

School board unsure about planned layoffs

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made, Mr. Williams said the board would be forced to lay off 75 employees if the goal was not met.

But Thursday he was evasive when asked about the layoffs. "We don't know about layoffs until we get to the first day of September," said Mr. Williams.

The director said the layoffs depend on other influencing factors including retirements, leaves and enrolments.

"We don't know the answer until September."

"Some staff who are low on the seniority list will have some fears, I'm sure," he said.

At Thursday's meeting, a plan to use an unspecified portion of a one-time \$1.3 million provincial restructuring grant (received by the board shortly after Mr. Williams made his request to staff) for an early retirement/severance plan, was delayed.

The motion by vice-chairman Dave Whiting was referred to the board's salary committee, to return with a report May 13.

Mr. Williams said "It would have been helpful to get some flexibility" when asked about the delay, but was hopeful layoffs could be avoided.

The director also looked to union pressures as a reason behind the shortfall in expected contributions.

"Very definitely I think it has to do with pressure brought to bear, particularly on the part of the OSSTF (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation)," said Mr. Williams.

The director admitted it may have some relation with the one-time restructuring grant.

Mr. Williams also noted the province may be looking to work out its own early retirement/severance incentive plans with provincial unions.

Quoting Premier Bob Rae's indications that government should downsize, Mr. Whiting said of the restructuring money, "Since it is the Premier's money, I feel comfortable using it for this."

"The premier made a statement on the fifth of this month that said in part, 'We hope to avoid massive layoffs by using early retirement and voluntary severance packages to downsize,'" said Mr. Whiting.

However Mr. Whiting's motion was delayed as trustees had problems with it.

Both Oakville trustee Debbie Marklew and Burlington's Don Cassidy didn't like the wording that allows "a portion" of the \$1.3 million to be used for the incentive plan. They preferred fixed numbers.

Oakville trustee Lafe said she

hadn't seen any alternative plans for the money.

"I don't know if this is the best way to spend these dollars," said Lane. "We haven't looked at alternatives. I can't get a fix on the figures."

Mr. Whiting said he felt incumbent on the board to solve its problems in Halton.

He also noted the incentive plan may have been looked at in the budget, had it not been such a tight budget year.

"It's not a direct cost to our taxpayers because it's not in our budget," he said.

Mr. Whiting says the plan "saves important young jobs that will be very, very important down the road."

Some trustees voiced concerns they had with Mr. Williams going out to staff looking for a days pay donation.

Both Burlington's Anne Barbu and Oakville trustee John Scheel, said

trustees weren't informed of the plan to ask staff for a day's pay until after the fact.

Board chairman Dave Coons and vice-chair Dave Whiting accompanied Mr. Williams in making several visits with staff around the

region, explaining the tight budget year and asking for a day's pay donation.

The board is looking at enrolment projections for September 1993 and is currently planning to operate with 54 fewer teaching positions based on

lower enrollments.

Currently, positions have been termed "excess to Region" but could become "redundant" or laid off by late May if retirements, boosted enrolments or other factors don't make room for openings.



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