

Public school trustee candidates debate issues at meeting

plan," said Thakkar.

Thakkar, an engineer with Samsung Canada, proposed a five-point program that, in his opinion, best addressed all of the issues in Milton's education system. This includes minimizing split-grade classrooms, decreasing classes in portables, improving the teacher-student ratio, keeping schools safe and drug-free via extracurricular activities and increasing communication between parents, teachers and the board.

Kala, a faculty member of Sheridan College and an avid volunteer, focused on making sure kids don't go hungry at school. He advocated for a 'Food4Thought' program that provides kids with healthy lunch options to maintain their concentration. He also said he wanted to find ways to channel the creative energies of students to keep them out of trouble.

"I will always put the students first," he repeated numerous times during the debate.

Raza, treasurer of the school parent council, said that planning is the number one concern for Milton residents. This includes building new schools, providing efficient and safe transportation, more training for teachers and support staff and budget planning. He proposed out-sourcing the contract with Hal-

ton's school bus transportation company and providing more training in new technologies for teachers and students.

For Raza, the bottom line is teamwork.

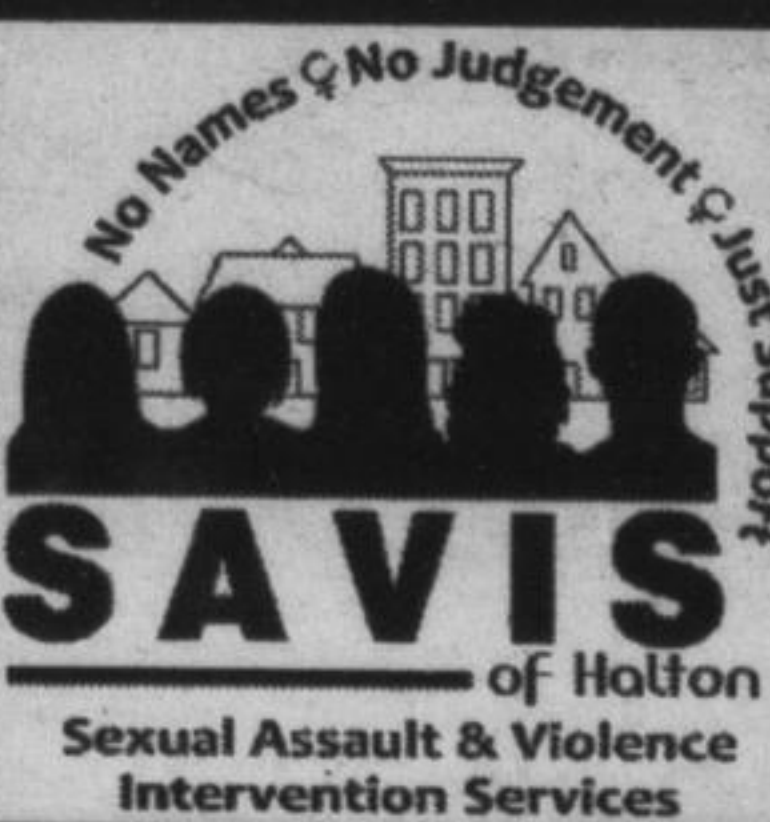
"We have to work in a more integrated way so we can produce a better place for our kids to go to school. If we all work together, we will not be discussing these issues," he said.

Graves, a math and computer engineering teacher at Sheridan College, said that accommodation was the biggest issue facing Milton. She wants to forge stronger relationships with the municipal and provincial government to facilitate future school builds and revisit the boundary lines to make sure kids can start and finish their education at the same place.

In her concluding statement, Graves pointed out that although the ideas of reducing class sizes and decreasing the amount of portables were great, there was only so much that can be done at the board level.

"We are bound by the Education Act. I warn you to think really hard when you make your decision. Don't make it hastily. Consider what we can actually do," she said.

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