

Teachers concerned about growing classroom sizes

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Staff Reporter


Public school principals have been told to expect up to five more students per class this fall. Elementary teachers federation president Fred Mayor said his union will be getting legal advice on a York Region Board of Education directive to up the

pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) by one. The board has set upped the staffing ratio from one per 15 students to one per 16. "Fifteen is supposed to be the planning figure for this year," Mayor said. He said in a "worst case scenario" 179 teachers could lose their jobs. Elementary enrollment is

expected to grow by 3.4 per cent in September and if the teaching pool is cut by 6.6 per cent, Mayor said there will be a 3.2 per cent shortfall. "There will be a reduction in services to all students, a reduction in DART (diagnostic and resource teacher) time, a reduction in library services, a reduction in phys. ed," Mayor said.

The number of students in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 as set by the Ministry of Education so the number of children in Grades 3 to 8 will be hiked by three to five students per class. This could lead to class sizes of 30. The elementary teachers' contract expires Aug. 31 and although the board and union representatives have met once, actual negotiating has not started. Salaries, grievance procedures, added responsibility and

the pupil-teacher ratio will all be brought to the table, York Region Board of Education Chair Bill Crothers said. Although Crothers could not comment on the negotiations, he said the board "has not talked about eliminating teachers or firing or letting teachers go." With enrollment steadily rising, teachers have been hired in past years," he said. Crothers said any change in the PTR will not be made at the expense of jobs.



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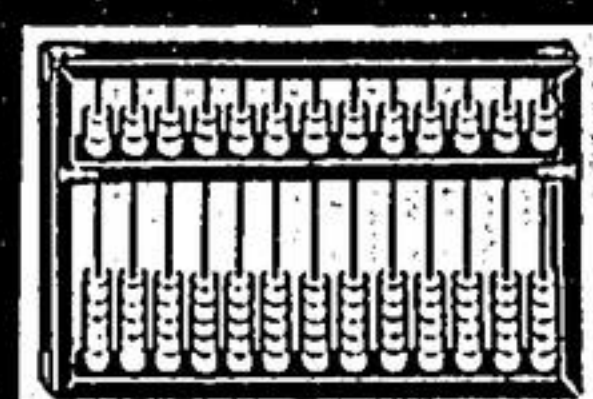


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