

OPINION

Censoring surveys could cause more harm than good

We find it unsettling that a motion that could ultimately have Halton Catholic District School Board trustees acting as censors could be approved with so little background information offered publicly.

Last week's motion introduced by Burlington Trustee Joanne Matters calls for staff to draft a policy calling for trustee approval of surveys and pilot projects that are "morally sensitive or controversial in nature."

While Matters believes trustees should be aware of student surveys and pilot projects before they're initiated, some around the board table — including one student trustee — voiced concern about how her motion would be put into practice.

Specifically, Matters was asked who would be deciding which surveys are examined and who would determine what constitutes morally-sensitive or controversial content in a survey.

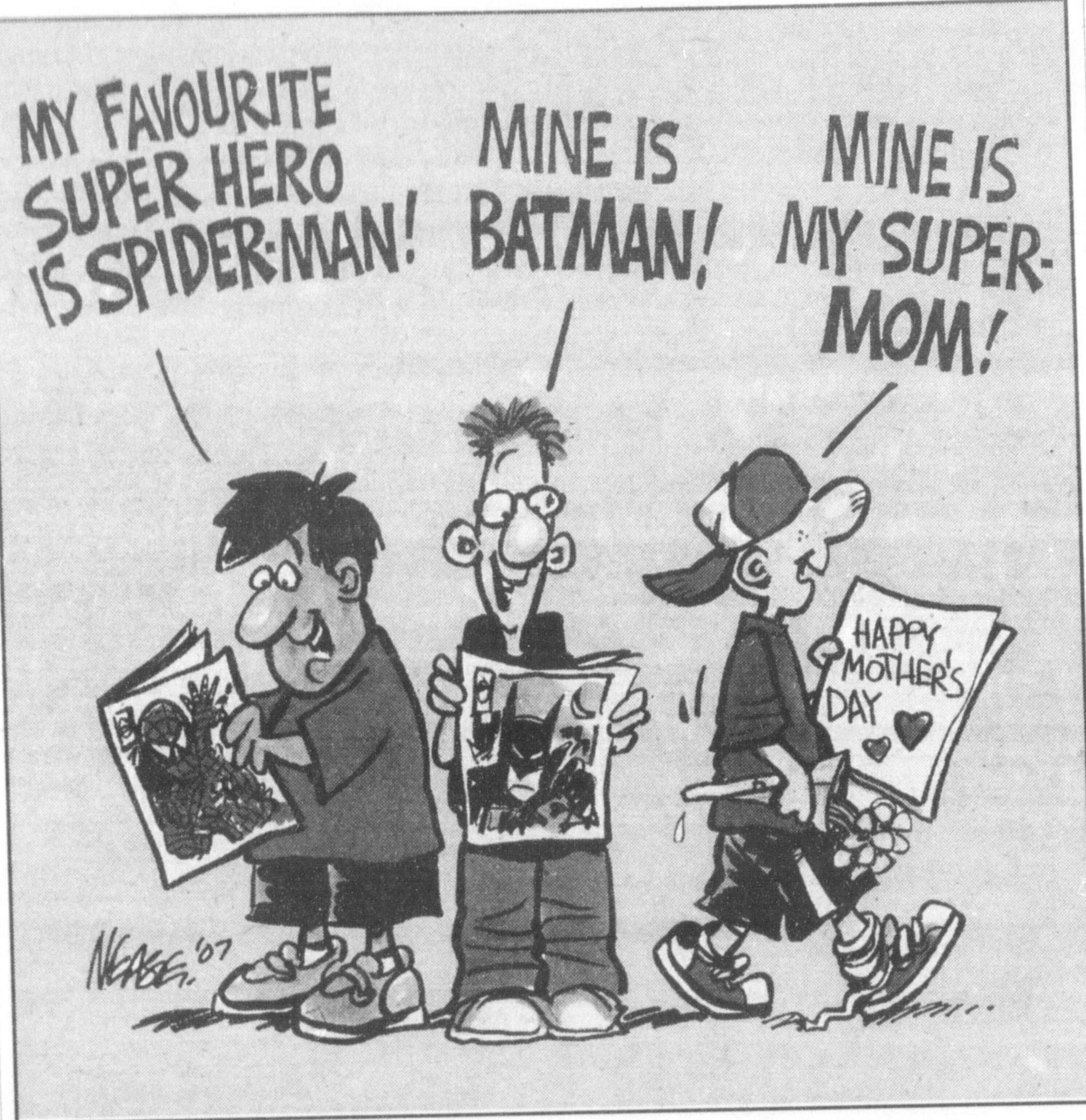
The trustee offered no specific examples of controversial surveys a new board policy might guard against, offering, "That's something that can be addressed in the policy that will be developed by our staff."

We don't envy those board staff burdened with the responsibility of hammering out the details of a policy that Matters herself isn't prepared to put into context.

What we do know is that some parents complained to the board and the media following a recent Halton Youth Survey distributed by Our Kids Network. The voluntary survey asked direct questions such as whether students had ever contemplated suicide or used tobacco, drugs or alcohol. Unfortunately, a letter sent home to parents in advance of the survey's distribution didn't provide detailed examples of what kind of questions would be asked. Still, is it the questions students are being asked or their potential answers that Matters is most worried about?

While drug use and thoughts of suicide among our young people are disturbing, ignoring their existence won't make the problem go away.

Censoring these surveys won't put the lid back on Pandora's box. It may, however, negatively skew invaluable data that helps providers of important health and social services for youth determine where the greatest needs exist in Halton.



ReadersWrite

E-mail your letters to miltone@haltonsearch.com.

Let's recognize nurses this week

DEAR EDITOR:

In every role at every level, you will find our nurses. From leaders to educators to clinical specialists, the nurses of Saint Elizabeth Health Care (SEHC) dare to make a difference every day.

They not only provide the best care for communities and families across the province, they are transforming the landscape of health care — making client-centered care a reality.

During National Nurses Week (May 7 to 13), SEHC would like to recognize and thank our nurses for their commit-

ment to heal, educate, comfort and support people in their communities.

Over the past year, SEHC has achieved many great things, including recognition as one of Canada's 50 Best Employers and a Best Practice Spotlight Organization. This would not have been possible without the energy and excellence of our nurses, who touch the lives of countless people everyday.

**SHARON ROBSON, MANAGER
HALTON SERVICE
DELIVERY CENTRE
SAINT ELIZABETH HEALTH CARE**

The view from here

Here's to mom — my role model, confidante and friend

How do you thank someone who has devoted the past 26 years of her life to you?

I'm sure by now my mom is tired of getting cards and trinkets for Mother's Day, so I thought I'd use this space to pay tribute to the most kind and caring woman I know — someone I aspire to be like every day.

Ask anyone who knows my mom and they would agree that she's the type of person who's always willing to bend over backward to help someone else.

In fact, I never realized how much she was doing for me until I moved out with my husband several years ago.

Suddenly my days were filled with cooking and cleaning on top of working full time and I couldn't help but wonder how my mom managed to do it with me and my sister in tow.

In fact, I couldn't believe she never threw

in the towel or complained about the laundry, the dishes, the grocery shopping, etc...

On top of all that, she had to listen to the never-ending woes of two teenage girls. Boy troubles. Friend troubles. School troubles. But she was always willing to listen.

In fact, to this day she's the first person I call if I have a problem. No matter how old you get, there's just something comforting about talking to your mother during times of trouble.

Often we talk almost every day on the phone, even if it's just to say how our days went at work.

I like to think in a lot of ways I'm similar to my mom and that any good qualities I have come from her.



Melanie Hennessey

Just by following her example over the years I've learned to always be kind to others, don't judge a book by its cover, don't give to receive and don't waste your time holding grudges.

She also taught me to appreciate the little things. In fact, I'm sure if I just gave her a copy of this column for Mother's Day she'd be more than happy.

So Mom, I know I may not always say it, but I truly do appreciate everything you've done for me over the years.

Thanks for listening, caring, protecting, loving, worrying, believing in, supporting and looking out for me.

But most of all I'm thankful that I don't just have a mom — I have a best friend.

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