. You add the assignments, the marking and you add 25 per cent. That's the killer."

Leeking said his classes range in size from 29 to 34 students despite the province's mandate of 22 students per class.

"We were at a running pace last year and

then you add one more class," said Karen O'Brien, an English teacher at Acton High School. "How do you keep straight what skills have to be developed for each student. You can't personalize things anymore."

O'Brien was also concerned about teachers' ability to provide extra help in semesters when they are teaching four classes.

"We can give them extra help after 4 (p.m.) but we don't have late buses anymore and that creates all kinds of problems in a rural school."

"When a student asks for help you wouldn't say no—we're not giving that up—but to be honest when you go for four hours (in a row)

and they ask for help you feel like you've had enough," said Wendy Mendlow, a French teacher at GDHS for 21 years who has four classes.

Several teachers also mentioned health concerns and the ability to teach to the best of their ability.

"My (last class), I'm not giving them as good a class as I have in the past," said GDHS teacher Randy Marinangeli.

The teachers returned to class on Friday and the board and the OSSTF will return to the negotiating table tomorrow (Monday).

"There might be more pressure put on the board because of this type of publicity," Marklew said, "but we'll still meet on Monday and try to get a deal."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Larger classes a problem, say local students

By HERB GARBUTT
Staff Writer

Students say growing class sizes has made getting help more difficult, but they don't see how Thursday's strike by Halton secondary school teachers will help the situation.

Shantel Bryan, a Grade 10 student, said the biggest change in the classroom has been the number of students.

"We had 27 in a class last year. This year there's about 35," she said. "When you have a question it takes a while before they (teachers) can answer you."

Laura Bowman and Nicole Cannon, both Grade 11 students said their classes are not only bigger but they are also split.

Cannon said her German class is split between Grade 11 and 12 students. Bowman said her math and art classes are divided between general and advanced levels, which makes getting help more difficult.

"In math you sit there with your hand up and there's all the different levels," Bowman said. "Sometimes it's half an hour before (the teacher) can get to everyone."

Despite the crowded class-

What's happening in Halton classrooms...



Halton District School Board

Elementary

Teachers in class. Have been told by union to refuse extra-curricular work. Are in legal strike position. Mediation talks set for Oct. 8.

Secondary

Teachers in class. Have refused all extra-curricular work. Held one-day strike this past Thursday. Mediation talks set for tomorrow (Oct. 5).

For further information contact the Halton District School Board at 878-8451.

Halton Catholic District School Board

Elementary

Reached a tentative deal Sept. 23. Will vote on deal Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Secondary

Teachers in class but are teaching only three of four scheduled classes and have refused all extra-curricular work. Negotiations set to resume Tuesday, Oct. 6.

For further information contact the Halton Catholic District School Board at 632-6300 or 1-800-741-8382.

rooms, students didn't see how Thursday's strike would solve the problem.

"It's kind of pointless when we're back the next day," said Rebecca Liebigt. "I don't think it's (the strike) going to get (the teachers) anywhere."

"It didn't make a difference last year. Why is going to make a difference this year?" added Mandy Emmerson, a Grade 11 student.

Emmerson was also disappointed in teachers' decision to not participate in extra-curricular activities.

"Elementary teachers have more classes and they still do it," she said, "but (high school teachers) can't seem to find the time for extra-curricular activities."