

Students can stay another year

By DENNIS SMITH
Special to The Champion

Students at Burlington's Lord Elgin's Satellite Centre will be allowed to stay there for another school year if they wish.

The Halton District School Board has made the change following concerns expressed by parents about decentralizing the centre, which helps learning disabled students from throughout Halton, including Milton.

The board plans to open another Satellite Centre at White Oaks Secondary School (Oakville) next February and a third centre in north Halton in September, 1999.

"We're trying to expand the program and provide equity of access," noted board superintendent Brenda Kearney.

She said some students and parents were

Frustration vented over what is seen as slow pace

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

It has not been the quick, results-oriented review of municipal services Halton councillors expected.

Already the Halton Area Services Review (HASR) process has taken longer than anticipated. Committee members heard recently that a final report will not likely be completed until near the end of this term of council, in the autumn of 2000.

"This is going so slowly. It's not acceptable," said Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac, who originally proposed the review. "I'm seeing the entire term of council pass before my eyes before I see something happen."

Some results in the form of cost savings have been achieved, such as a reorganization of road maintenance and snow plowing. Planning has been reorganized in Halton, with a clearer delineation between regional and local responsibilities.

However, an attempt to create a north-south transit link did not fly.

The Pegasus bus link has been in operation for a year but it will likely be scrapped this fall. The general use transit program developed out of a north Halton service for the disabled.

The main road block to completing the service review is the question of roads. Currently there is a system of regional roads overlying the local road network. A study of the issue has been adopted which will not be completed until late 1999.

Mr. MacIsaac suggested streamlining a transportation study by removing several options it would consider. He explained that staff examining planning issues had trimmed their similar investigations. Mr. MacIsaac accused engineers considering transit administration of "including every conceivable option" and bogging down the process.

However, committee members refused to substantially reduce the study scope, agreeing only to take the option of a single municipal road authority off the table.

The committee also heard that police, fire and ambulance services could be consolidated. However labour issues forced discussions behind closed doors.

Oakville Fire Chief Wayne Gould explained that the preferred plan, a single employer, single collective agreement sys-

anxious about the changes but are feeling better now. "This gives them a year and a bit to make the transition," Ms Kearney noted.

The superintendent added teachers and instructional assistants will move with their particular students. "Only the room will change," said Ms Kearney.

Board officials have also noted the new centre will be more convenient for many, since 30 of 40 students at the Lord Elgin centre come from Oakville.

It has been estimated decentralization could save about half the \$50,000 in trans-

portation charges required for the program.

Students opting to stay another year at Lord Elgin will also have transportation costs covered by the board.

Placement in small groups and intensive support for half the school day are seen as key features of the program. Participating students have above-average intellectual ability, but have difficulty learning.

A parent representative recently complained to the board participants don't know what to expect from next year's programs and valuable peer support may be lost through decentralization.

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