

# Look Inside for Volunteer Special Section

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## High school ratings deserve an 'F' say local educators

By **HERB GARBUTT**  
Staff Writer

Local education administrators gave the Fraser Institute's ranking of Ontario's high schools a failing grade.

Calling the report flawed and absolutely irresponsible, Halton District School Board chair and Halton Hills trustee Ethel Gardiner said "this report has devalued a huge percentage of our student population. It says you are of little value unless you take advanced level courses."

The Vancouver-based think tank released its Report Card on Ontario Secondary Schools last week. The report ranked Ontario's 815 high schools based on data from 1994 to 1999. The three schools attended by local students (Georgetown, Acton and Bishop Reding) were among the 247 of high schools not ranked or given scores for 1999 because information on them was not available from the province.

Schools were given a rating out of 10 using five criteria:

- the percentage of advanced courses taken
- the percentage of advanced

level courses passed in Grade 11 to OAC

- the number of core courses taken per student in Grade 12 and OAC

- the difference in average marks between male and female students in Grade 12 advanced English and the difference in average marks between male and female students in Grade 12 advanced math.

'This report has devalued a huge percentage of our student population.'  
—Trustee  
Ethel Gardiner



Gardiner said the criteria completely ignores a school's ability to deliver programs to students at all levels.

"Not all kids are academics," Gardiner said. "We have to provide programs to meet the needs of all students in terms of their ability."

"There are other criteria that make a good school," said Acton High School principal Greg MacPherson.

"If you're going to analyze a school on whether it's a good school, rather than use those criteria, I would rather use the criteria from the effective schools research."

MacPherson said that research includes points such as: is the school run in an organized manner; does the school reward student achievement; are students

See FOCUS, pg. 4





### A bird's eye view

Eight-year-old Cierra Smyth made an amazing discovery—a bird's nest in the midst of a shrub, while exploring Cedarvale Park on Saturday. Although the nest was not in use, Cierra was fascinated by this close-up look at a bird's home.

Photo by Christine Smyth

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