

Catholic trustees vote to keep Early French Immersion program alive

By Kathy Yanchus
METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Halton Catholic District School Board trustees have voted to keep Early French Immersion, rejecting a report by senior staff to phase out

the pilot program.

After more emotional delegations last Tuesday (Dec. 20), including one by eight-year-old Brooke Feth, a Grade 3 student at St. Mary CES in Oakville, trustees decided to forge ahead despite staff concerns about a lack of

qualified teachers and transportation costs as raised in its French Sustainability Study. That study was presented to the board last month and a vote to discontinue the EFI pilot was deferred until last Tuesday night's meeting. Parents had expressed their anger to trustees about not having been forewarned that the program was in jeopardy. In the end there were only three trustees who voted in favour of discontinuing the four-year-old pilot program: Anthony Quinn (Oakville), Arlene Iantomasi (Burlington) and

Diane Rabenda (Milton).

"This pilot was started by a trustee resolution four years ago because it was part of the previous director's strategic plan, so it was a strategic planning point that this board wanted to move into this area and deliver this program," said Oakville trustee Anthony Danko. "Parents were asking for it and they're still asking for it; they're here, they're engaged." The value of the program and its popularity was never in question, said Superintendent of Education, curriculum services Anna



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