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But meeting marred by heated exchange Director to trustees: Try and get along

Trustee relationships is one of the main challenges facing the future of the Halton District School Board, according to a feedback report from the board's Education Director Wayne Joudrie.

Ironically, a heated exchange between two trustees followed the tabling of the frank, 10-page report at last Wednesday night's board meeting.

Joudrie engaged the board and public to get a sense what they would like to see happen in education. That included one-on-one interviews with trustees, staff and school councils, among others. Also, a survey for public feedback was posted on the board's website, and Joudrie held public forums in the region's four municipalities.

The results from those consultations formed the report, which Joudrie said would be vetted by the public one more time before he turns the results into a workable action plan.

Based on the dozens of correspondence and interviews Joudrie conducted, he encapsulated the common comments into four sections: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Listed under the headings of weaknesses and threats was the issue of trustee relationships between themselves, the board and the community.

"It's no secret at this table there are conflicts," Joudrie told the board. "Unless we deal with these things, this board will not flourish and be the best kind of board I think it can be."

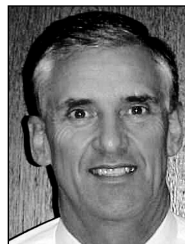
Chair Paul Tate said an organization must "evolve" and to do that, it must look at everything it does, good and bad.

"To have a viewpoint from someone who came in from the outside, I think that is enlightening," Tate told

'It's no secret at this table there are conflicts.

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—HDSB Director of Education
Wayne Joudrie



trustees.

But near the end of the board meeting, a testy exchange of words erupted between Tate and Oakville Trustee Mary Chapin. Chapin asked Tate to retract comments stated in a November letter— he signed as board chair— and published in a Halton newspaper. Tate declined.

After the meeting Chapin said the letter contained comments about her and former chair and Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner that concerned her.

"By writing as chair of the board and stating erroneous information, he does bring into question the ability of all the board members," Chapin said.

It proves to her, she said, the relationship between trustees is not salvageable.

"I'm of the opinion there is too much hurt, there's too many walls already built that we can't ever work together as a group."

Tate said after the meeting that trustees cannot bring personal agendas to the board table and must focus on students.

"I think what is very clear to me is that comments like that from trustee Chapin weren't about student achievement," he said, adding the board meeting that night was for

the most part civil. "I have been trying at this board to get focused on student achievement."

"If trustees want to take cheap shots they can do it, but it's not about student achievement."

Trustee tension is nothing new to this board and worsened last year.

Joudrie, former education director for the Grand Erie school board, was voted unanimously by the 11 trustees in late August to take on the new position vacated by Dusty Papke at the end of June. Papke was education director for eight years and left with a controversial severance of \$600,000. His departure announced at a stormy board meeting in May, left the board divided and a handful of trustees upset because they believed a quality educator had been turfed from the board.

When Joudrie assumed the director's position, he delivered a firm speech to his new colleagues in which he explained four immediate goals he will address over the next while. Among them was to ease any tension among trustees.

At the time Joudrie said, "My challenge will be to create more opportunities for this board to show unity and to take advantage of the fresh start."

After the meeting, Joudrie still held out hope for trustee co-operation.

"I am still optimistic we can do some things," he said. "I'm not naive to think we're going to make everybody very, very happy on every front, but I do expect we can come to a civil discourse. We can get better."

The report wasn't entirely negative, indicating there is a lot for the board to be proud of including an "excellent staff", a "strong" administrative team and above-average student achievement.

—By Jason Misner, special

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25



Matt & Marg,
25 yrs, and
still going
strong.

Love Matt, Will,
Justine & Xander

25
25

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24 payments, no interest on all desktops. On pg. 2 of our February 3 flyer, this promotion was advertised with an administration fee of \$59.95. In fact, the administration fee for this promotion is \$99.95.

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Love Dad, Tracey, Kate, Dan & Dana

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