

Student testing 'a scam': Liberals

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"There is a clear expectation of what students need to know when they leave school," Ecker said. "We need to know when they leave school they have that information."

"Other jurisdictions have shown testing is necessary," she said. "Until the government started testing, Ontario lagged behind other jurisdictions in putting benchmarks into place."

She said the tests, devel-

oped by the Education Quality and Accountability Office, are aimed at helping students, teachers and parents, saying students will receive better help in areas where they have problems, teachers will be trained to administer the tests and parents have asked for them.

Ecker said \$16 million annually will be allocated to train teachers and administer the tests.

Currently, testing is confined to reading, writing and math in Grades 3 and 6; math

in Grade 9 and literacy in Grade 10.

By 2005 tests will be conducted in science and language for Grade 4, social studies and math in Grade 5, science and language in Grade 7, social studies and math in Grade 8, science in Grade 9, history in Grade 10 and English and math in Grade 11.

Liberal education critic Gerard Kennedy dismissed the announcement as a "non-news" event.

"There were two scams

perpetrated here today, political and educational," said Kennedy. "The premier announced this six weeks ago. Ecker is using it as an aid to the byelection."

"We (the Liberals) are opposed to testing that does not benefit the students," he added.

"Nothing comes back from the government to help kids who are struggling. You can't just demand results, you have to provide the resources to achieve them."

Maple Leafs' road show coming to Stouffville

There will be something for hockey fans at the 17th annual Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival next weekend.

The Ford Toronto Maple Leaf Off-Ice Hockey Tour will bring its van to Stouffville Memorial Park from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. next Saturday, June 30.

The Leafs' van will fold out to a 130 foot by 130 foot area where kids can play inside. It will be divided into six different zones where kids can test their hockey skills and enjoy a variety of hockey-related activities.

Stouffville resident Keith Acton, an assistant coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs, was instrumental in bringing the special van to Stouffville for the Strawberry Festival.

The festival opens Thursday night with events including the Stouffville Lions beef barbecue.

Events continue from Friday afternoon until Sunday night.

Main Street in Stouffville will be closed next Saturday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. for a giant craft sale and entertainment. Most other events will take part in

Stouffville Memorial Park; also in downtown Stouffville.

The Stouffville Buttermakers will host their 25th anniversary slo-pitch tournament as part of the festival. More than 40 men's and mixed teams are expected to take part. The finals go July 1.

Other Canada Day activities on Sunday include an ecumenical church service, strawberry social, family barbecue, teddy bear picnic, Canada Day cake and fireworks.

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