

Twenty-three per cent of public elementary students in FI

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that the public school board is determined to phase out English-track programs in certain schools.

Milton Trustee Donna Danielli told board members she has been inundated with emails and phone calls about rumours that E.W. Foster was going to be converted into an FI school.

"It's a completely unfounded rumour," Danielli said, adding, it is extremely important for parents to be aware she and her fellow trustees have fought hard against any automatic conversion to French Immersion.

"We came up with recommendations that give us options," she said.

While blended and triple grades aren't ideal, it will allow students to remain in their current school instead of being redirected to another, including those who decide they no longer want to be in FI.

It also reduces costs and is a better solu-

tion socially for students, who might be uprooted from their friends and/or siblings, trustees heard.

The plan, however, seems to go against the wishes of many of the nearly 4,000 parents, who filled out a questionnaire in June.

Approximately 45 percent of parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with combined grades — classes made up of two adjacent grade levels — and 81 per cent disagreed with triple grading.

On the other hand, 92 per cent of respondents said the option of having their children attend their neighbourhood school was either important or very important.

Burlington trustee Ann Harvey Hope said the new policy gives trustees the power to make decisions that will be in the "best interest" of students.

"We (trustees) will be the final arbitrars," she said. "We are committing to look ahead, and look forward, and come

up with solutions."

In approving the new policy, board chair Amy Collard reminded concerned parents it pertains to French and English enrolment.

"If French enrolment is low, the same thing will happen," she said.

Collard said a boundary review also won't automatically result in a conversion to a single-track school.

"The boundary for English could be increased to create better numbers," she said.

Decreasing enrolment in Grade 1 English forced the board to make three decisions for this current school year because of concerns

raised about the quality of their learning environment.

As of September 2013, 23 per cent of all elementary students in Halton public schools were in FI programs (Grades 1-8) with a 42 per cent uptake for Grade 1 French Immersion.

As a result, a triple grade (1-2-3) was created at E.W. Foster, while Grade 1 students at Pineland Public School in Burlington were redirected for their English program to another school.

A blended Grade 1-2 class was also created at Martin Street public school in Milton.

Police say man died of natural causes


Halton police have determined a senior man found dead near Lake Ontario in the vicinity of Holyrood Avenue Friday afternoon, died of natural causes.

At around 3 p.m., police said, a passerby discovered the unresponsive body of the man who was accompanied by a dog.

The dog was unharmed and was taken into the custody of the Oakville & Milton Humane Society.

It has since been picked up by the family of the deceased.

The man has been identified, but his name is not being released.



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