

roughly 200 more students in January versus September.

“We've been able to make room into our bricks and mortar classrooms with very little change,” said director of education Wesley Hahn, noting virtual learning numbers have remained “relatively stable” since the start of school.

Hahn is, however, somewhat concerned with the increase in homeschooling numbers.

“We normally have between 200 and 250 families on our homeschool register,” said Hahn, noting that number currently sits at more than 400.

Hahn said there are many reasons why this number is up this year over previous years including parents now working from home opting to keep their children home as well, consistency (twice in less than a year, students had to quickly pivot from in school to online learning), concerns related to COVID-19, and difficulties related to connectivity and access to technology.

Hahn said the board has also tried to address requests from parents wishing to transfer from in-school to online learning, and vice versa, but doing so is a challenge in order to meet class sizes. It also impacts staffing and maintaining the safety in cohorting.

“We would prefer to make everyone happy and have everyone in their best spots, but it's not possible right now,” said Hahn, who asked parents to be patient while the board works to address its wait list for transfers.

When it comes to being in “best spots,” if Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board parents haven't already expressed their transfer intentions, it's too late.

The board, which has 2,483 students learning virtually (as of Jan. 28), had given families until Jan. 12 to make changes in advance of semester changes. Parents wishing to remove their children from in school learning must now homeschool.

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