

# No penalty for students' late work in public board

*Halton District School Board policy made mandatory this school year*

By Tim Whitnell  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Teachers with the Halton District School Board no longer take marks off student assignments for lateness, the *Champion* has learned.

The policy — actually included in the Province's curriculum overhaul of 1999 but only made mandatory this school year — calls for a mark of zero per cent to be given only if the work is not ever handed in.

The practice, which a board superintendent says isn't only board policy but an expectation of the Ministry of Education, has drawn the ire of a senior Halton-area student.

In her Views From a Student column in the *Champion's* sister paper, the Burlington Post, Grade 12 Nelson High School student Sabrina Shaheen says such a practice is unfair to conscientious students like her who get their homework done on time.

Ultimately, she believes the board policy doesn't do dawdling students any favours in the long run.

"Students will suffer when they graduate," she said of those who do not meet deadlines established by teachers. "... Education is essential in our competitive society. An education system should teach teenagers how to live in the real world. Instead of being aware, students in the Halton District School Board are living in a bubble and are becoming unaccountable to the subjects and their teachers.

"Who is responsible for creating the unaccountable child? Whether it is teachers, parents or society, it will be everybody's problem once these students graduate," added Shaheen.

E.C. Drury High School principal Donna Taylor, however,

## Charges dropped in sex assault case

Sexual assault charges against two Milton men have been dropped.

Charges against Abdul Majid Abdul Wahed, 20, and Noorallah Nawrozada, 25, were withdrawn January 11 at Ontario Court of Justice in Burlington.

"The Crown came to the conclusion there was no longer a reasonable prospect of conviction," said Brandan Crawley, a spokesperson for the Ministry of the Attorney General, adding he couldn't give any specific information about the case.

Abdul Wahed and Nawrozada were each charged with sexual assault in March of 2007 in connection with an alleged attack against a 13-year-old Milton girl.

sees merit in the policy.

"It's designed to separate a student's ability from their behaviour. When this first came in there was fear there would be a teacher revolt, but I'm not sure it's much different than what some teachers were doing before in terms of having some flexibility for students who feel overwhelmed and can't get some work in on time," said Taylor, who says she leaves the policy practice up to individual teachers. "It's about being reasonable. A zero (mark) will be made, but only as a last resort. Students can't expect to be able to hand everything in at the end of the semester."

Milton District High School principal Ian Jones admits the practice has made things more difficult for teachers, but that it hasn't caused much disruption.

"There's no denying the standard knock against it (policy) is that we're not preparing students for the real world. But my intention is to give students a window of opportunity to show they've learned the material. It hasn't really been a big issue here."

Casey Kalvaitis, president of the Halton chapter of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, said he recently received a copy of a memorandum from the Ontario Ministry of Education, under the title Growing Success, which directly addresses the issue of marking late and missed assignments.

"Teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that are fair to all students," states part of the ministry document.

It later lists nine methods for dealing with late and missed assignments. The last entry, related to reducing marks, says

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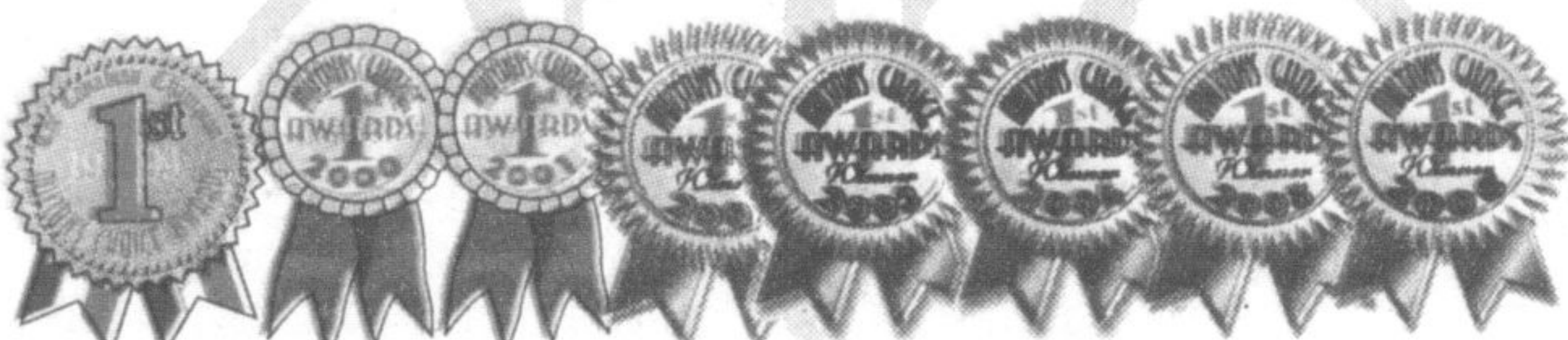
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