



Susan Murray, Examiner

Avis Glaze, the local public school board's new education director, sits down to work. Glaze has replaced Dick Malowney.

# Student achievement top priority for new school board director

By **SUSAN MURRAY**  
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After only two weeks on the job, the local public school board's new education director is already certain about her biggest goal — ensuring student performance improves each year.

"I have been speaking with evangelical zeal about student achievement," said Avis Glaze, who left her post as associate education director with the York Region District School Board north of Toronto. "They are our reason for being here."

Born in Jamaica, Glaze became a high school teacher after earning a bachelor's degree at the University of the West Indies in Kingston. In 1974 she came to Toronto to study at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where she earned two master degrees and a doctorate in education.

During her career, Glaze has taught at nearly every level: elementary, high school, community college and university. She also co-authored a book about the African-Canadian experience titled *Towards Freedom*.

In 1994, Glaze was the only educator chosen to serve on the provincial Royal Commission on Learning. For more than a year she toured the province, speaking with teachers, administrators and students on possible reforms to the education system.

"I want to build upon the excellent foundation I have inherited," she said, referring to the board now under her direction. "We have the will and we have the skills to do the job."

While on the York school board, Glaze helped implement a number of new programs including internships, new counselling centres and working to integrate a new policy she termed "character education."

In order to nurture successful young citizens, children need to be supported by the entire community, particularly the home and school, she explained, calling parents the "first educators."

But for now, Glaze said she has been busy meeting with teachers, principals and students to get acquainted with the issues facing the board.

"I'm really in learning and observing mode, then it will be action mode," she said. "I want to work at being a good coach, mentor and facilitator."

Past director Dick Malowney, who officially retired Jan. 31, stayed on for Glaze's initial two weeks.

At Wednesday night's board meeting, trustees welcomed Glaze to the table and wished Malowney well in his retirement by passing a motion to extend their appreciation.

Glaze has served on four different school boards in her career. Her contract runs until 2007.