

# Bailey back as Catholic board chair

For the seventh year in a row, Burlington Trustee Al Bailey is back in the chair's seat at the Halton Catholic District School Board. He heads into his 10th year as a trustee.

His colleagues at the board gave him the title at the board's inaugural meeting Tuesday (Dec. 5).

Alice Anne Lemay, an Oakville trustee and 26-year veteran of the board, was named the vice-chair, which is a post she has previously held.

They lead nine trustees, which is one more than last term and are joined by three newcomers: Rosanna Palmieri of Halton Hills, and Anthony Danko and Pauline Houlihan, both Oakville trustees. Growth in Oakville prompted the additional trustee. The board now has five representatives for Oakville, two for Burlington and one each for Halton Hills and Milton. The term of office for all trustees is now four years.

In January 2007, the board faces a vote on the school uniforms pilot project at both a Milton and Burlington elementary school.

"There seems to be less support for (uniforms) in Oakville," said Danko. The board offered to let an Oakville school join the two-year experiment, but none volunteered.

As budget planning ensues, Bailey foresees many Ontario boards, including Halton's, moving too close to a deficit. There are no reserves to take care of the increases the provincial government has imposed through negotiating teachers' contracts, he said.

"We will have to do a better job of getting funding from the government because there isn't money in other areas to take from, it's all been enveloped already," said Bailey.

Discussions will also get under way in the next year to either find a new home for the overflowing board headquarters, renovate it or leave it as is.



Halton Hills Trustee Rosanna Palmieri accepts congratulations during the Halton Catholic District School Board's inauguration last week. Palmieri defeated longtime trustee Irene McCauley in last month's municipal election. *Photo by Liesa Kortmann*

The same decision must also be made for St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Oakville.

"We're a growth board, which is a good problem," said Bailey.

Pressure also has to be alleviated on crowded Notre Dame and Assumption high schools, Bailey added.

"A constant challenge over the long term for us is maintaining our Catholic identity in a secular world," added Danko. "This is the only quality that guarantees our survival as a board, so if we lose heart over that, God help us."

Three student trustees were also sworn in during the ceremony: Jaclyn Peluso from St. Thomas Aquinas in Oakville, Christ the King student Heather MacKinnon is the Halton Hills representative and Assumption's Ryan Durrant is the Burlington student trustee.

The Halton Catholic board has 28,600 students in 46 schools.



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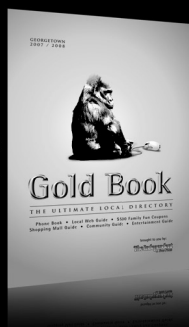
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