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## Puppy love

Grade 12 Bishop Reding Secondary School student Taryn Dams cuddles with a bunch of little toy puppies available as part of a fundraiser for upcoming school band trips. The stuffed animals were for sale during the 14th annual Community Bazaar at Milton Mall Saturday.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

# Percy W. Merry School to close

BY TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

Martin Street School has been given a reprieve from closure but Percy W. Merry has been slated to close its doors, prompting one local resident to threaten the Halton District School Board with possible legal action.

Milton resident David McCann said a two-page letter from a lawyer was given to the board the morning of Wednesday night's meeting, where trustees voted 7-2 to close Percy Merry.

The junior kindergarten to grade 6 school on Britannia Road East is slated to close by June 2003.

Mr. McCann told trustees he and other parents believe the board's administration has discriminated against rural students who attend the school and

that there's a rural-urban student dichotomy supported by the board.

"The Halton board has intentionally targeted Percy W. Merry and created a low-enrolment status through discriminatory and inconsistent policies," he said.

He charged that school/pupil boundaries for forthcoming urban expansion lands haven't included Percy Merry's catchment area. He deemed the board's actions prejudicial and said they were done to ensure the eventual closure of Percy Merry.

"The board should review its (closure) decision," Mr. McCann said the next day. "I don't know if legal action will be launched. It has to be reviewed by the school council and parents at Percy Merry as to whether they want to proceed because of the expense."

Mr. McCann said he was told by the Ontario Human Rights Commission that a judicial review

of the board's decision would have to be requested in an Ontario civil court.

The Halton board had little to say at Wednesday's meeting about possible legal action against it, but when Mr. McCann insisted that a planner employed by the board had used the terms urban and rural students in a report, facilities superintendent Gerry Cullen responded to the accusation. "It's not about changing (school area) boundaries to reduce enrolment at a school."

He said planning is always done to accommodate future long-term growth in any area.

Education Director Dusty Papke said the board doesn't discriminate and that the boundary matter isn't an issue.

"It is not the Halton board's practice to designate students urban or rural. We could fill up any school we want to if you want to move boundaries. At the end (of the shuffle) you'll still have 20 empty

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## INSERTS

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- A&P • Shoppers Drug Mart • Zellers • Walmart • IDA
  - Toys R Us • M&M Meats • Town & Country Window Cleaning • Cristello's Village Market
  - Food Basics • Santa Claus Parade Donation Envelope
  - Canadian Tire • No Frills • Acton Garden Market
  - Hyundai • Ginos Pizza • Rogers Media • Beam
  - Bell Sympatico • Remax Blue Springs • Sears
  - Future Shop • Radio Shack
- \*Selected areas only

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