

North York Mirror

Trustee satisfied awareness raised about ad contract

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Although North York separate school trustee Maria Rizzo failed to convince her colleagues Monday to terminate the board's contract with a marketing firm, the North York trustee believes she's been successful in raising awareness of the pilot project.

Rizzo, the only member of the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to vote against the board's contract with Navigator Ltd., asked her colleagues Monday to back out of the \$1-million deal.

"They wouldn't support my motion. I can't do anything about that. That's democracy," Rizzo said Tuesday, adding, "I think there's going to be a lot of scrutiny on this contract and that's a good thing."

Members of the TCDSB voted last June to hire a marketing firm to promote the board in an effort to attract new students.

The firm Navigator Ltd. was initially retained to develop marketing and promotion strategies in an effort to beef up student enrolment and to increase the number of registered Catholic school supporters in the city.

In November, the board approved an eight-week pilot project at a cost of \$750,000, an amount Rizzo has argued would be better spent in the classroom.

The firm will target 20 schools in the pilot project, which is intended to attract immigrant students.

The campaign will get under way later this month, in time to coincide with registration for the coming school year.

And, although the campaign is proceeding, Rizzo said she's not through with the issue.

"I don't think I'm going to be through with this. I think this is just the beginning," she said.

Ward 1 Trustee Joe Martino (Etobicoke) and Ward 9 Trustee Catherine LeBlanc-Miller (Toronto) voted in favour of Rizzo's motion Monday to terminate the contract. Neither could be reached for comment.

Trustees also voted 10-1 Monday to send all invoices submitted by Navigator to the audit committee for review.

"I think all the trustees thought it would be good to keep track of the expenses," Rizzo said.