

Ontario's deaf education may be best — Bartu

By LISA TALLYN

A review of hearing impaired schools might just prove Ontario schools are the best on the continent, says Paul Bartu, acting superintendent for E.C. Drury School for the Hearing Impaired.

Mr. Bartu was responding to criticism directed by Queen's Park NDP member Richard Johnston in the Legislature Thursday.

"I think that he has made a set of broad and sweeping statements, some of which are overstated," said Mr. Bartu.

Mr. Johnston, the NDP's education critic, called for a review of the hearing impaired education system by November.

He slammed the current system on a number of points and called for an assessment of teaching standards, a determination of why there are so few deaf teachers working within the system, increase in public accountability of deaf schools, an increase in the roles of the deaf community for setting their own educational policies, and a possible introduction of American Sign Language as the language of instruction.

Mr. Bartu says he welcomes the opportunity for a review. "We are always open to finding better ways to do things."

But, he adds, a review might determine the hearing impaired education system in Ontario is one of the best in North America.

Mr. Bartu said he cannot see any benefit to introducing American Sign Language across the board.

The 235 students at E.C. Drury are taught and communicate with Signed English. They have been using that system since 1984/85. Signed English is a form of communication where words and sentences are signed just as they would be written or spoken.

American Sign Language is a language of its own.

"It doesn't correspond with what we use in the three provincial schools. It has a syntax that is unique, and its vocabulary and word order is different."

He said most E.C. Drury students become proficient in the language on their own, by talking with other deaf adults. The American Sign Language is most often used when deaf children also have deaf parents.

"It is impossible to standardize a language, and it's important to develop English skills in our students."

He says there is no one international language used by the hearing impaired, and adds the language used at the only deaf university in North America, Gallaudet in Washington, D.C., is likely a version of "Pigeon Signed English."

The superintendent is supportive of adopting the introduction of American Sign Language into the provincial system as a heritage language, however.

Mr. Johnston questioned the teaching standards used in the system pointing to the fact the bulk of deaf secondary school graduates only have a Grade 4 reading ability.

Mr. Bartu says achieving that level is realistic, and that it's not unusual for deaf students everywhere to have a lower level of academic achievement.

"In some cases we are teaching profoundly deaf children, who have been deaf since birth or an early age. It is difficult to ever get these children on par with hearing children because of the language barrier."

In response to Mr. Johnston's question of why there are so few deaf teachers in the system, Mr. Bartu says that is caused by historical facts.

In 1920, there were 17 deaf teachers working in the province. Of 170 teachers working at Ontario

schools for the deaf now, only eight are deaf.

Mr. Bartu said between 1920 and 1973 signing deaf students could not obtain teaching credentials. That changed in 1973, and the superintendent says it is taking a few years for some of those students to work their way toward teaching positions.

There are currently eight hearing impaired teachers at E.C. Drury.

In relation to Mr. Johnston's call for increased accountability of the system to the public, Mr. Bartu says that's a good idea in theory, but in practice has been difficult to maintain.

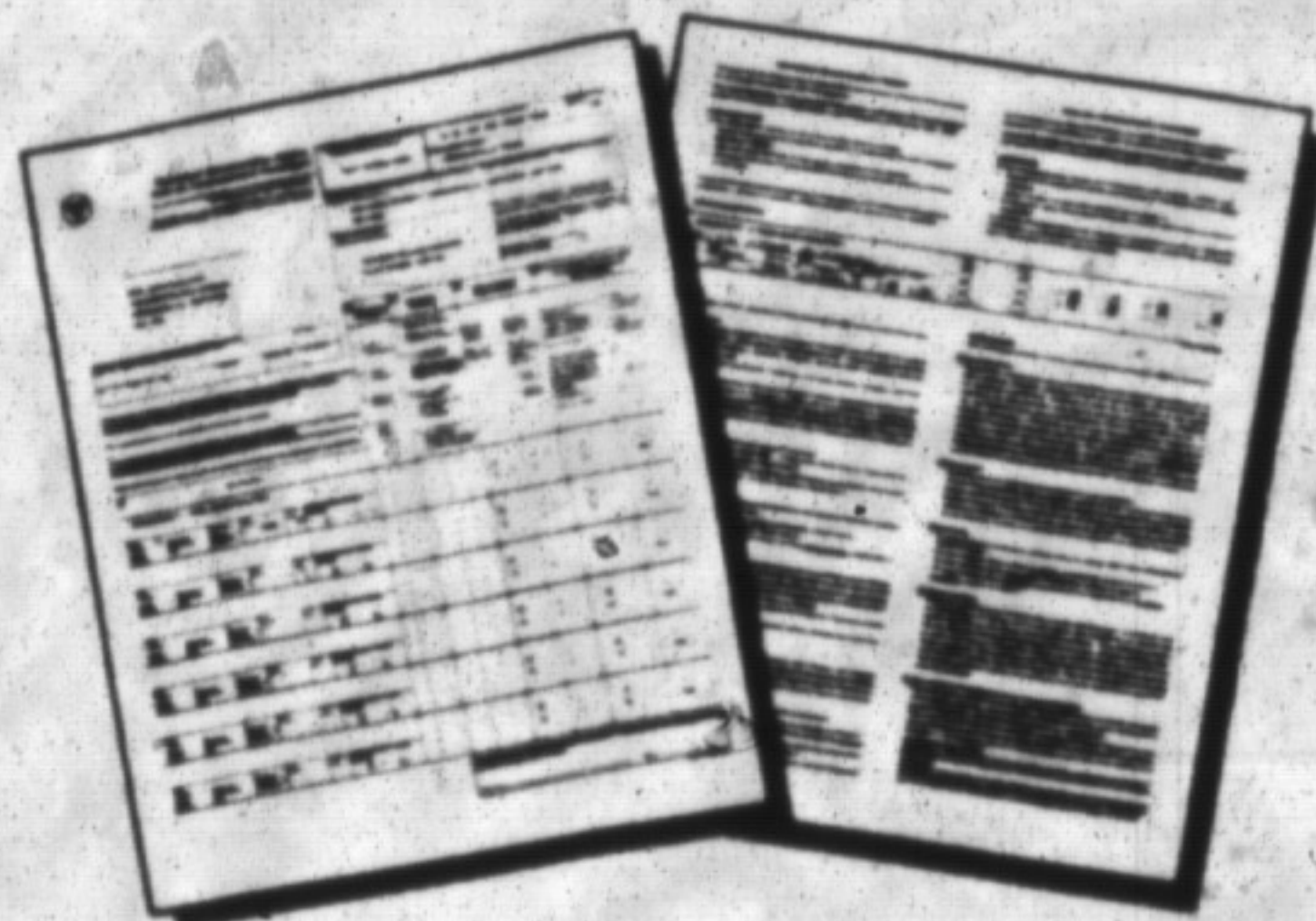
"We draw our student population from such a widespread area, including Niagara, Waterloo, to Simcoe and Barrie, that it's difficult to maintain parent contact. If the review can find better ways to establish that, we would welcome them."

Don't be missing on May 12th!

May 12th is the date by which the Municipal Enumeration Notice mailed to your household must be completed and returned.

Five easy steps to complete your notice

Step 1. Just look at the front of the notice and check the information shown. That's all you have to do. The explanations on the back are to give you further details if you need them.



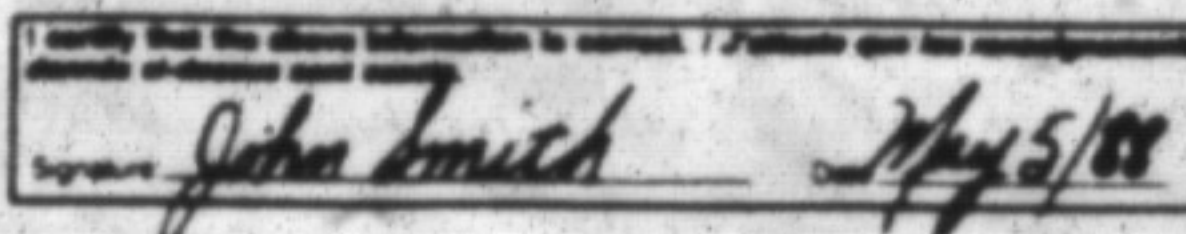
Step 2. If any of the information shown about occupants is incorrect, simply cross it out and write in the correction. Add information about new occupants, including children. If you don't have enough space on the notice, attach a separate piece of paper with all the details.

Step 3. Complete section 5 about French-language education rights... it's new for this enumeration. In areas of the province where school boards operate both English and French schools, English and French-language school trustees will be elected.

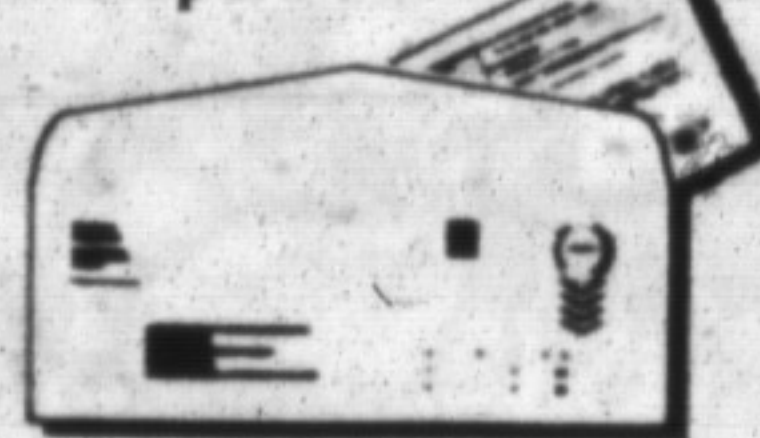
If you have French-language education rights, you will be able to vote for French-language school trustees.



Step 4. Sign your name in the space provided at the bottom of the notice.



Step 5. Return the notice by May 12th in the postage paid envelope.



The information you give will be used by your municipal and provincial governments to:

- prepare the voters list for local government elections to be held on November 14, 1988
- direct your school taxes (as a tenant you can do this since part of your rent is for taxes)
- identify English-language and French-language electors for school board trustees

- select prospective jurors
- prepare the Ontario population report
- update assessment records on ownership and tenancies
- help municipal and school board planning

The information will be used for these purposes only and the confidentiality of all personal information will be protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1987.

You are required by law to complete and return this notice.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC SESSION

Joint Board hearing on the proposal by the Regional Municipality of Halton for a landfill site in the Regional Municipality of Halton.

The Joint Board is currently conducting a public hearing concerning the above application.

The Board wishes to ensure that all members of the public who have an interest in the project have an opportunity to express their views and concerns.

Therefore, the Board has arranged for day-time and evening sessions in order to hear the presentations of those individuals who are unable to attend at other times.

Please take Notice that the day-time and evening sessions will be held on **Thursday, May 26, 1988 and Friday, May 27, 1988.**

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1988

Day-time session from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Evening session from 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Location: The Auditorium
Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts
130 Navy Street (Navy/Lakeshore)
Oakville, Ontario

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1988

Morning Session from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Location: Studio Theatre
Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts
130 Navy Street (Navy Lakeshore)
Oakville, Ontario

It would be appreciated if those persons intending to make a presentation before the Board would advise the Hearings Registrar and provide a copy of any documentation that they may wish to have distributed.

Dated at TORONTO this 29TH day of MARCH, 1988

Y. Lane
Hearings Registrar

Office of Consolidated Hearings
P.O. Box 2382
2300 Yonge Street, Suite 1201
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1E4
(416) 323-4806



NEED HELP? If the information on the back of the notice doesn't answer your questions, call toll free 1-800-263-1988 or contact the Regional Assessment Office shown on your notice.