

Teachers object to mandatory written tests for competency

By DENNIS SMITH
Special to The Champion

Written tests shouldn't be used to determine teacher competency, says the president of Halton's Catholic secondary teachers unit.

Joe Pece supports his provincial association's unanimous recommendation for its teachers to refuse Provincially-mandated written tests.

"Assessing competency involves knowledge of curriculum and material plus the rapport and relationship with the students. A written test could never evaluate this," he said. "The more important aspect of teaching is the ability to convey the message to students."

Last week, nearly 600 delegates to the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association general meeting voted against mandatory written competency tests for recertifying teachers. The testing is slated for June.

Pece said the College of Teachers already deals with teacher competency and school boards have performance reviews and in-class reviews of teachers.

Some areas of the United States have scrapped written tests because teachers had 98 per cent passing rates, noted Mr. Pece.

Teachers have one or more university degrees and probably won't find a written test in their expertise area to be tough, he said.

"The government has brought in sec-

ondary school reform and is fast-tracking many changes in education," said Mr. Pece. "To add a written test now, there would not be enough time to prepare for it."

He said generally teaching unit members he has spoken with feel the written test isn't appropriate.

Mr. Pece noted the College of Teachers is also opposed to the written tests for teachers.

Ministry of Education spokesperson David Ross confirmed tests will be introduced in June.

"But there are no specifics yet," he said. "We are still conducting research."

He said Ontario has excellent teachers and ministry officials are aware of teacher testing and recertification procedures in the United States.

"We plan to develop made-in-Ontario testing to ensure we have high-quality teachers," said Mr. Ross.

He said it hasn't been decided if all grade school teachers will be tested or how Catholic teachers will be encouraged to take tests. "We're not at that bridge yet."

Two sides squabbling

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keeping the lands under the NEP throughout the hearing.

But Mr. O'Kane attempted to show Friday that Ms Plaunt had been misleading in a number of written reports to the NEC, which may have helped sway its position on the issue. He tried to show the reports were riddled with misinformation, such as a reference to his client's lands as being part of the escarpment toe.

When she acknowledged the mistake, Mr. O'Kane jibed "today is March 17, 2000, and it occurs to you today that this is not accurate?"

Ms Plaunt responded by noting there are several references throughout her testimony and written reports that Mr. Curcuruto's

property isn't part of the escarpment toe.

But Mr. O'Kane argued that the contradictions in her report may have been confusing to NEC members.

The commission was clear on the issue when it took its vote on the applicant's lands, assured Ms Plaunt.

The errors in Ms Plaunt's reports were frequently referred to by Mr. O'Kane as sloppiness, rather than a deliberate intention to mislead.

That eventually prompted NEC lawyer Marianne Orr to interject. "The aim of this questioning goes to the credibility of Ms Plaunt. I think Mr. O'Kane is overdoing it."

An unapologetic Mr. O'Kane replied, "I don't intend to stop overdoing it."

Watch for our *Lifestyles* section in this Friday's issue of *The Champion*.

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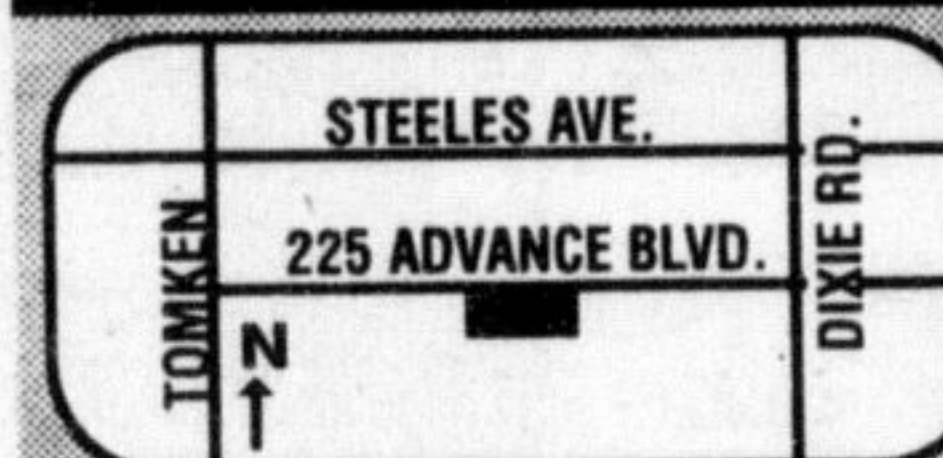
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THE POTENTIAL AMALGAMATION OF FLAMBOROUGH INTO HALTON REGION

HALTON REGION'S TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Last week, Halton Region released its *Technical Analysis and Discussion Paper* on the implications of a potential amalgamation of East Flamborough into the Region of Halton. This report does not take a position for or against the amalgamation. There will be a second report that makes recommendations for Regional Council to consider.

On **Thursday, March 23rd at 7:30 p.m.**, the Region is hosting a **Public Meeting** to present the results of the analysis, to answer questions and to hear your views about the Flamborough proposal.

On **Tuesday, March 28th at 8:00 p.m.** there will be a **Special Meeting of Halton Regional Council** to decide whether to support the amalgamation of East Flamborough into Halton.

The entire technical report can be viewed on Halton's web site at www.region.halton.on.ca.

These charts show the changes to municipal taxes for both Halton and East Flamborough residents and businesses if the amalgamation occurs:

Financial Impact on Halton Residents & Businesses		
	Change/Year	
Residential (CVA 185,000)	+\$6	0.2%
Commercial (CVA 200,000)	+\$93	1.3%
Industrial (CVA 200,000)	+\$36	0.3%

Financial Impact on East Flamborough Residents & Businesses				
	Change/Year			
	Low		High	
Urban Residential (CVA 175,000)	+\$482	16%	+\$790	27%
Commercial (CVA 200,000)	-\$2,844	25%	-\$3,169	28%
Industrial (CVA 200,000)	-\$2,706	17%	-\$3,058	20%

Notes:

- These are examples only. Actual taxes will vary based on the Current Value Assessment (CVA) for individual properties.
- Data based on assumption that East Flamborough's waste management, water/wastewater and asset/liability costs will be paid for by East Flamborough residents, rather than shared Halton-wide.
- The low numbers are based on Flamborough's calculations on the asset/liability costs, and the high numbers are the Hamilton Transition Board's calculations.

There are a number of other issues and policies that also must be considered. For example, what happens to the 9-1-1 service? How will Flamborough residents be represented on Regional Council? And, what if the Province transfers Highway #6 to Halton Region?

To express your views on these and any other issues, plan to attend the **Public Meeting on March 23rd** and/or the **Special Regional Council Meeting on March 28th**. Both meetings will be held at the Halton Regional Centre at 1151 Bronte Rd. in Oakville. For further information, please call the Regional Clerk's Office at (905) 825-6225.

For local inquiries:

Aldershot (905) 639-4540
Acton (519) 853-0501
Georgetown (905) 878-8113

