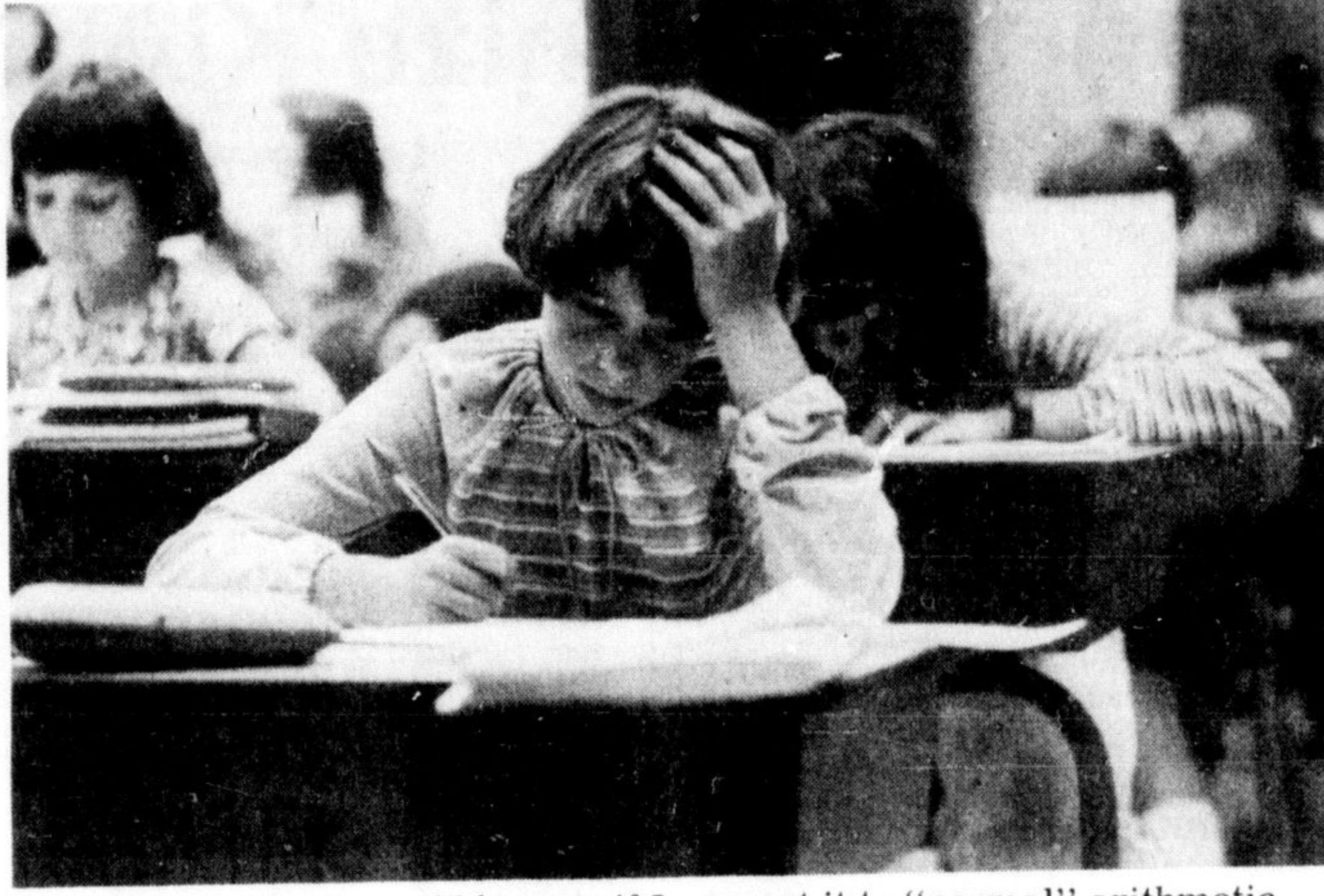
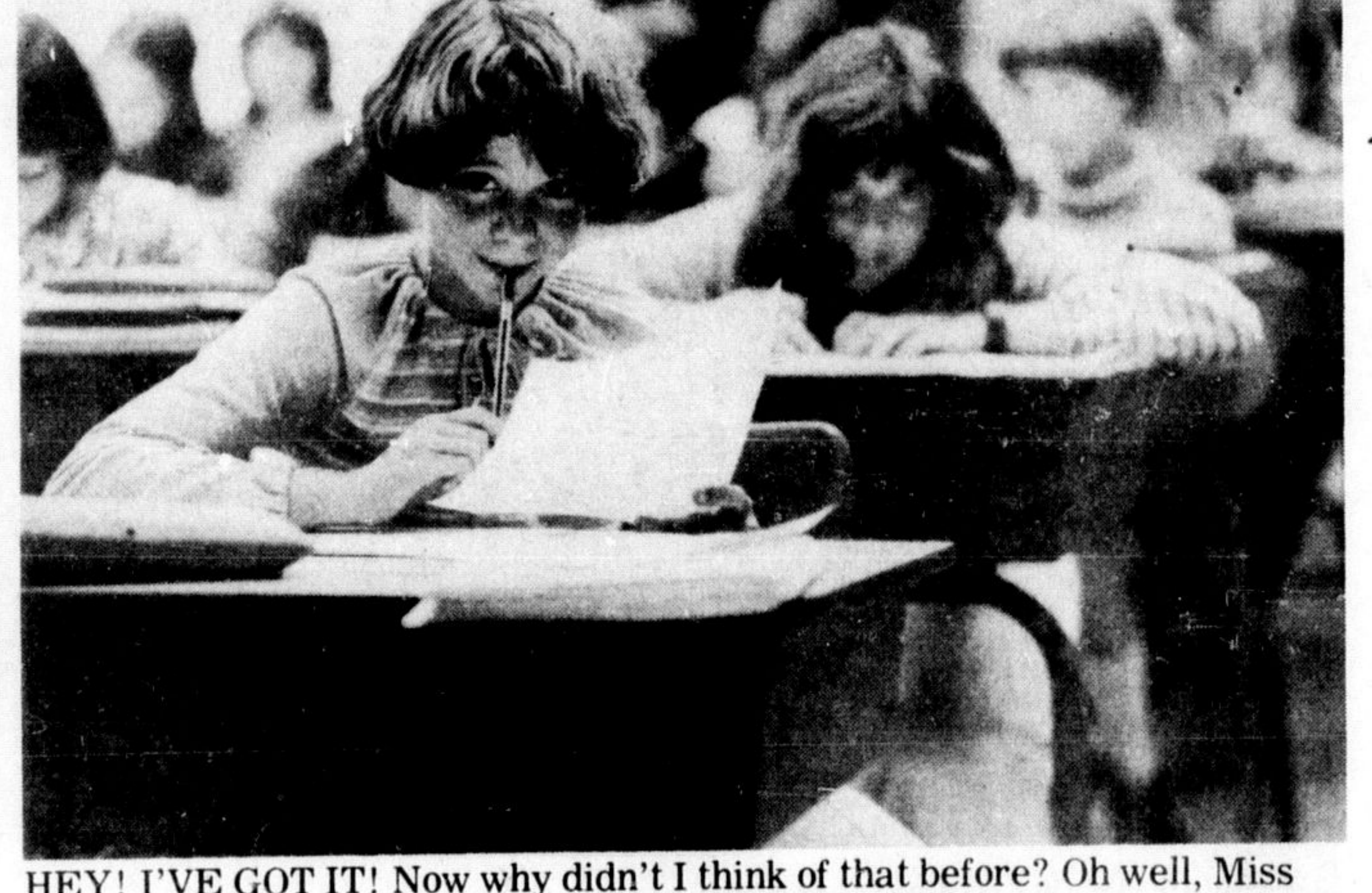




GEE, THIS METRIC STUFF is a puzzler, muses Cindy Ruse, 11, of Martin St. Middle School, one of thousands of Milton and district students who went back to the books after a delightful summer holiday last week.



I WONDER WHAT would happen if I convert it to "normal" arithmetic, work out the answer, then convert it back to metrics?, Cindy wonders as the answer to the current problem continues to elude her. Oh well.



HEY! I'VE GOT IT! Now why didn't I think of that before? Oh well, Miss Ruse, if all the problems can be worked out that quickly, it's going to be a great year of school. (Champion photos by Peter McCusker)

Board expanding French program despite protests

Halton elementary school children will be taking much more French beginning this year. Thursday Halton Board of Education approved a plan to begin this year phasing in 40 minutes of mandatory French instruction a day for each student in grades four, five, six, Grades seven and eight already have French. The board also decided how staff will be allocated to teach extra French to look further into French immersion courses next year and to establish French learning centres in 10 Halton schools, including Centennial, Georgetown, and McKenzie-Smith, Acton, in the north. Trustees spent over two hours debating the issue

which has been simmering since the spring. Many students dropped out of high school back in the days when French was a mandatory subject. Trustee Ivan Armstrong stated, kicking off debate. He warned more French in the schools could cause problems for many students. Because of public pressure the board brought in core-curriculum with an emphasis on English and math. Armstrong noted. He predicted expansion of French in elementary schools would cut into study of core-curriculum subjects and suggested the board stick to making sure pupils are getting the basics before adding more courses. He warned adding French

would mean more teachers would eventually have to be hired and would have a serious effect on the pupil-teacher ratio. Armstrong also warned French would be costly to local taxpayers and reminded trustees that even with generous grants from Queen's Park, the same taxpayers who foot the bill in Halton will feel the pinch of provincial taxes. If the board expanded French, possibly this generation of students would be able to learn to appreciate Canada's dual heritage. Trustee Elaine Rhiem said. Immersion isn't for every child but everyone in Halton should be given the opportunity to decide if they want it, she added.

Trustee Fred Armitage said the administration had not made a good case showing more French wouldn't harm other subjects. "I want to be convinced there will be no dilution of core-curriculum by French." The study of a second language often improves command of one's native tongue, Trustee Edna Robinson declared. Trustee Florence Mears said it was unfortunate politics in Quebec was making people reluctant to introduce more French in schools. She said nobody knew for sure what children will need to know 20 years from now, so it was wrong to

say French won't be needed. French appeals to a lot of parents but not many pupils, Trustee Don Long said, noting many drop the subject in high school after taking it in grades seven and eight. It was noted only 63 per cent of all Halton grade nines take French and just 45 per cent of all high schoolers are taking French. Director of Education Em Lavender said some avoid French in high school because they dislike the subject but others don't take it even though they like it because other subjects have even more appeal. Long said the board would be wasting money teaching French in elementary school if students don't continue the subject in high school. He suggested a spending ceiling be set on French programs, warning the costs could really escalate in years to come. Long also thought it was one thing to make French optional but in elementary school it would be mandatory while some pupils would detest the subject. Long said people living in other nations need to learn English because it is the language of business but Ontario students would find very little use for French. He was also concerned

about starting new programs with special staff requirements in a time of dwindling enrolments. Trustee Bert Hinton said the board wasn't paying enough attention to concerns about French in elementary schools expressed by Halton principals. He noted principals feel 40 minutes a day of French is too long to hold children's interest and wondered how many priority objectives, like core curriculum, a school can handle. "We should listen to the professional's practical approach to French," Hinton declared suggesting it be an optional subject so those who wish to take it can. Trustee Bill Lawson noted the board has been forced to increase remedial education and worried the introduction of French would simply increase the number of students needing special help. He said 40 minute French classes would be a disruption to the school and warned moving French teachers from class to class could also cause problems. Trustee Cam Jackson noted much of Halton's population increase is immigrant families and not only will the board be teaching French as a second language but also English in the future. There isn't a unity problem

in Canada, Trustee Elsie Hilson said. She told the board in her opinion the only unity problem is the one "someone" in Ottawa is creating for political gain. She said parents are more interested in their children learning math and English. Trustees Long, Armstrong, Hinton, Hilson, G. Lawson, Jim Cleland, and Fred Armitage all opposed various aspects of the French expansion when voting took place.

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Back to school

Enrolments slightly lower than official projections

Enrolment in North Halton schools was 45 students less than projected for this year said Don Gentleman, assistant superintendent for the Halton Board of Education. The projected enrolment which Mr. Gentleman said was tabulated last winter, was 7,869 students. However when heads were counted after the first week of school the actual enrolment in North Halton was 7,824 students. The biggest difference between actual and projected enrolment for classes occurred in W. I. Dick's kindergarten class. The board of education had estimated there would be 35 students but only 27 children enrolled in the class on the first day of school. Two changes were required among Halton teachers after enrolments were tabulated. Mr. Gentleman said one full time kindergarten teacher in Georgetown was changed to a half time schedule and one teacher for Joseph Gibbons school in Georgetown was transferred to a grade four class at J.M. Denyes in Milton. This move was made necessary when the enrolment at J.M. Denyes, 549 students, surpassed the projected enrolment of 526 students. Mr. Gentleman said officials were not surprised that a higher number of students were attending J.M. Denyes than expected. He said that during the last

spring term the enrolment at the school had risen sharply from the fall and it became necessary to hire supply teachers to handle the overload. The increase last spring was the main cause for throwing off the projections for this fall, added Mr. Gentleman. Estimates for enrolment at Baldwin Public School in Dorset Park were off as only 586 children attended classes. This was lower than the estimated figure of 613 students. Meanwhile Pineview School on Trafalgar Rd., which is handling students bussed from the Baldwin School area had a higher number of students than was anticipated. The board had projected an attendance of 397 students but 425 children showed up for the first week of classes. However, Mr. Gentleman said ubssbussing of about 40 students would still continue. "We haven't got room for all the kids in Baldwin," he said. "We need leverage for growth." Mr. Gentleman added that he would like to solve that problem as soon as possible. Commenting on the enrolments in North Halton schools in general, Mr. Gentleman said each school's attendance tended to fluctuate fluidly either above or below the projected enrolments. In the kindergarten classes the board had projected 836 students while the actual

attendance was 829 children. The actual enrolment at W.I. Dick school was 212 students which was lower than the projected figure of 236. Martin St. Middle School had a projected enrolment of 407 students but ended up with 419 after the first week of school. Milton District High School had 1,356 students attend classes during the first week of school, which was more than the 1,333 students the board had anticipated.

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