

EDUCATION

Catholic parents rebel against strike

BY PATRICK CASEY
STAFF WRITER

Catholic parents in Thornhill are planning to take their children to school this morning, whether there's a strike or not.

Although contract negotiations with teachers resumed yesterday, more than 30 frustrated parents at St. Michael's Catholic Academy have decided to cross picket lines today and take their children to school.

And they want their kids to receive an education, not just a babysitting service.

The strike really boils down to a labour and management issue, and we really have to get the politics out of it," said parent Ted Kotschorek, who helped hatch the idea during a St. Michael's parent council meeting Monday evening.

"We are not concerned about the issues at this point, we just have to get the kids back to school. Sort your differences out, but let those be independent of the education."

The sentiment in Thornhill is being echoed across York Region, as exasperation from parents continues to mount during a strike by 2,700 Catholic teachers.

Parent meetings have been held throughout the region all week.

Yesterday morning, some 20 local parents and several children gathered in the hallway of a Markham hotel to meet board and union negotiators arriving to start talks.

Management escorted the parents out, said LeeAnn Fifield, Catholic school chair of St. Edward Catholic Elementary in Markham. "I defy them to leave that room before what I consider the end of a long day," she declared later.

An evening session for Markham schools with speakers from both sides drew 300 to St. Edward the night before, said Fifield, adding the parents left unsatisfied.



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