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**A GOOD NEIGHBOUR:** Seven-year-old Brad Dendecker shows a tire recovered from the Sixteen Mile Creek as part of Good Neighbours Community Day Saturday. He was out with other volunteers cleaning up the creek in the community initiative. See more photos from the event on page A8.

## Trustees want strict control of surveys

By David Lea  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Some student surveys may soon find themselves unwelcome within the schools of the Halton Catholic District School Board after trustees passed a motion last Tuesday that would require their approval before they reach the classroom.

The motion, introduced by Joanne Matters, called on staff to draft a policy allowing for trustee approval of board surveys and pilot projects that are morally sensitive or controversial.

"It is necessary for trustees to be made aware of such surveys and pilot projects that impact the students entrusted to our care before such surveys and pilot projects are initiated," said Matters in her rationale for the motion.

"While it is recognized that many surveys and pilot projects of varying origins and intentions are routinely implemented within the board, the intent of this policy is to address those surveys and pilot projects that are of a serious nature."

Many trustees immediately voiced concerns with the practical implications of such a motion.

"Who is going to decide what surveys (are examined) and what surveys are of a morally contentious nature?" said Oakville Trustee Alice Anne LeMay.

"What is a controversial survey?" asked Burlington student trustee Ryan Durran.

Matters did not provide a specific example or any indication of the type of surveys the board was hoping to guard against with this policy, noting that these questions would be dealt with at a later date.

"That's something that can be addressed in the policy that will be developed by our staff," she said. "It's a

good question and we have to grapple with that. On one hand it's quite complicated and on the other it's quite simple and obvious."

The call for required trustee approval of surveys and pilot projects comes in the wake of the Halton Youth Survey created by the Our Kids Network.

Asking questions like, "In the last 12 months, have you seriously considered suicide or taking your own life?" the survey was issued to Halton schools in an effort to determine what places children were thriving and what places they were not.

The survey was not well received by some parents who brought their concerns to local trustees.

Despite the fact that alterations to the questions in future Halton Youth Surveys have been agreed upon, the motion went forward and passed.

• Learn more about the survey page A10

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