

**EDUCATION:** Students will suffer if high school teachers go on strike, negotiator says

# Teachers' negotiator blasts board

BY DAWN LIERSCH  
STAFF WRITER

Students will suffer unless the public school board backs its teachers' fight against Bill 160 and the province's new funding formula, according to the chief negotiator for the secondary teachers.

"It is simple math," said Moe Jacobs at a board meeting Monday.

## Students have 'major concerns' over strike

BY MIKE ADLER  
STAFF WRITER

A work-to-rule campaign by teachers this fall would only hurt students, says their representative this year in York Region public schools.

Student trustee Rohit Ramchandani said students respect teachers, "our guides in life," but lately they've expressed "major concern" over the possibility of a strike.

Since teacher supervision of after-school activities is voluntary, a work-to-rule campaign could wipe them out, although parents have helped with activities at some schools.

"If they decide to go on work-to-rule, it's going to be a very hard year," said Ramchandani, an Aurora High School student who transfers his non-voting board position to David Major of Westmount Collegiate in Vaughan this summer.

"Everybody's losing sight of what they're fighting for, and that's the students," he added this week.

If teachers work to rule, community volunteers and students over 18 should be allowed to manage extra-curricular activities, Ramchandani suggested.

He mentioned this position, backed by Major and other student leaders, to fellow trustees this week.

Chairperson Bill Crothers said the board welcomes any such suggestions and says trustees agree extra-curricular activities are a very significant part of school life.

"It's all speculative," he added, since the board still hopes its schools will be operating normally when students return.

A change in provincial law means working to rule is not considered a strike by teachers. But Crothers said the board will have a backup plan ready to help provide the activities.

"You will hear nothing about that until the situation happens," said the Markham trustee. "It's the board's hope that these kinds of things will not be necessary."

Ramchandani said students will soon be able to find updated news on a student trustee web page linked to [www.YRBE.edu.on.ca](http://www.YRBE.edu.on.ca).

The two sides were to meet with a provincially appointed conciliator yesterday.

"If I have more students, then the time I am able to spend with each student, the time I am able to prepare for each student, and the time I am able to evaluate each student decreases. With each decrease of time, there is a proportionate decrease in learning."

In response to provincial legislation, which requires a ratio of 22 students to one teacher and a minimum 1,250 minutes of instruction each week, the board is requiring most teachers to teach at least one more

class each day.

And, because the board pays its teachers about \$3,000 more per year on average than a new, provincially mandated funding formula provides, the board faces a \$14.4-million shortfall -- money it wants to recover from teachers.

For the curriculum to be successful, Jacobs said, students must be motivated and teachers must feel valued by students, parents and the board.

But he said the board's latest

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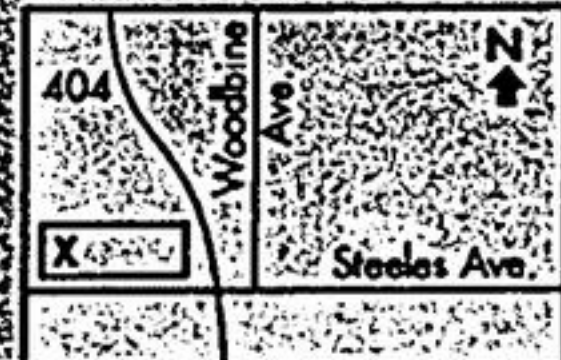
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