

OPINION

Does Halton need homework reform?

Are teachers heaping too much homework on today's students or are after-school assignments taking a backseat to part-time jobs, sports, video games and Myspace.com with our children?

It's the question being bandied about at the Toronto District School Board, where two student trustees have proposed homework reform that would limit assignments being sent home with children and teens.

Most school boards in the GTA follow a guideline of assigning five to 10 minutes of work per grade, per evening. That means a Grade 1 student can expect five to 10 minutes of homework per day on average, while a Grade 6 student should anticipate a daily average of 30 to 60 minutes.

According to the Halton District School Board's website (www.haltondsb.on.ca) Grade 7 to 10 students should be prepared to face four to 10 hours of homework per week.

The same website defines four different categories of homework: completion — anything not completed in class; practice — review and reinforcement of learning presented in class; preparation — home preparation for the next day's class work and extension/creative — creative applications that integrate and/or expand upon classroom learning.

Halton's public board characterizes homework as "an aid in developing life-long learning skills such as self-discipline, task commitment, time management, responsibility, independence, initiative and problem solving. Homework is one means of demonstrating and building the partnership between home and school that leads to more consistent school success."

We would like to hear what you think about homework.

We welcome anyone — but especially students, parents and educators — to share their views with *Champion* readers.

Is there too much, not enough or just the right amount of work being sent home with students today?

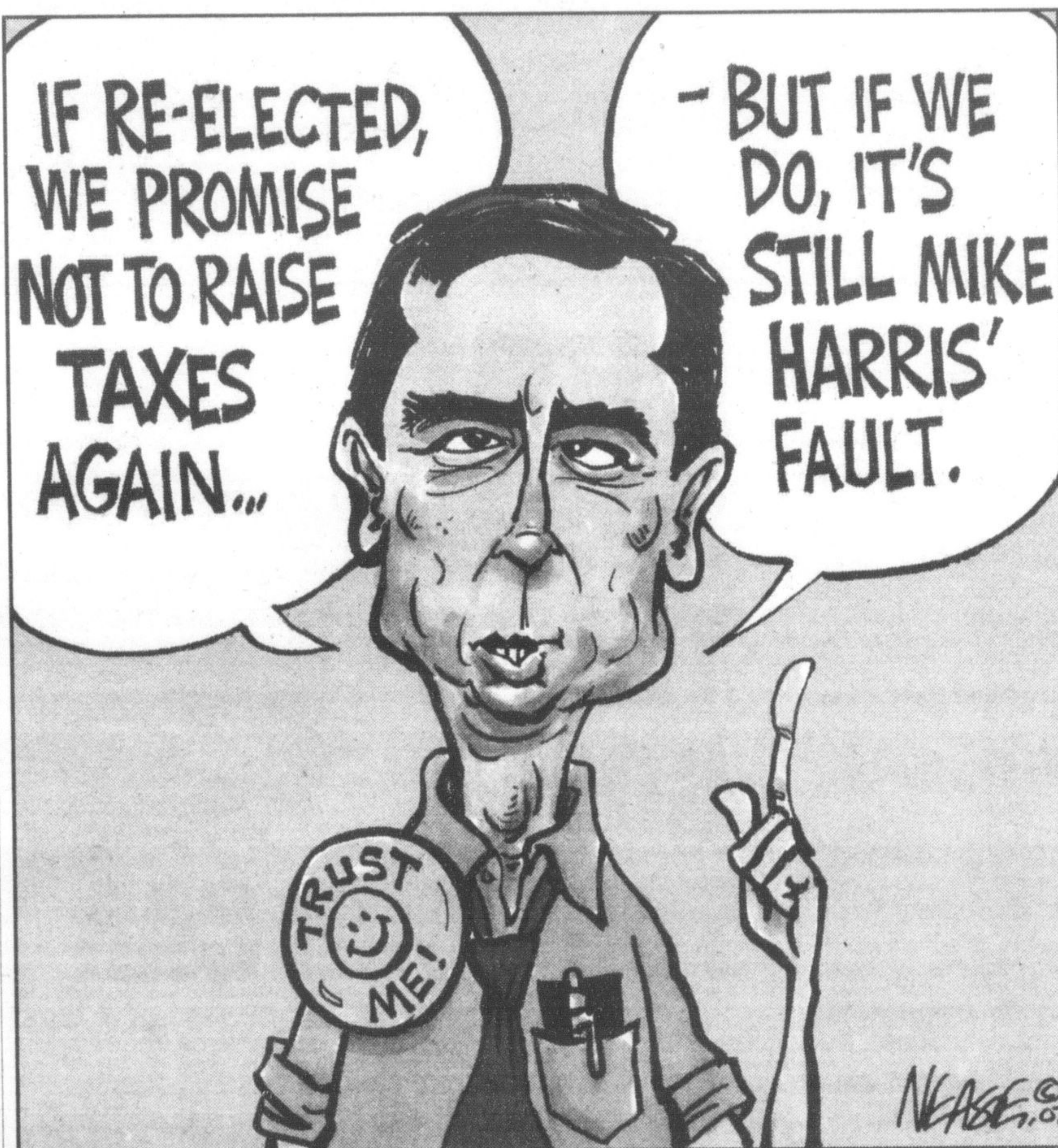
Are parents taking enough of a proactive approach to their child's education by keeping a watchful eye on their progress?

Do Mom and Dad know how much homework their child is assigned each day — or each week?

Are families designating time every evening for the completion of homework?

Send your thoughts to miltomed@haltonsearch.com.

The *Champion* will highlight the most interesting responses in future editions.



ReadersWrite

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

Thanks to everyone who made family fun day such a big success

DEAR EDITOR,

On June 2, Hornby Co-operative Nursery School held its annual Family Fun Day and Silent Auction.

The day was a huge success, raising more than \$3,900. The funds will help improve our current programs, which include a morning pre-school program, an afternoon kindergarten enrichment

program and a summer camp.

A big thank-you goes out to all of the Hornby families that helped organize the event, as well as the local businesses in Milton and Halton Hills that donated items to the silent auction.

**MEAGHAN CHRISTIE, PRESIDENT
HORNBY CO-OPERATIVE
NURSERY SCHOOL**

Editor'sdesk

The truth hurts, but the truth is — knowledge is power

My husband and I went up north for our first wedding anniversary last week, and I do mean up north. We went as far as the picturesque Lake Superior, a great water body every Ontarian should see.

I hadn't been that far north since I was a small child — an experience I don't remember. So it was all new to me as we travelled farther north than what we know as cottage country to explore the land unknown in my mind.

Of course it's natural to compare your vacation destination to home in many ways. That I did, noticing the most difference in the nature of both the lands and the people.

On the way back, we drove through Manitoulin Island and took the ferry across Lake Huron to Tobermory.

As we drove homeward down Hwy. 6, farmland was in abundance, a nice sight to

see. But as I gazed at the Niagara Escarpment close to home, I commented to my husband, "It's beautiful here, too."

He agreed and asked, "What do they have that we don't have?"

"Cleaner air," I responded without thinking twice.

He couldn't help but agree.

And many others know, too, about our pollution levels, especially with the town's population growing so rapidly.

A report from Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal noted that north Halton residents — anxious about the pace of development in their communities — have expressed the need for better information about air quality.

And for good reason, too. A growing community no doubt will mean rising pollution

levels. And what will be the environmental and human impacts of that increased pollution?

In response last week, Halton Region's health and social services committee endorsed an initiative that would see a stationary air monitor set up in Milton — since they already exist in south Halton — and a portable monitor purchased to measure air pollution in different locations across the community. And it was passed by regional council Wednesday.

The initiative will allow the Region to track air quality in north Halton as development occurs. Stay tuned...

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Karen Miceli

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