

EDUCATION: *Students' year already at risk, MPP says*

Work-to-rule campaign hurting academic year

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ther. I spoke to him a week ago and he expressed his concern," he said.

"I don't believe the issue of waiting for the student's academic year to be at risk is an issue — my assessment is these students are already at that point. This panel has been on a work-to-rule since the beginning of the year."



FRANK KLEES

Rotating strikes, work-to-rule too disruptive

Klees' comments didn't come as a shock to union chief negotiator Harold Vigoda.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the government became involved at this point in time, because if the membership rejects this offer the rotating strikes will continue," he said. "I always felt it was a distinct possibility."

Vigoda said he expects provincial mediator Kevin Burkett will call both sides back to the table once the offer was rejected.

"I would hope the board will bring a new mandate," he said.

If the two sides resume talks, it will be up to the union executive to decide if rotating strikes will be called off while negotiations occur.

Klees says the fact students and parents have endured a work-to-rule campaign, coupled with rotating strikes and a lockout, is too much disruption.

"As far as I'm concerned, those things are not acceptable in the school system," said Klees, adding his Aurora office has been inundated with calls from parents concerned about the impact the dispute has had on their children's education.

But Vigoda cautions that even if teachers are legislated back to work, they still have the right to withdraw from voluntary extra-curricular activities such as coaching and after-school clubs.

"Even if we are legislated back, there is nothing that precludes an individual teacher from withdrawing on an individual basis," he said.

Since the beginning of October, teachers have been advised by their union to withdraw from extra-curricular activities. And recently, teachers were instructed to cancel all field trips with their classes, arrive at school just 15 minutes before school begins and leave 15 minutes after classes end.

"I've had calls from parents, which are progressively coming in greater volume, concerned their kids are not getting the kind of attention they should be in the classroom," Klees said. "It clearly has an impact on their academic progress."

But declaring teachers an essential service, as hospital workers and firefighters are, won't work, Klees says. He

wants to find an alternate way to deal with teacher contract negotiations.

"This situation is not acceptable, and I'm concerned that to simply legislate this profession as an essential service is not the answer. I've been calling for an alternative way to

deal with this," he said.

Klees points to the current threat of illegal strikes by hospital workers and last fall's two-week provincial protest by teachers as proof that simply declaring teaching an "essential service" would have little impact.

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If you are in this situation, the deadline for the RRSP contribution room has been **extended to April 30th, 1999**. Employers' pension plan administrators were to report the reversal to the individuals involved as well as Revenue Canada by the end of December. In many cases this has failed to happen, therefore Revenue Canada has extended the reporting deadline to March 31, 1999. It is estimated that the average PAR will be about \$12,000; depending on your pension plan, it could be much more.

If you are in this situation, you should sit down with your financial planner and explore how you could best take advantage of this extra room. After determining your 1998 taxable income, you may choose to contribute this prior to April 30th so you can reduce your 1998 taxes. You may do this from cash flow or by using a RRSP loan plan. In some cases, it may be better to stagger the extra contribution and claim it over a period of years. Your financial planner will aid you with these decisions.

We would be delighted to meet with you and review your situation. At **Money Concepts**, we specialize in investment counseling, estate planning, life and disability insurance.

Please call **Signy Lawson, Sandy Parsons** or **Carol Clements** at **642-4540**.

LIBRARY NEWS: *Holiday celebrations for children require pre-registration*

Halls decked with Christmas programs

Christmas decorations are everywhere and although the library hasn't yet decked its halls with boughs of holly, plans for the festive season are in place.

A Holiday Celebration for Kids is an hour-long program designed for younger children. Bring your youngster for a party of songs, games and stories. Afterwards, children can decorate a gingerbread man. Please pre-register since the Halloween program filled quickly. This program runs Friday, Dec. 11, at 10:30 and costs \$5 per child.

A Dramatic Christmas is a two-hour program for children aged six to eight. This drama workshop incorporates a variety of dramatic styles and modes of expression. Afterwards, children will make individual gingerbread houses. This program runs Saturday, Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. and costs \$10 per child. Again, please pre-register.

Tales for Tots starts up again this Wednesday at 6:45 p.m. Parents or caregivers join in the fun. The theme for the next four weeks will be holiday songs, rhymes and fingerplays. There is a charge of \$2 at the door.

Mark your calendar for a special Holiday Family evening on Tuesday, Dec. 29. Live musical entertainment will be provided by April K. Concerts. Don't miss this event.

For more news, check out the library's website at <http://www.itree.com/library/whitchch>



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