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Trustees, staff, have little sympathy for Scheel's cost-cutting ideas

• from TRUSTEE'S on page 12

Empty buses do not necessarily denote inefficiency of use, added Superintendent of Business Services Jerry Jenkins. "Many of our buses do double and triple runs," he explained.

In response to Mr. Scheel's recommendation that department heads be required to spend more time in the classroom, Mr. Williams said the administration's plan to reduce headships one third by 1995 will amount to a greater savings than Mr. Scheel was asking for.

To withdraw 50 per cent of department heads, he said, would have a large impact on the schools.

"I believe it would cause considerable anxiety and unrest among secondary teachers and department heads... certainly confusion," said Mr. Williams, explaining that Halton schools are currently planning curriculum for 1995.

"It seems it's always too late and we have to do this next year," countered Burlington trustee Dianne Leblovic.

"We have to move along in solving this. In times of economic restraint, one of the focuses we really need to have is teachers teaching kids."

Oakville trustee Penny Siebert

said that, when timetables, Mr. Scheel's proposals were more of a message than a call for immediate action.

"He outlined savings that were achievable in those proposals," she said. "But in making them firm enough to prepare a motion, he agreed the savings he had identified were not savings that would be related to the 1994 budget."

A vote against Mr. Scheel's proposals is not necessarily a vote against the intent, she added.

But Ms Siebert said items like the PTR, which is arrived at through contract negotiations, can't be changed "willy nilly at budget time". Mr. Scheel's concerns should be aired during salary negotiations, she said.

In a presentation to the committee, Frank Gue, chairman of the Taxpayers Coalition Halton, had supported Mr. Scheel's bid to alter the PTR.

"Evidently the understanding we naive and innocent taxpayers have of PTR needs some clarification," he said.

"If the teacher part of your PTR includes any teachers who do not teach full time, or perhaps any of the time, then it must include other teachers who are overloaded with

classes far above the PTR. This is a mathematical necessity because your PTR is an average.

"What we smell here is that the definition of PTR enables classroom resources to be drained off into administrative work inside the system, on one hand, while on the other hand trustees and taxpayers outside the system are forbidden to question the resulting cost. What a neat setup."

"To say that a cost reduction is inaccessible because it is in the PTR is simply slack management," Mr. Gue warned. "Whole mighty industries, like shipbuilding on the Clyde, have been destroyed by that kind of thinking."

Mr. Gue said the board can't save \$10 million by flipping a switch, but he did ask trustees to prepare a component of the strategic plan which will, over a reasonable period of time such as three years, eliminate rigidities like the PTR, which he suggested are preventing the implementation of cost reductions exemplified in Mr. Scheel's list of proposals.

"The objective is improved scholastic results obtained at significantly lower cost, in the order of 10 per cent lower or better within the plan time frame."

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