

# Parents want SDSS improved

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the high school are caught in a Catch-22: the board won't build a school without the services in place, but the services won't come without development, of which a high school is a key part.

"A high school provides a focus for the community and we don't have that focus in East Gwillimbury," Ms. Hackson said.

While the residents of York Region's second-smallest municipality wait for their own high school, the region's changing demographics suggest their wait could be longer than expected.

Between 1996 and 2001, the dates of the last two censuses, York Region's population grew 23 per cent, from more than 592,000 people to almost 729,000. The bulk of that growth occurred in the three southern municipalities, with Vaughan's population alone growing more than 37 per cent in those five years.

By comparison, East Gwillimbury's population grew from 19,770 in 1996 to 20,555 in 2001, a rate of just 4 per cent. (Only King, at 1.7 per cent, was lower; Georgina and Whitchurch-Stouffville grew by 11 and 13 per cent, respectively.)

The board's 2003-2006 capital project list echoes those trends. In March, superintendent of cor-

porate planning Ralph Benson told trustees 29 elementary schools, four secondary schools and three major school additions are either under construction or being proposed, at a cost of almost \$300 million.

Of those, 13 are in Markham, 11 are in Vaughan and seven are in Richmond Hill. Newmarket accounts for three and Aurora and Stouffville will get one elementary school apiece.

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Understandably, the board says it has to put the resource where the students are, but East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville Trustee Bob Burrows says there's a growing feeling among his constituents their needs are being overlooked.

"I think they often feel like they've been pushed off to the side repeatedly," he said.

Mr. Burrows has received calls and letters from parents of students at Stouffville District Secondary School who are "very concerned" about the physical condition of their school.

With the fact he serves the

largest area of all 12 trustees, Mr. Burrows wonders if it's time each of his two municipalities had its own trustee.

"The fact is, there's something about this situation that isn't right," he said. "Both (towns) often have different priorities. Maybe we can do with one less trustee in Markham and have one more for East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville."

Markham currently has four trustees. The distribution of school trustees may have to change in the near future, but not for at least four years and not in the way Mr. Burrows may want.

With municipal elections coming in November, trustees are required by law to report to the province any changes in the number of trustees they require.

York Region's board voted in March to keep their number and distribution the same as the last municipal election, which was held in 2000. That means the board will remain fixed at 12 trustees for the next four years, at least.

But if current trends continue, Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill will almost certainly require a larger representation on the board soon, leaving York's rural residents with an even smaller say on how their schools are governed.



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Awnings, which range from 7 feet to 51 feet, block up to 77 per cent of the sun's direct heat, lowering interior temperatures by 7 to 15 degrees F.

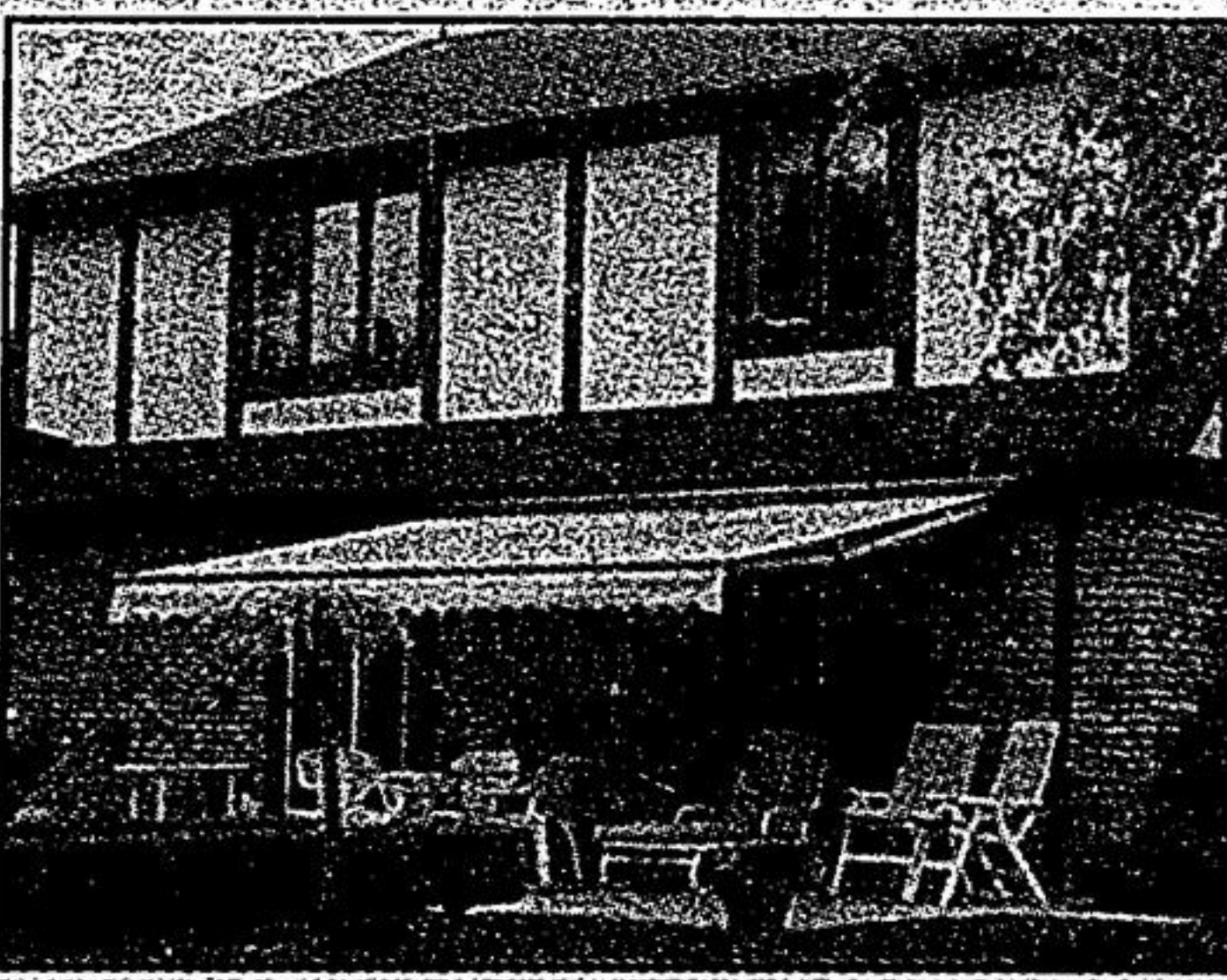
They also protect drapes, broom and furniture from the sun's damaging rays.

"Awnings give you complete protection against ultraviolet rays," says John.

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