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of two with one child currently in the French immersion program, said she had heard there were at least 40 children who are siblings of those currently in the program interested in being part of it in the coming school year.

"This projection does not account for all the new families wishing to begin their own journey in FI, wishing to give their own children an opportunity to learn our country's other official language within a Catholic school setting. This is not elite programming; the demand for FI will not go away. The Halton Catholic school board is behind every other board in making this work. Why the constant delays?" said Kelley in a presentation to the board.

The struggle to accommodate French immersion demand is not unique to the local board. Demand has been steadily

growing across the province over the last few years. A lack of qualified teachers is regularly cited as a challenge to growth.

In Halton, school capacity presents an additional difficulty. Milton schools, in particular, are largely well beyond 100 per cent utilization and already have reached the limit for portables to add new classrooms.

Trustee Helena Karabela said that just because there are challenges in particular parts of the board, it doesn't mean they should not expand the program.

"If there are places we can expand, we should do that and not be sort of slowed down by another area. The population enrolment in Milton is a good thing. Other boards are struggling from declining enrolment and here we have this lovely challenge. But that doesn't mean in other areas where there are schools with empty

spaces we couldn't open another site," said Karabela.

If that approach is taken it would mean an unequal availability of French immersion from one community to the next.

Milton Trustee Patrick Murphy pointed out that any expansion in Milton will have to deal with a complete absence of available classrooms that is expected to persist for years to come.

"There is no space. There will be no space for the next 10 years. Maybe we'll get lucky every time we add an elementary school where we will have a two- or three-year window where we can add a few more classes, but that is going to be the governor that allows expansion for the board. And the reality is, it's not going to be able to expand if we're basing it on equitable expansion in all regions. That's just the reality," said Murphy.

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- avoid potlucks or shared utensils
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