

Director retiring from school board

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The Peel school board has "worked hard to embrace all elements of the educational community," under his tutelage, says its retiring director of education.

"When I came here in 1993 we were alienated from one segment of the community," Harold Brathwaite told *The News*.

He was referring to the split that had developed with the Sikh community. That stemmed from a dispute over whether Sikh students would be allowed to wear sheathed kirpans in schools.

"I've always espoused the issue of equity for students and staff," says Brathwaite, 60, who has lived in Mississauga since 1977.

When asked about the greatest disappointment in his eight-and-one-half year

term at the Board, he says, "it's that equity is not as embedded as I would like it to be."

The former elementary, secondary and university teacher is proud that in the past two years, the Board has been recognized for its outreach efforts with awards from both the Muslim and Sikh communities.

Brathwaite's retirement, to take effect at the end of June, was approved by public school trustees last night.

After coming here from the Toronto School Board for an initial five-year term, Brathwaite renewed for three-and-one-half years, with the full intention of retiring. "I felt that was long enough," the native of the Barbados said.

"Since I was aged 15 I have never had

two months off in the summer when I was not studying, working or doing both," he says. He plans to relax this summer and explore his work options in September.

The director believes he is leaving the Board in very good shape. "We have an excellent group of senior administrators, superintendents and controllers who know the only way we can survive is to work as a team," he said.

The underfunding of the public school system and the "micromanaging" of education from Queen's Park have made it "extremely difficult to maintain quality and meet expectations," said Brathwaite who was a recipient of the Harry Jerome

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BRATHWAITE

Consultant will be hired to find a replacement

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Award.

The Board slashed 1,100 positions before he arrived, the number of superintendents has been cut from 26 to 18 while the number of students has risen by 30,000. "The expectations haven't diminished but the resources have."

"Harold has put the name of the Peel Board at the forefront of educa-

tion in the province," says Chair Janet McDougald. "He brought some of that provincial experience which Peel was lacking at the time he was hired," she added.

The Board will hire a consultant to do a national search for a new director. McDougald hopes the new director for the position will be in place before Brathwaite leaves in June. The job pays \$148,000-166,000.

Brathwaite, H.J.
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