

Both boards will see unprecedented expansion

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Mr. Piovesan, in his second year as chief executive of the Catholic board, echoed those sentiments.

"We will be reviewing all operational areas which were impacted by the funding shortfall as well as new and emerging needs early in the new year," he said.

"It is clearly expected that the supplementary special education funds will provide increased levels of resources and services to those students. It is anticipated that additional resources will also be provided to support a wide range of academic programs as well as additional support services for our school facilities."

He noted that in the past year the board acquired more than 500 state-of-the-art computers for elementary and secondary school computer labs and offices. There was also a large acquisition of updated textbooks covering core subjects.

Both administrators acknowledged there has been and will con-

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ETHEL GARDINER

tinue to be a period of unparalleled physical expansion of their respective boards.

"The year 2002 provided the Catholic system with a period of

unprecedented growth with the opening of two elementary and two secondary schools and the addition of more than 1,000 students," said Mr. Piovesan.

The four new schools reduced the need for portable classrooms across the board, he said.

The Catholic board's more than 100 portables are now mould-resistant, air-conditioned models.

"We will continue refining short and long-term plans for building new schools and for renovating older school facilities," said Mr. Piovesan.

"It is anticipated that we will begin the construction of one new school and undertake second and third-phase renovations to several older schools."

Ms Gardiner said the Halton public board will see similar capital developments.

"In September 2003 our board will open three new elementary schools, and it is hoped a fourth will be near completion," she said.

"It is expected that in June of this year we will see quite a number of our principals and vice-principals retire. With them will go a vast amount of experience and knowledge. There is no question that we have people ready to assume these administrative positions. During the coming months, there will be great excitement as (new) school names are selected, principals and vice-principals are appointed and staff is chosen."

During the next school year, the General Brock-Lord Elgin integration plans in Burlington will be finalized in preparation for the September 2004 opening of the new composite high school. As well, construction will begin on the new Glen Abbey high school in Oakville.

Ms Gardiner said the Halton District School Board has started to address its very significant student accommodation issues and that "this emotional and difficult topic will continue to be a high priority as we review the Capital Strategic Plan (CSP)."

There will be a public meeting on revisions to the CSP Wednesday.

Another contentious issue, one affecting many senior high school students at all boards across the province, is the double cohort graduation.

"Students from grade 12 and OAC will leave our secondary schools. It remains to be seen whether or not universities and colleges are prepared to accommodate these graduating students," said Ms Gardiner.

Accountability and flexibility at both school boards is also a hot topic.

"Another component to our commitment to continuous improvement was the establishment of a systemic audit committee, composed of a broadly-based representation of system stakeholders who undertook and completed a review of our strengths and areas needing improvement," said Mr. Piovesan.

The process of implementing the recommendations in the committee's report will be undertaken in 2003, he said.

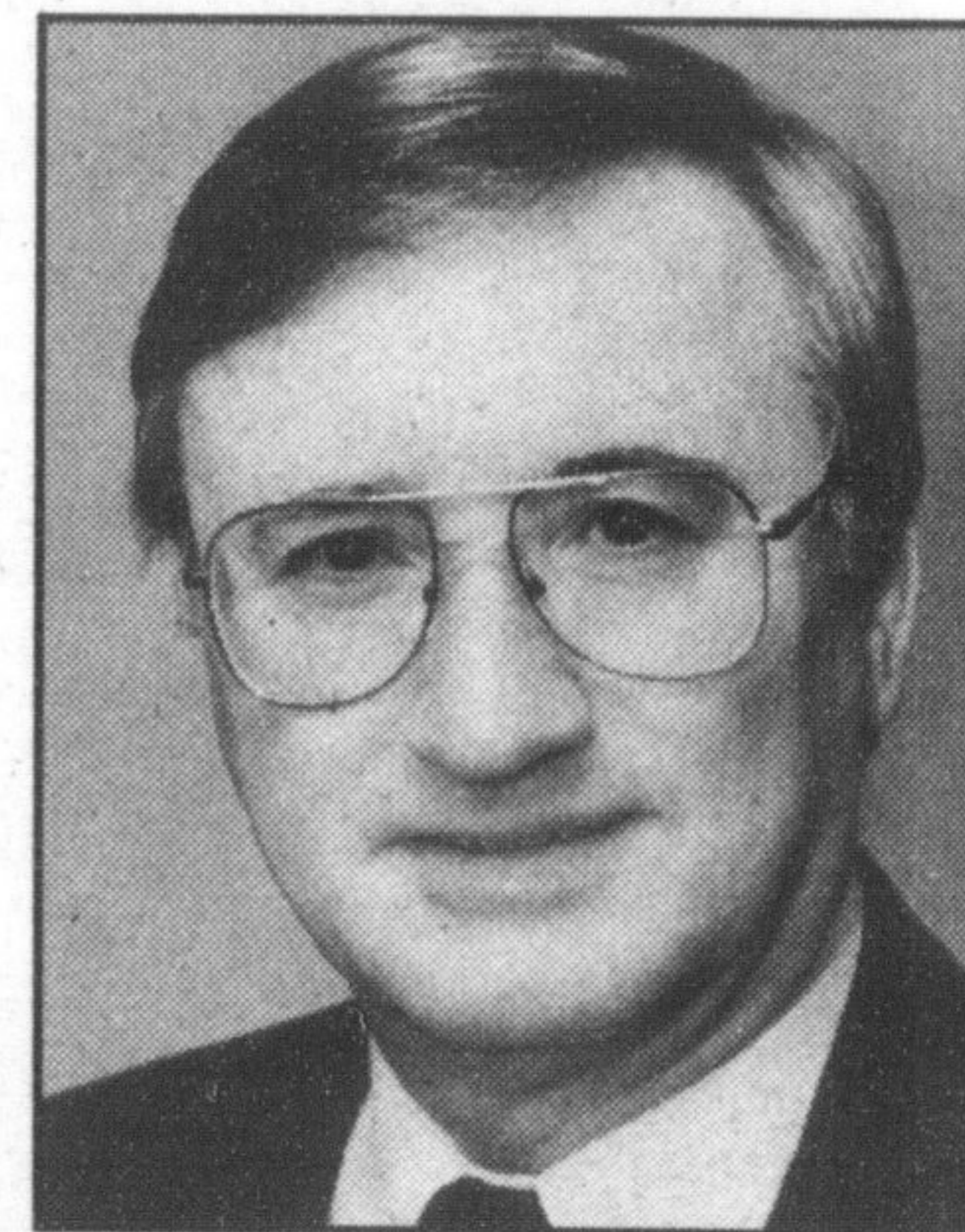
Ms Gardiner said that during 2003 her board's strategic outcomes plan, which focuses on student achievement, will be implemented with accountability agreements in place to ensure compliance.

"For the first time in the history of the Halton board, policies are in place, which focus on student achievement," she said.

"Our strategic outcomes will be measured and regularly monitored with the results communicated to the public. We will present data to ensure accountability for student achievement."



Ethel Gardiner



Lou Piovesan



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Fire wasn't visible

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is what the camera was used for in this particular call, as all occupants of the home were able to get outside before the smoke spread.

"We could hear the fire but we couldn't see it," said Acting Captain Michael McConnell, who was on scene. "This was the first time we've used the thermal imaging camera in a structure fire. We thought the fire was out but we saw on the camera the fire was in the ceiling. The camera definitely saved the dollar value (of damage)."

About \$40,000 damage was caused.