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Cash shortage may force board to axe programs

The scope, and perhaps even the existence, of popular programs like Drug Abuse Resistance and Education (DARE), Celebrating Literacy and Food For Thought is in doubt at the public school level in Halton.

Budget recommendations have been made by staff with the Halton District School Board that funding for those initiatives be removed. The administrative direction, which was met with regret by trustees, came during the third in a series of budget meetings Monday. The public board is wrestling with an evolving 2002-03 school-year budget that is expected to vastly exceed the projected revenues coming from the provincial government.

"It's a very frustrating



ETHEL GARDINER

process to have to look at (cutting) programs like that that are so valuable to children, and not have the resources to implement them," said Halton Hills Trustee and board chair Ethel Gardiner.

No firm decision has been made yet about the three elementary school programs in question or the others that were talked about on Monday. Trustees are reviewing and debating financial projections being made by staff with a final vote on next year's budget expected by mid-June.

The proposed budget for '02-'03 is \$281.4 million, however the general legislative grants from the Ministry of Education, which account for the bulk of board revenues, won't be known until late May at the earliest. That X factor is causing concern among board staff and trustees.

"We have no idea what we'll receive so we're doing this blind," Gardiner said. "We might get more than we expect but right now we have to have a plan."

Board business superintendent Carla Kisko indicated people will be doing more squirming than wiggling with the dollars they'll likely have at their disposal.

"We have a lot of work left still.... There isn't going to be any surprise when we come to you with a budget that far exceeds the \$281.4 million," Kisko told trustees.

See SCHOOL, pg. 9



Murder suspect out of hospital

Angus Snow, 52, of Norval is escorted from Thunder Bay hospital by Thunder Bay Police officers Wednesday. Snow has been charged in the first-degree murder death of his wife Shirley, 44, who was run over and killed by a man driving a van in an Orangeville mall parking lot Sunday. See story page 5.

Photo by Sandi Krasowski, Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal



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