

**EDUCATION: Funding formula takes toll on school budget**

# Board has fewer dollars to educate more students

Per-pupil spending drops \$322 since 1995

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STAFF WRITER

More students to educate, fewer dollars to pay for it.

That's the bottom line for York Region's public school board, as it passed its first budget under the province's new funding formula.

The average cost per student in 1998-1999 will be \$6,004 — down almost \$200 from last year, down \$322 from 1995.

And that's despite the fact there was a 6-per cent increase in enrolment since 1997, taking the average daily enrolment to more than 80,000 students.

Exactly how the reduction in per-pupil spending will affect students won't be known for some time, but it will be monitored, promises board vice-chairperson Karen Barker.

"It concerns me in that I don't have enough information yet to know what the implications are," she said. "It's something we have to look at and see what the impact will be."

The bulk of the \$200 per student lost to the new funding formula has been taken from



**BILL CROTHERS**  
board chairperson

money the board will receive for new schools under the new capital funding program, but does include payments on behalf of debentures issued for schools built in the past.

Board chairperson Bill Crothers said there are two areas where funding has changed significantly — the amount provided to allow teachers to do things other than teach and the money the board can use for new school construction or building repairs.

"The reality of the recent legislation and the new funding formula has very significantly affected our teachers," said Crothers. "Their reaction has been both expected and understandable."

"Much of the pressure from negotiations to date has been directed at the issue of finding money in the other areas of the budget to allow teacher working conditions to remain at their previous levels."

Despite reductions in other areas, Crothers said the budget reflects the board's commitment to keeping student programs

staffing or teacher preparation time.

The budget reflects provincial demands that boards spend no more than 35 per cent of the budget on non-classroom items and the balance on classroom instruction, which includes 51.3 per cent for in-class teachers.

The budget amounts to \$519 million, which does not include



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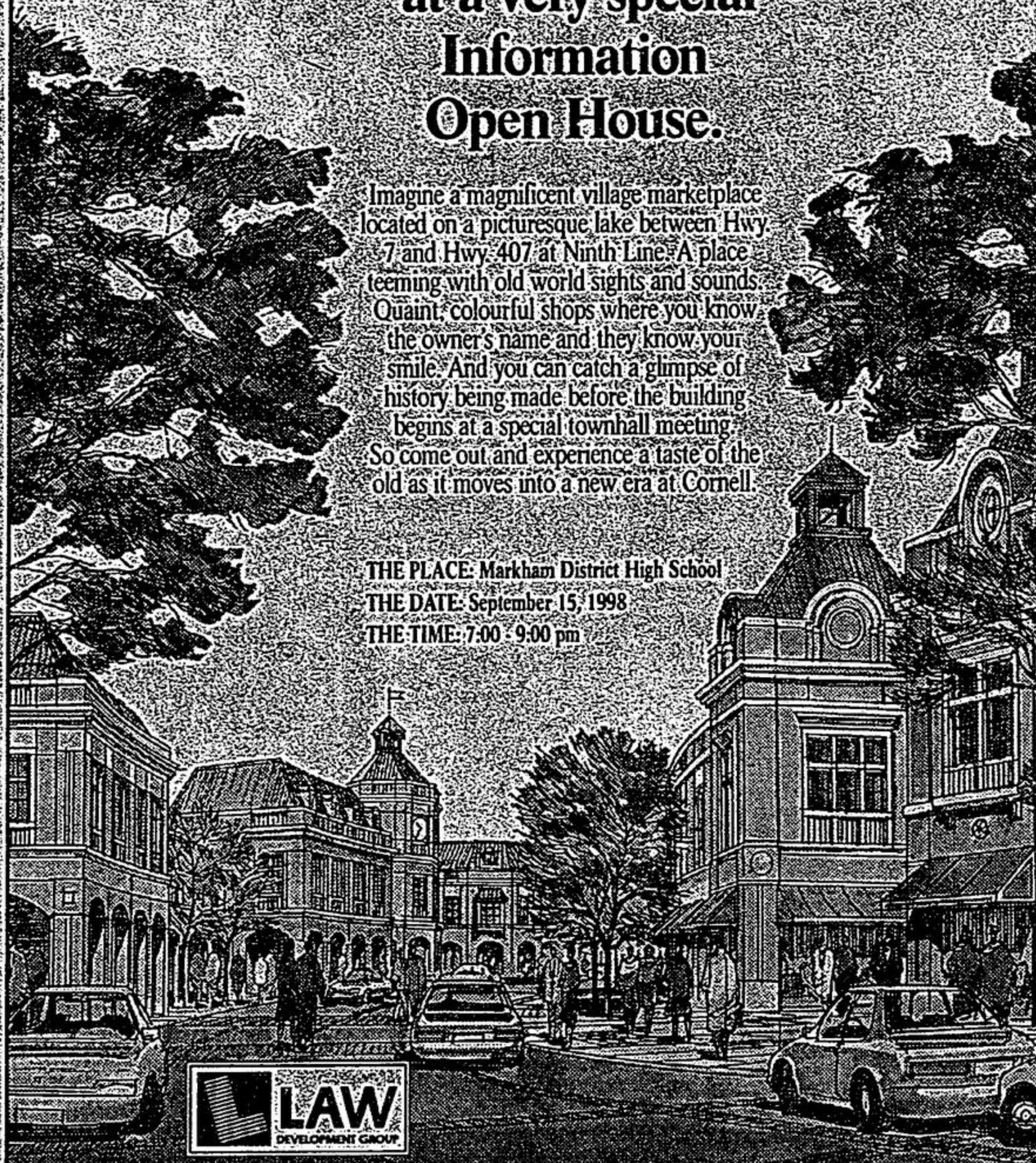
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THE PLACE: Markham District High School

THE DATE: September 15, 1998

THE TIME: 7:00 - 9:00 pm



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