

Tory school plan not that simple: minister

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

Inviting faith-based schools into the public education system is the "wrong thing to do", according to Education Minister Kathleen Wynne.

If the Conservatives win October's provincial election, leader John Tory says former premier Bill Davis will be appointed to lead a commission determining the impact of inviting faith-based schools to join the public system. Pilot programs could begin as early as September 2008.

Have your say: Do you welcome the idea of inviting and offering public funding to faith-based schools to include them in the public education system? Go to yorkregion.com and click the "What do you think" link.

"We want to make the education system inclusive," explained PC education critic Frank Klees, who was on hand during Mr. Tory's announcement earlier this week. "Why shouldn't all parents have the same opportunities as Catholic parents?"

The estimated cost is \$500 million, which Mr. Klees claims wouldn't require

a tax hike. The present budget needs to be reorganized to make education a priority, he said.

"There is no shortage of revenue; it is just how it is currently being spent," Mr. Klees said.

However, rearranging the budget won't produce the money because those kinds of funds are just not available, Ms Wynne said.

"We cannot afford to cut programs and shut down repairs to existing schools in the public system," she added. "This is what would have to happen to find the money needed."

There are still many questions surrounding the Conservative proposal and Ms Wynne says the complicated and expensive process has not been thought through.

"I don't think Mr. Tory knows exactly what he is getting himself into," she said. "I think it is exactly the wrong thing to do."

Parents with children in private schools are parents who don't want their children in the public system, Ms Wynne said, adding funds dedicated to education are needed for schools the public system.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction funding only one faith, Mr. Klees continued.

He said he doesn't understand how the province can keep justifying a decision made in the 1980s to provide fund-

ing to the Catholic schools when, today, the world is much more diverse.

The Society for Quality Education, a charitable organization promoting choice for parents, cautiously welcomed the Conservative proposal.

Executive Director Doretta Wilson believes such a policy which could provide parents with more choice and more competition between schools could be a positive change.



KATHLEEN WYNNE: Education minister says there's significant funds would be needed to bring faith-based schools into public system.

However, concerns surrounding strings attached to such a change might mean participating faith-based schools losing their distinctive nature.

That would mean an inability to serve their communities, she added.

"We are waiting to see to what extent the Conservatives will require participating schools to submit to the regulatory burden that is crushing publicly funded schools," Ms Wilson said.

"If for example, eligible schools are forced to hire provincially certified teachers or use provincially approved textbooks, they will be in danger of losing their uniqueness."

The proposal, so far, says faith-based schools interested in joining the public system must meet three conditions: teaching the Ontario curriculum, introducing standardized testing and hiring only accredited teachers, thus bringing the province one step closer to a standardized system, Mr. Klees said.

The invitation does have the potential to make the public system stronger in terms of an increase in student enrollment, allowing school boards to improve their performance and attract more students and Ms Wilson supports that.

Edmonton's public board offers funding for faith-based schools and, under the board's umbrella, all schools have considerable autonomy.

SHARE a little MAGIC

A little time can make a HUGE difference in a child's life!

With several volunteer programs to choose from, one is sure to suit your schedule.



Big Brothers Big Sisters of York

905-895-0289
www.bbbsy.ca

This message brought to you as a community service of The Economist/Sun-Tribune

You want the best for her...



...but your best may not be enough anymore.

To find out about not-for-profit long term care housing, and services for seniors in your community, connect to

www.oanhss.org
We're here for you.



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT HOMES AND SERVICE FOR SENIORS

This message brought to you as a community service of The Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

Stouffville Churches Welcome You

STOUFFVILLE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
6853 Main Street

Sunday, July 29, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
Worship Celebration
- Jason Cheong -
Kidsville for ages 2 - Grade 8

Tuesday at 7:00 pm
Illuminate - Grade 9-12

Wednesday at 7:00 pm
Essence - Young Adults - Ages 18-30

Call church at 905-640-5696 for information
www.spckids.ca

Parkview Village
12184 Ninth Line South, Stouffville

Sunday, July 29th, 2007
Joe Nemmi
Messianic Christian Speaker
7:00 pm

Tired of being preached at?

...But still seeking answers?

Join us and share in the journey!

Pathways is a vibrant and fresh spiritual community helping people find their own answers to today's life and faith questions. All are welcome!

Pathways meets on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. at Heritage Centre 17 Anna Russell Way, Unionville

more info? www.pathwayschurch.ca or 647-400-0673

BLOOMINGTON GOSPEL CHURCH
13660 Ninth Line N.
(905) 642-4414

Sunday, July 29th, 2007
Rev. Peter Pallant - Pastor
Morning Service
10:30 a.m.

Weather permitting there will be a fire side get together for those who wish to take part.

Everyone Welcome

Springvale Baptist Church
Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.
905-887-5651
www.springvale.org

Senior Pastor: Bob Flemming
Youth & Family: Jay Sandiford
Student Ministries: Alex Street
Children's Ministries: Sharon Russell
Counselling Services: Karla Kamerman

July 29th, 2007
10:00 am
Celebration Service
Jordan Butcher

STOUFFVILLE UNITED CHURCH
34 Church St. N. 905-640-1163
Worship Minister: Rev. Robert Nightingale
info@stouffvilleuc.ca

Sunday, July 29th, 2007
10:30 am Worship Service
Children's
Worship & Baby Fold
EVERYONE WELCOME
Website: www.stouffvilleuc.ca

THE ANGLICAN PARISH of CHRIST CHURCH
254 Sunset Blvd., Stouffville
The Rev. Canon Robert Shields
The Rev. Jason Prisley, Associate
(905) 640-1461

Sunday, July 22nd
8th After Pentecost
Services at 8am & 10am
Nursery & Church School at 10am
Services in the Great Hall in July & August

Friday, July 27th
Floor Hockey in the Great Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 1st
Barbeque & Service at 5:30 p.m.
Bring a salad or dessert for an evening of fellowship

Come & See
www.stouffvilleanglican.ca
e-mail: admin@stouffvilleanglican.ca

Welcome to **ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Rev. Kathryn Strachan, Minister
6432 Main St. Stouffville
Phone - 905-640-3151
email: st.james.stouffville@bellnet.ca

Sunday, July 29
Service of Worship
10:30 a.m.

Sunday, August 5
Combined Service of Worship at Stouffville United Church
10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, August 8
Pot-luck congregational picnic at the home of Jack & Marj Carter
5 Sunset Blvd., Ballantrae
6:00 p.m.

'A Friendly Family Church'

Sunday Service 10:00 am
at Middlefield Collegiate
525 Highglan Ave., Markham

HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL

Questions? Call us at (905) 472-8722
Visit us at www.harvestmarkham.ca
Email us at info@harvestmarkham.ca
Senior Pastor Deric Bartlett



To advertise in the Church section please contact Tyler Duncan at 905-294-2200