

**Bill Kent calls it quits**

# School board chief stepping down

By JOHN STEWART  
Staff Writer

Bill Kent, chairman of Peel Board of Education for an unprecedented six consecutive terms, is stepping aside because the job "should not be the exclusive preserve of one trustee."

The Ward 2 trustee from Mississauga has served as chairman for seven of the board's past 12 years.

"There are a number of other things I'm interested in pursuing," says Kent who is admissions director of the University of Toronto and the past president of the Association of Large School Boards of Ontario.

Kent does intend to seek election again as Ward 2 trustee next fall. He says his accomplishments as chairman include streamlining the committee system of the board. Prior to his election, board meetings were much longer and trustees often didn't finish the agendas.

The retiring chairman also feels the board has a higher profile now in matters of municipal planning. "We're listened to," says Kent. "Previously I don't think it was recognized that the board had a role in that area." The chairman has been critical of Mississauga city council for releasing new areas for residential



**BILL KENT**

development without adequately considering the effects on schooling.

An ability to keep a broad base of support on the board was mentioned by Kent as another thing he's proud of.

Margaret McKee, the Ward 1 Mississauga trustee who challenged Kent for the chair six years ago, says her initial fears he wouldn't be a good chairman quickly dissipated. She says he's provided strong leadership in Peel and has raised the region's profile significantly in provincial education circles.

McKee has decided to run for chairman in an attempt to become the first woman ever in the post. A 12-year

veteran of the board, McKee has thrice served as vice-chairman and is the past president of the Ontario Public School Trustees' Association.

"I'll be a different chairman than Bill Kent but I think I can give the board leadership and speak out strongly on educational issues," she says. Her gender will not be an issue in the vote by trustees which takes place Dec. 3, she believes. "I want to be elected on my own merit."

The board's current vice-chairman, Mississauga's Peter Gazzola, says he will seek re-election to that position. "I've only had one year as vice-chairman," he says. "I'd like another year or two before looking at the possibilities of running for chairman," adds Gazzola.

The fact he is a separate school representative has nothing to do with his decision not to run, says Gazzola, a principal in the Toronto separate school system.

Brampton trustee Gary Heighington is also considering seeking the chairman's job but has not made a final decision.

Ward 6 Mississauga trustee Tom McAuliffe, a former vice-chairman, is also thinking about running.

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