

1982 school budget

# Halton board facing \$15 million hike

By STEVE ARNOLD  
Champion News Editor

Salaries and wages are the major reason for a \$15 million budget increase being faced by the Halton Board of Education, trustees were told Thursday night.

That's when they were given their first total view of the Board's projected spending for 1982.

As presented by the finance committee, the budget calls for spending totalling \$131.9 million, up from the \$116 million spent to operate the school system last year.

Burlington trustee Bill Priestner, chairman of the finance committee, said several cuts had been made to the document before it was presented to the board and the final version was the best that could be done without damaging the quality of education.

As in past years, the lion's share of the budget is taken up by the demands of the instruction division, which is responsible for what happens in the classrooms.

At 76.5 per cent of the total budget, this department is expected to spend \$100.9 million in 1982. Of that total, \$89 million will be required to cover the wage and salary bill for teachers, principals and other administrators employed by the board.

Oakville Trustee Ann Fairfield presented that portion of the budget and noted several of the major increases were in areas over which trustees had little or no control, such as postage and telephone costs and expensive English as a second language programs.

She noted that \$5,400 was budgeted for ESL pro-

grams "and we have to provide that if we expect these children to be able to function in the system."

Mrs. Fairfield also noted that \$220,000 had been set aside in the budget to pay for computer installations in all the schools, but that amount would not be spent until the Ministry of Education confirms its 75 per cent subsidy for that program.

Another major increase, presented by Burlington trustee Marg Bullock was in the cost of installing electronic surveillance systems in the school, expected to rise from \$65,679 last year to \$130,000 in 1982.

She explained that the systems were being upgraded so that they would not only detect motion in the schools, but also heat loss.

Finance committee members recommended a number of cuts in the budgets for school maintenance which drew expressions of concern. At the elementary level alone, Mrs. Bullock noted, \$211,000 was cut from maintenance. The total maintenance budget, however, is up by slightly more than \$1 million over 1981.

Milton trustee Bill Lawson noted that in its 1975 budget the board had drastically trimmed amounts for maintenance "and that caught up with us a couple of years later. I have some real reservations about what's suggested here."

Mr. Priestner explained that many of the maintenance budget cuts had been made to schools "that very likely won't be operating a year or two from now. We aren't cutting those areas where we expect the schools to remain in operation."

Soaring interest rates have also posed a problem

for the board, which must borrow money to finance its operations until tax payments are received from local councils.

In 1982 interest charges on short term borrowings are expected to cost the board \$641,648, up from \$553,316 in 1981.

Board chairman Len Auger asked why a reserve fund had not been started to finance operations in the short term and avoid "this extra profit that the taxpayers are giving to the banks."

Mr. Priestner said that move had been suggested in the first draft of the budget but had been cut because of the effect it would have on taxes.

"We decided to withdraw it when we got wind of what the grant situation was expected to do to the millrate," he said.

Mr. Priestner added that such moves had been carried out in the past when reserves were built up

to ease the burden of tax increases in future years, but that this was a year when such reserves would normally be spent.

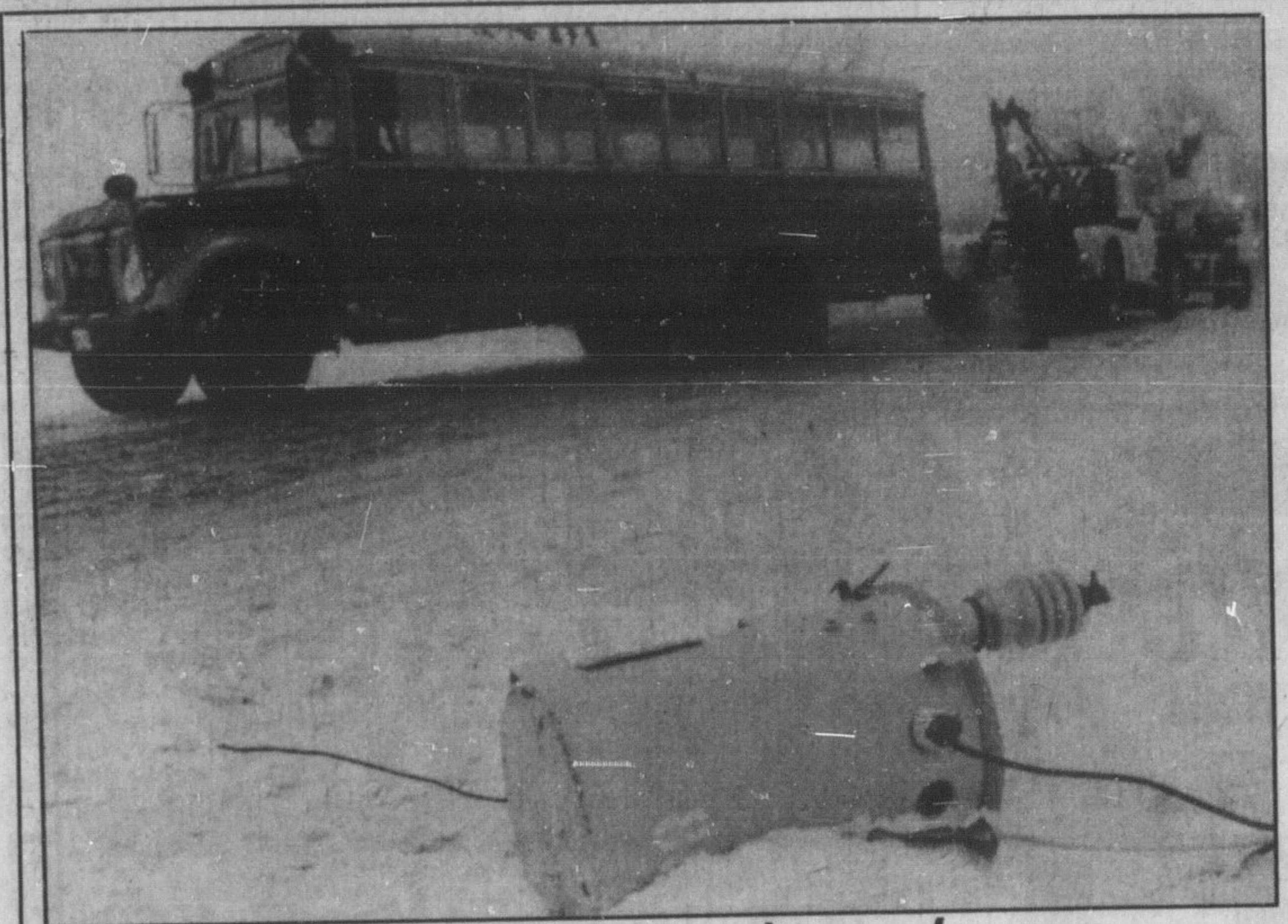
"Right now we are just too poor to get rich," he explained.

Barbara Moore, superintendent of business and finance, said action should be taken by the Board to have the Provincial Education Act changed to allow the board to collect interim taxes in the same way as local councils, rather than waiting until its budget is set, normally at the end of March.

One particularly painful move recommended by the committee was the elimination of free coffee and cookies at board meetings—a step which is expected to save about \$7,000.

Milton and Halton Hills trustee John Bradley bemoaned that proposal.

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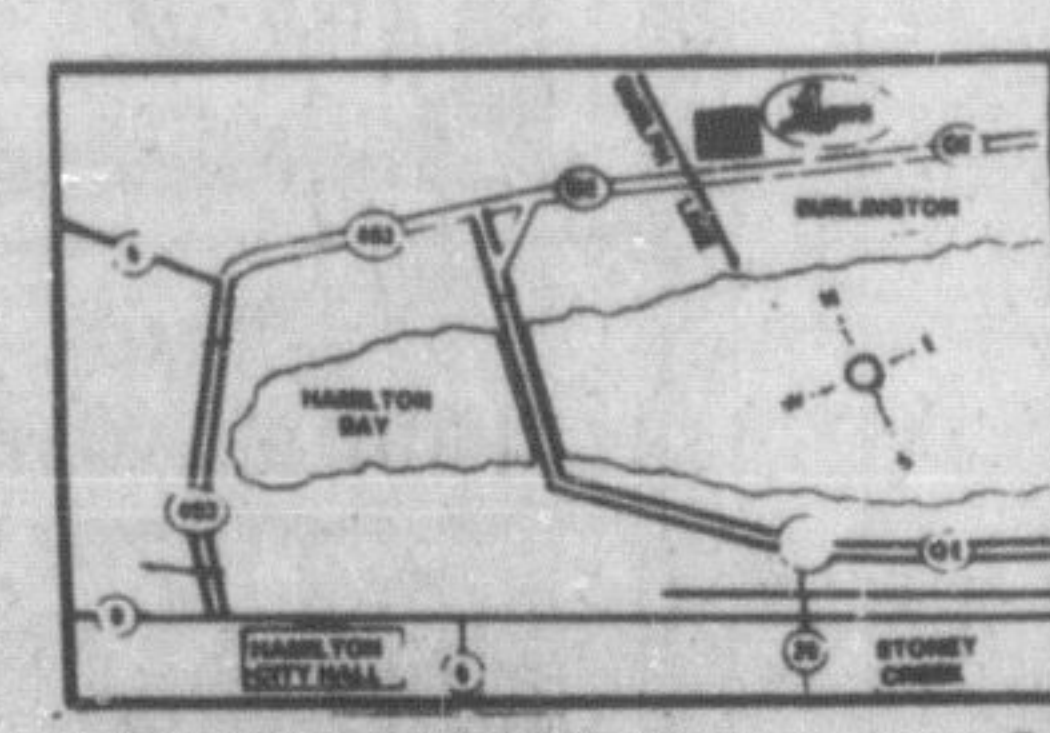


**RUTH WARRICK**  
(Phoebe Tyler in the ABC Television Network's & CHCH Channel 11's "ALL MY CHILDREN")  
"Citizen Kane" is usually the first thing that comes to mind when Miss Warrick is mentioned but that was only the beginning of her career in Hollywood, and far from the end! Some 20 other movies including "The Great Bank Robbery", a long run (and an Emmy nomination) as Hannah Cord in "Peyton Place", five years of daylighting on "As the World Turns", a starring role in the television series "Father of the Bride", guest star roles on television and a long list of plays have followed. And of course, she's the matriarch in "ALL MY CHILDREN".

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