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have to provide their own transportation to specialized schools. That means a school designated as the Arts school, for example, would draw students from other areas including educational facilities that are bursting at the seams.

When the idea was recently presented to Catholic trustees, it received vocal support from key voices at the board.

At the same meeting, trustee Nancy Guzzo successfully passed a motion for a feasibility report into the creation of expanded arts programming at particular schools. That report is expected in March 2023.

Guzzo said she felt arts was the best place to start with bringing specialized programs to the board partly because it has such a broad appeal.

"There isn't one offered in Halton. And we know that for those students who seek to go into a specialized

"Arts programs, high tech programs, they're more aligned with what kids are seeing out there right now. And I think it would bring, more kids and get them more excited."

- Laurie McDougald

arts program there, they're leaving our region to do that," said Guzzo, adding, "It's another way of attracting students and maintaining the schools that we have."

The proposal for the expanded Arts program was widely supported around the board table.

John Klein, director of education at HCDSB, said he believes programs like this can help engage both staff and students.

"I do think that it provides the opportunity for students to express themselves, particularly for those who might find that

the pathways that they're in, in schools, may not necessarily, be the one for them. This might engage them. And we see through the arts too, in our faith, that this is another opportunity to transcend the world that we live in—I am a big believer in this," said Klein.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With Halton facing a significant enrolment disparity in its schools, we wanted to explore how one parent's proposal of specialized regional programs could help address the problem.



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