

The Sun-Tribune is taking the pulse of our communities in a wide-ranging news series that continues.

The State Of series takes a hard look at the issues challenging the continued vitality of York Region: education, transportation, waste and

public safety.

Our award-winning team of reporters, photographers and editors have spent months examining a wide range of issues, highlighting not only where we stand, but how we got there and, most importantly, what lies ahead.

Let us know where you stand on the issues by e-mailing jmason@ymg.com or taking part in online surveys at yorkregion.com, where the full series of articles will be available as they are published.

Golf course to house sports school

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suggests we provide as many opportunities as possible for our students.

"It could be French immersion, special education, technical apprenticeships, arts and sports. We try to provide and encourage participation in all areas of interest."

Mr. Crothers points to Arts York as one of the first and most successful specialty schools in the system.

"It's the envy of all school boards in the province," he said.

The next wave in nouveau pedagogy is scheduled for 2008 in the form of the York Region School for Athletics and Healthy Active Living in Markham. Prophetically, the 31-acre site of the high school "with a focus on the total integration of academic and athletic excellence" is now occupied by a golf course.

The 1,300 students expected to attend will be high performance athletes or those with the

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Bill Crothers
York public board chairperson

potential to be, international guest athletes and youngsters interested in coaching, officiating, training and sports media.

The York Catholic District School Board has also introduced and integrated special interest studies.

"We have brought together the expertise and resources to enable students to broaden their horizons in specialty areas," said Catholic board spokesperson Chris Cable.

The boards' special programming is ranging. Notable is the exclusive International Baccalaureate program at St. Robert's Catholic High School in Thornhill and Bayview Secondary School in Richmond Hill. The program, involving 200,000 students at 1,468 schools in 119 countries, cultivates internationalism and respect for other cultures.

Regional arts programs thrive at St. Elizabeth and St. Michael's Catholic high schools in Thornhill, while students pursuing a technical grounding find St. Gregory The Great in Woodbridge aptly named.

In addition, said Ms Cable, the Catholic board offers specialized laptop computer and global education studies.

While promoting Attack of the Clones in 2002, Mr. Christensen told reporters his parents wanted him to audition for Arts York as a dancer.

"I refused. I wasn't going to do that," he said.

It seems to have worked itself out.

MATTRESS HAVEN

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One-stop learning: university, high school could share campus

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curriculum as well.

"Changes will evolutionary, not dramatic," he said.

Learning exclusively via computers from far away is not in the cards, said public board director of education Bill Hogarth.

"Distance learning is a misnomer," he said. "I think preliminary experience has to be connected in a real and virtual sense. "When we speak of the school of the future, we're looking at an integrated approach

and at methods of instruction we haven't imagined."

The campuses of tomorrow may be fully integrated, according to Mr. Hogarth.

VARY SCHOOL DAY

"I think in the future we should have a total learning opportunity housed in one building," he said. "It should include, in one facility, elementary, secondary, college and the world at work together.

"It would be easy to do and would vary the school day. It would vary the quality of

instruction and the types of supports that are required within the community."

Partnerships with corporations may well be more prevalent in the future, said Mr. Hogarth.

"There are some fine corporations with the best interest in what should happen to students, families and learning," he said. "They already support education through taxes. "We need to change attitudes on how business can be an integral part of the learning process."

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