

Mackenzie says funding formula has nothing to do with education

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boards in Ontario," Mr. Birett said. "It (Halton's \$65 net gain) was not a windfall because we were told (by the ministry) where it had to be applied. It was used mostly by Catholic boards to provide additional staff to make sure we met the mandated (average) class size."

Mr. Birett said Catholic boards are in the same dire straits as their public counterparts in Ontario when it comes to stating they're underfunded in specifics areas like special education and transporta-

Like the public board, Halton's Catholic board had projected a \$4 million spending overrun for 2002-03, but made the cuts to bring in a balanced budget.

Still, Mr. Birett believes Mr.

Mackenzie's overall numerical research is accurate.

"I think it was a very thorough analysis of the funding that has been taken out of education. In that sense his work did a service to school boards in Ontario."

Mr. Mackenzie, director of research at the United Steelworkers of America, said he made a fundamental change to how he came up with his cost-adjusted per student dollar figures for each school

"This is the second year we've done this. The first time (2001) we did get some comment. She (then Education Minister Janet Ecker) said we shouldn't have used the 2001 Consumer Price Index (CPI)."

Mr. Mackenzie said in retrospect

he agreed with the criticism as the CPI measures only changes in the prices of goods and services while about 82 per cent of school board expenditures are on salaries and wages.

So, for the current CCPA report, Mr. Mackenzie used Statistics Canada data on average weekly salaries and wages to measure employment cost impacts.

Mr. Mackenzie had his own criticism of the government's funding formula.

"The funding formula has nothing to do with education because there are no educational principles in it," he said.

To view the full report visit CCPA's Web site at www.policyalternatives.ca.

Mow your way to healthier lawn

The secret to a healthy lawn isn't necessarily how much you water it, according to Halton Region.

In fact, how you mow could make a big difference.

The following are some tips to keep your lawn healthy while cutting down on the amount of water you use:

- Mow your lawn to a height of 6 to 8 cm. This will encourage longer roots and shade the soil, reducing moisture loss.
 - Longer grass will also choke

out weeds.

- Keep the blades of your mower sharp. Blunt blades tear the grass requires. rather than cut it and make it vulnerable to disease.
- · Alter the direction each time you cut the grass.
- Avoid cutting the grass when it's wet.
- Leave your grass clippings on the lawn after you've mowed.
- Grass clippings supply valuable nitrogen back into the soil, and since they are 80 to 90 per cent

water, they help to reduce the amount of water your lawn

- Leaving grass clippings on your lawn will not cause thatch
- Your lawn should only require 2.5 cm of water per week. Use an empty tune can or a rain gauge to measure.

For more water efficiency tips in the garden and around the house, contact Halton Region to receive the free Household Guide to Water Efficiency at (905) 825-6000.



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