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Student sends aggressive message to board, union

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into a roster system, rotating on a schedule that would give them a double-prep period every three years.

Board vice-chairperson and spokesperson for negotiations Karen Barker agreed Major's proposal to be involved in talks is a valid request, but could not say whether he would be invited to participate.

"I think it's an excellent idea to get input, but it is up to the mediator if it is appropriate. I will be taking it to the agenda of the next negotiations advisory committee," Barker said.

In an effort to involve students in the process, the York Region Presidents Council (the student council presidents) have invited trustees to a meeting Sept. 3 at the board office from 6 to 8 p.m.

A similar meeting with OSSIF representatives is also being planned, but a date has not been set.

"I urge you to RSVP — ASAP," Major told his new colleagues.

Barker said she was not surprised by Major's aggressive message on his first night as trustee.

"He reflects the attitude of the general population I hear from. People simply don't understand — they believed we were operating in a differ-

ent process and that doesn't seem to be the case," she said.

Contract negotiations between York Region public high school teachers and the school board will continue tomorrow and into the weekend, if a provincially appointed mediator can keep the two sides focused on getting a deal.

The main issue on the table is that new provincial standards require teachers to teach an additional period each day, or every other day, depending on the school's timetabling system.

An extra class would add, on average, 22 students to the workload of a teacher who currently instructs and marks the tests and essays of about 150 students.

The school board argues the provincial funding formula doesn't allow much flexibility in scheduling.

While she acknowledged the timetabling issue is not the only item left to be resolved, Barker would not elaborate on what issues were still in contention. The union representing high school teachers is also tight-lipped about the state of talks.

Teachers could walk out as early as next week, as the union holds a 90-per-cent strike mandate from its 1,900 members. That could delay the Sept. 8 start of classes for York Region's 29,000 students.

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