

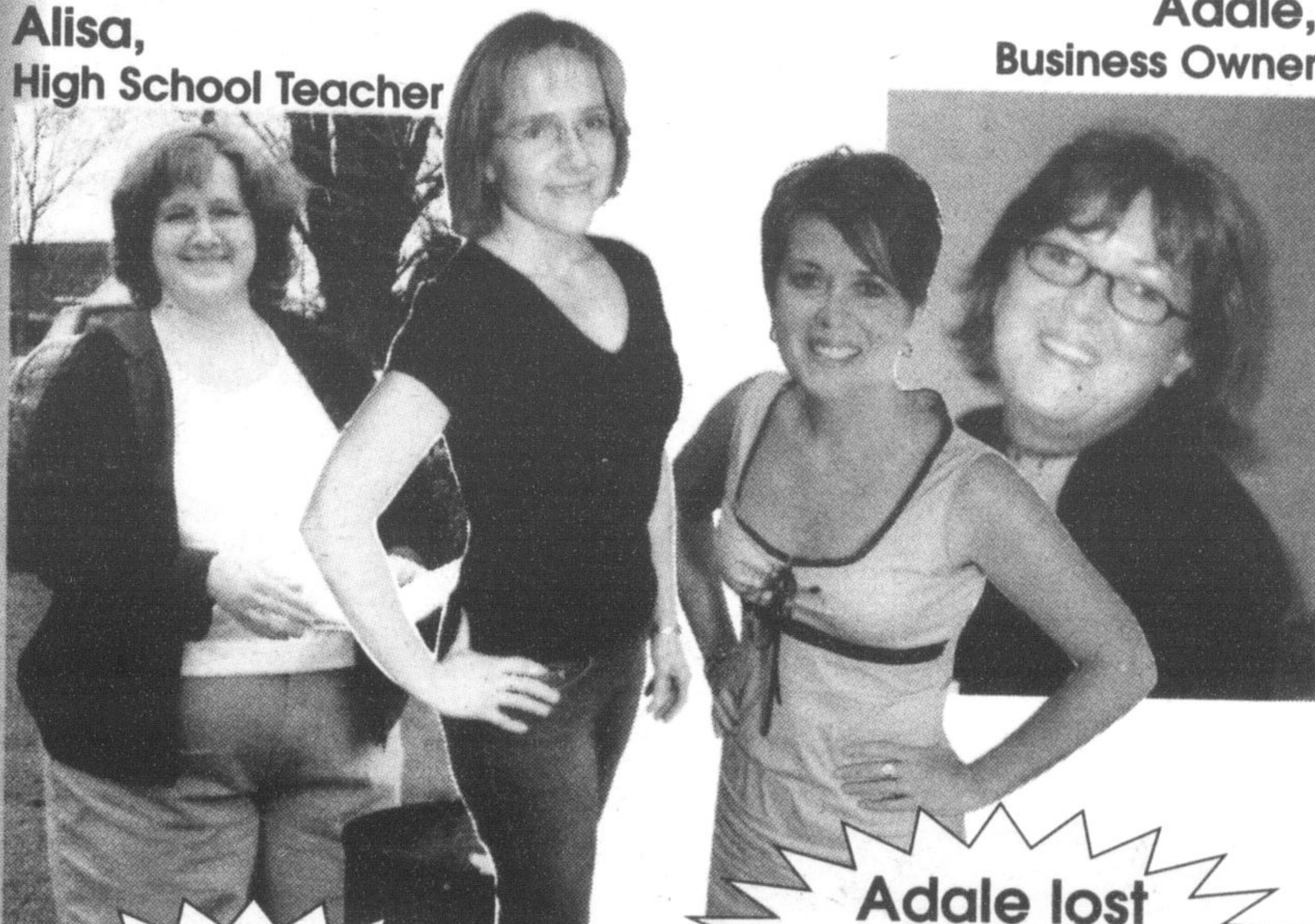
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Teachers' union pink lists the public school board

ETFO asks new educators not to apply for work at board

By **ROBB SWYBROUS**

Special to *The Champion*

The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) is pink listing the Halton District School Board, effectively asking teachers from across Canada not to apply to any teaching positions in Halton until further notice.

Emily Noble, president of ETFO, admits the union is hoping to use the action to jump-start contract talks between it and the board. Halton's elementary school teachers have been without a contract since last August and the two sides have yet to agree on a new deal.

"(The pink listing) just tells teachers across Canada that this board has outstanding contract issues and not to apply there for the time being," Mr. Noble said. "We're hoping this will bring the two sides back to the table."

Maureen Weinberger, president of ETFO Halton, said the region's elementary school teachers are anxious to get what they would consider a fair deal in place.

"On June 5, elementary public school teachers voted 95.8 per cent in favour of strike action. We are demanding improvements to our salaries and working conditions," Mr. Weinberger said.

"We have been very patient. The board has settled with all its other employee groups. Since Halton hires new elementary teachers during July and August, ETFO's pink listing will continue to focus attention on our issues."

ETFO Halton represents the 1,600 teachers in the region's elementary public schools who teach roughly 29,000 public elementary students.

There are 65,000 public elementary school teachers and education workers in Ontario who are members of ETFO, making it the largest teachers' federation in Canada outside of Quebec.

Move won't have immediate effect, says board official

Dawn Beckett-Morton, the board's lead negotiator for contract issues, said the pink listing won't necessarily have an immediate effect on the board, since it has hired almost all of the new teachers it will need for the beginning of the

2003-04 school year.

"The majority of our hiring for September is done. But for vacancies that come up in the fall, there could be a problem," she said.

The board says it has hired 114 new teachers for September, many of whom accepted positions after interviews throughout June.

Ms Beckett-Morton said there will likely be only a handful of positions that need filling in the fall.

The board lists its job openings on its Web site and is currently accepting applications for eight positions.

Four are full-time jobs, while the other four are part-time positions.

The board says it currently employs 1,592 teachers. As for contract negotiations, Ms Beckett-Morton said the board has a written offer on the table for its elementary teachers, but has yet to hear back from the union.

"It's up in the air. We hope to have a deal in place by September but we'll see," she said.

The board already has agreements in place for its secondary school teachers, office and clerical workers and professional student service workers, but its educational assistants still await a new employment contract.

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