

# School board says character education spending is appropriate

From page 1.

mation, but I'm not going to respond to requests that are taken totally out of context and are totally, totally unreasonable," said Mr. Hogarth, explaining the staff time required to answer Mr. Burrows' questions would require hiring more staff.

Mr. Burrows' motion to have Mr. Hogarth provide him and a parent with the

same information given to the reporter was voted down by trustees.

Mr. Burrows, who has tried to gather the information through a freedom of information request and wrote a letter to the Minister of Education asking for intervention, isn't the only person questioning the board's spending practices.

Several parents are upset the board is spending money

on matters they consider less urgent when there are students who have to share or go without textbooks.

Board chairperson Bill Crothers of Markham takes exception to people who question the board spending money for the character education program.

"Any moneys specified (for character education) were approved," he said. "Every school principal has a

professional development budget, a travel budget, a curriculum budget. There's no character education budget, just as there's no science or math budget.

"For anyone to suggest money was taken away from textbooks for character education is naive and inappropriate."

In light of the way the board voted on his motion, Mr. Burrows said he may

never have his questions answered.

"I have a genuine concern for the board's spending priorities but we're all missing the point," said Mr. Burrows, explaining he respects the intent of the program but wouldn't say he supports it. "It's a question of privilege. If I was (provided with the information) and, quite frankly, all trustees were provided with the information, we wouldn't be having this conversation."

"It's not an unreasonable (request), but I've been stone-walled ever since," said Mr. Burrows, referring to when he first raised concerns during a committee meeting

last November. "I never intended to harass them, but they refused to answer any of my questions."

**"We talk about being a board of character, but if you take a step back, do we and our actions measure up?"**

— Bob Burrows, public school trustee

"We talk about being a board of character, but if you take a step back, do we and our actions measure up?"

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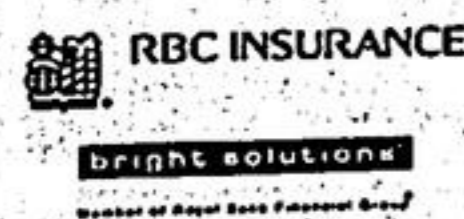
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