

In The Schools



Georgetown District High School students helped teacher Harvey Chapman wire the building on display for visiting parents last week. Students built the structure as a woodworking project and

wired the structure as an electrical assignment. Working with Mr. Chapman are Grade 11 students Ryan Lafferty and Barry Ewing. (Herald photo)

Enrolment declines sharply for technical courses

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

A decline in students enrolled in technological courses at Georgetown District High School is part of a Region-wide trend in education, said a former Georgetown vice-principal last week.

Bill Robinson was appointed by the Halton Board of Education to prepare a study on "tech" courses in the Region. He said there has been a "significant decline" in tech enrolment since the 30-credit diploma replaced the 27-credit diploma.

And "with the increase in compulsaries, there was the result of a decline in tech courses," said Mr. Robinson. He referred to the credits students must get to obtain the new diploma.

Teachers at GDHS want to boost the image of tech courses. Next year, they will introduce all-female tech classes at the Grade 10 level.

"The whole purpose is to promote the tech program in Georgetown," says electricity instructor Harvey Chapman. The school presented a mock building to parents at a Grade 8 information night last week. The structure was built by woodworking students and wired by electrical students.

Mr. Chapman said he's not sure why enrolment in technological courses has declined, but said the courses are a "good jump" on life's demands, and are skills that are usable.

Auto courses are available to teach students how to maintain

cars and electricity courses teach expert wiring. But Georgetown also offers metal fabrication, drafting and courses in manufacturing products.

The school is launching a crusade to recruit new students. Posters and pamphlets are given to "feeder" schools like Centennial Public School and Stewarttown Public School. Georgetown provides tours through woodworking shops for senior elementary students.

The Halton Board of Education sent out surveys asking parents to define the importance of tech courses.

The board's study is being performed by T.A. Blakelock Secondary School principal Mr. Robinson in conjunction with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the teacher's advisory committee, and local chambers of commerce.

The study should be back with "detailed analysis" by Feb. 1. The results of the study and recommendations will be reviewed by the board in June, said Mr. Robinson.

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Board analyses student numbers

Halton Hills' public schools have more space than any other public school group in the Region, according to a Halton Board of Education report released recently.

The Functional Rated Capacity of Schools report, or FRC, indicates that Halton Hills' 11 public schools are 66 per cent filled, meaning there are 1,627 remaining pupil places.

The report is based on an average "loading" of 29 pupils per class. This differs from the Ministry of Education figure which loads 35 students per class.

The school with the most available space is Joseph Gibbons Public School in Georgetown. The school is filled to 31 per cent of its rated capacity, making it dangerously close to the 30 per cent mark. At 30 per cent, said board chairman Pat Hillhouse, there is a "mandatory investigation" of the school's necessity.

Joseph Gibbons has 15 classrooms, with five in use. The actual enrolment is 109 of an estimated 350-maximum students.

The most crowded school in Halton Hills is Glen Williams Public School, said the FRC report. The school is filled to 81 per cent capacity. It has 11 classrooms, seven in use, and has enrolled 205 of a potential 253 students.

Most schools in Halton Hills are between the 50 and 80-per-cent range in their estimated capacity. But M.Z. Bennett Public School in Acton is at 48-per-cent capacity. The school has enrolled 202 students but has space for 422 students.

Halton Hills schools show considerable contrast to the more crowded schools in Halton Region, including Brookville Public School in the Milton area. Brookville is at 103 per cent of its rated capacity. There are 444 spaces available to the school which has enrolled 459 students.

In Burlington, Central Public School is almost full at 99 per cent of its capacity. Other crowded schools in the Region include Brookdale Public School in Oakville at 98 per cent of its capacity, Sunningdale Public School in Oakville at 96 per cent capacity, Sir E. MacMillan School in Burlington, also at 96 per cent capacity and Queen Elizabeth Park School in Oakville at 95 per cent of its rated capacity.

Although some trustees claim there is no "consistency" in the FRC report given to the board, Peter Gnish, assistant to the Director of Education, said the report was "indicative" of classroom space.

The 29 students estimated per classroom was "an inflated

figure," he said.

The Halton Board of Education uses the FRC report in "an attempt to take on the Ministry" to get increased funding for pupil and class spaces, said Board Superintendent of Business Services, Jerry Jenkins.

But Acton and area Trustee Arlene Bruce said the report shows available space when "there's virtually none."

Mrs. Hillhouse said the report is used to indicate where space requirements are and what trends develop in individual areas. It is not a definite count of "available" pupil spaces, she said.

"We have to remember that children don't come in nice packages of 29, 31 and 35," said Mrs. Hillhouse.



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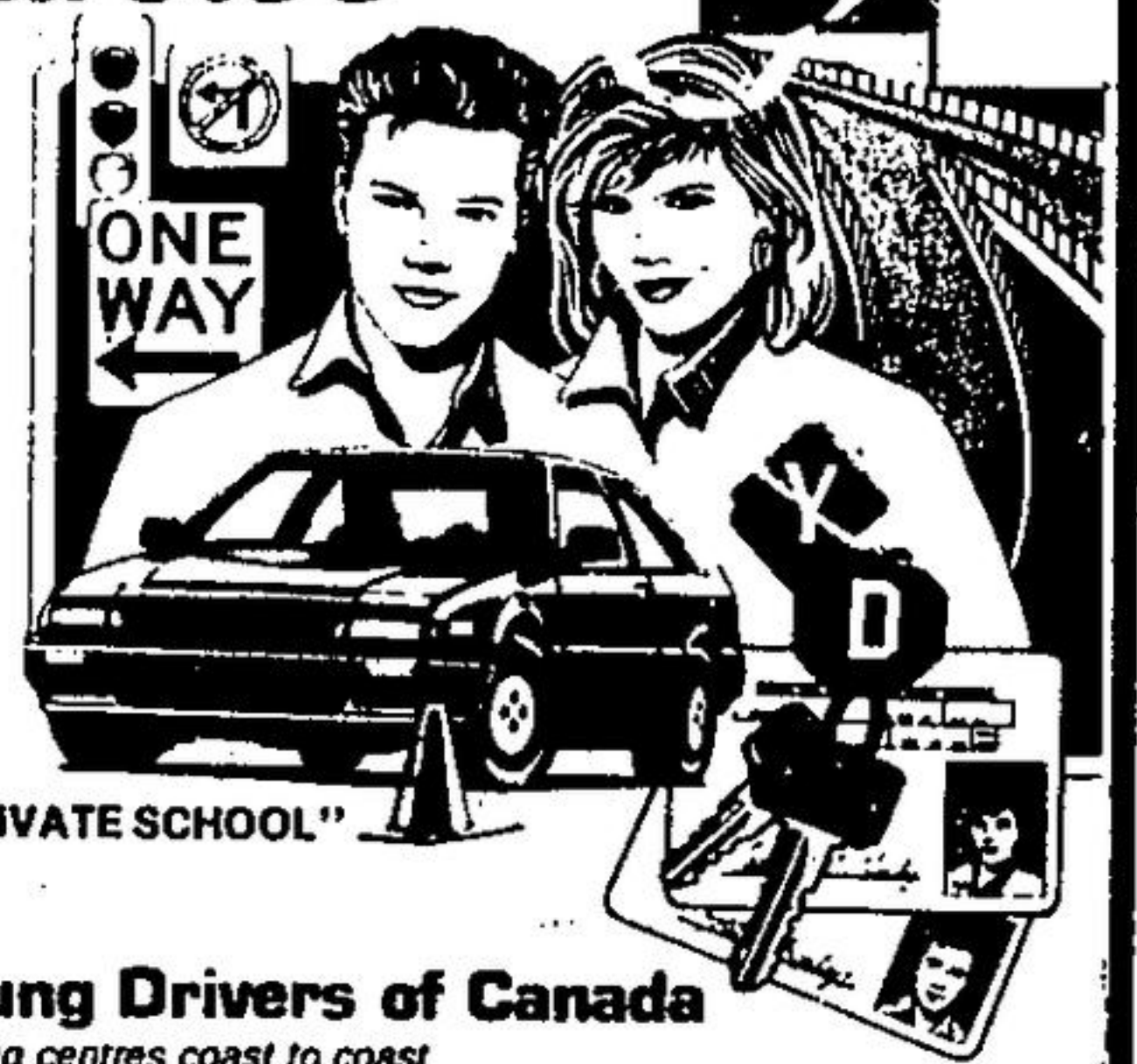
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