

# Board receives some opposition to new timetable

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efits children," she said of the balanced day.

"A lot were under the impression there would have been more information forthcoming before a decision was made."

Ms Boyda said she had been looking for the results of a survey of the pilot school participants but didn't see it on the board's Web site until recently.

However, the board did make the survey's general results public by discussing them at a school board meeting April 2.

Suzanne Earle, the assistant superintendent of education who delivered the decision to go with the balanced timetable, tried to allay some of the criticism at the May 7 board meeting.

"The idea of a balanced day has been discussed around the board for about two years, and most intensely since September 2002 and the implementation of the pilot project," said Ms Earle.

"We don't deny there are concerns out there from small groups of parents and communities. It is the intention of staff to review the implementation of the balance day timetable some time next (school) year."

Still, it's Ms Boyda's belief that the balanced day isn't welcome at Pauline Johnson School. She said she was at a school council meeting recently and that two teachers there didn't want to switch school schedules.

"They were speaking on behalf of their (school) colleagues (but) a teacher can't speak out (publicly) because that jeopardizes their position with the board," said Ms Boyda.

Oakville Trustee Mary Chapin said she has received letters of concern from two middle schools in her ward.

Ms Earle noted she had only just seen the correspondence and would contact the writers soon to address their worries.

Ms Chapin also wondered why no school in her east Oakville constituency was part of the pilot project.

"They didn't volunteer for it," was Mr. Papke's answer. The board's top administrator noted staff had wanted to run a greater number of pilot projects but didn't get the expected response.

Ms Earle's report to the board noted parents, students and staff at the eight pilot schools completed surveys about the balanced timetable at the end of March with the "majority of survey respondents from all three groups" agreeing the new schedule was an improvement over the old one.

Trustee Peggy Russell of Burlington asked how many school boards in Ontario are using the balanced day approach.

Ms Earle responded that the Simcoe board has about 11 schools participating while the Peel public board has two and the Hamilton-Wentworth board has one.

She added that other boards were still deciding whether to go with the new schedule as a family of schools or board-wide.

Mr. Papke jumped into the discussion saying he believes Simcoe has "significantly" more than 11 schools utilizing the balanced day schedule and that the two in Peel have employed it for "quite a few years now."

Nelson High School student trustee David Waugh said he thought the new schedule was being implemented too quickly with the jump from a pilot project to almost all of Halton's approximately 70 elementary schools.

The education director half-agreed. "In a way it's a big jump because it's all schools but in other ways it isn't because we had pilot projects done," said Mr. Papke.

Board Chair Ethel Gardiner said school

councils in her wards in north Halton were leery of the concept at first but like it now.

"I've not had one call or letter from a parent with a concern about the balanced schedule. We have a lot of data based on

the eight pilot projects," she said.

One area where Ms Gardiner said she can see some difficulty is with parents who like to have their children at home for lunch.

"The schedule is at odds, there is no doubt about it," she said.

More information on the balanced day timetable can be viewed on the board's Web site at [www.haltondsb.on.ca](http://www.haltondsb.on.ca).

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