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# Student majority must be served

The current furore over busing for students attending the arts program at Unionville High School raises the thorny question of how far we should go to meet transportation expenses for alternative programs.

The York Region Board of Education is already having difficulty covering the cost of basic educational needs within the region.

Universal busing to the school of one's choice, like universal family allowances, may be a wonderful idea in theory, but the economic reality of the '80s suggests it's becoming an expensive luxury.

Is a price tag estimated at well over \$100,000 a year to provide busing for a relatively small group of students too much to expect taxpayers to cover?

On the other hand, with virtually no public transportation available and both parents in the majority of families now working, are alternative programs guilty of elitism?

Obviously, most students who have to travel some distance must rely either on a car pool or a non-working parent to allow them to attend. For many, these options just aren't available.

In the last few years, there's been much discussion on the pro-



**KATE'S CORNER**  
Kate Gilderdale

blems of minority groups, and it's easy to lose sight of the fact that the needs of the majority must also be taken into consideration.

Those needs may sometimes get overlooked in our eagerness to be fair to the smaller, but often more vocal, groups.

I believe our first priority must be to our local public and secondary schools, which open their doors to everybody, regardless of qualifications, and which serve the vast majority of students.

In our imperfect world, those who choose an alternative program must take on the responsibility for making the necessary arrangements to ensure access for their children.

The idea behind busing is a laudable one, and for many people it's a necessity.

However, given present budgetary constraints, there's no alternative but to look at the greatest good for the greatest number of people and accept that it's unrealistic to hope we can be fair to everyone in every situation.

If the board agrees to spend large sums of public money on busing small numbers of students, isn't that a form of elitism too?

Perhaps the only alternative to make the situation equitable would be to abandon the Arts York program altogether so no unfair advantage would be available to these fortunate students who currently enjoy its benefits.

The law requires that all children receive an adequate education, and provides the schools and the transportation necessary to achieve that end.

Entering an alternative program seems a privilege rather than a right, one that may well require sacrifices by both students and their parents.

There are no free lunches, as the saying goes. And if we want something badly enough, we sometimes have to overcome seemingly impossible odds to get it.

Most parents who have a gifted child soon discover that to allow that child to develop his or her gift, it takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears on the part of the whole family.

Strictly speaking, it's not fair, and some students will inevitably lose out, but one of the first lessons we learn is that life just isn't fair.

In a publicly funded system, we have no choice but to make the most of our limited resources in a way which will benefit the largest possible number of people.

## Science Fair a success

Although entry into the Science Fair at Orchard Park Public School was optional this year, approximately 120 students participated.

According to Grade 8 Teacher Bob Arlidge, everyone in the junior and intermediate grades had to complete a project, but were not obliged to enter the fair. Nine projects were selected from those entered, and will go on to the area F science fair, which takes place this Thursday at the school.

A total of 250 projects were on display in the gym Feb. 22. Primary students (Kindergarten to Grade 3) will be having their own science fair during Education Week, April 24 to 28.

Judging was performed by Grade 11 students from Stouffville District Secondary School under the supervision of staff.

Murray Sherk, who is a science professor at the University of Toronto, also assisted with the judging.



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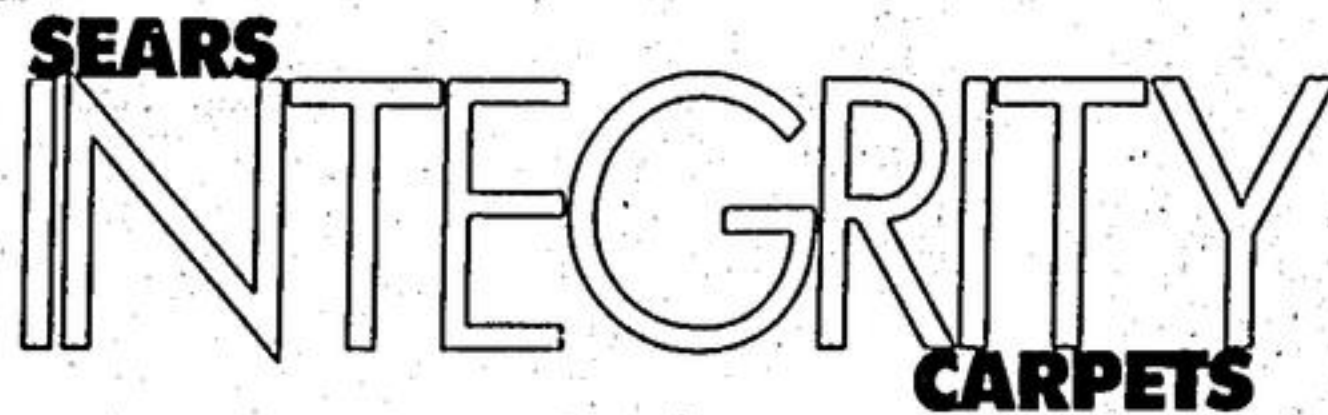
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