

High demand could bring French immersion to Shelburne

By Brock Weir

It was back to school for kids in Shelburne last week, but if parents were bundling their children off to French immersion on Tuesday, they were going a bit further afield.

Shelburne students currently enrolled in French immersion programs attend Princess Elizabeth Public School and Mono-Amaranth Public School, but in the years down the road there could be options right here in Town.

The Upper Grand District School Board has launched a boundary review in response to enrollment pressure in the area. Along with this boundary review is a feasibility study on whether French immersion in Shelburne will fly.

The study was announced by Upper Grand on Tuesday morning, along with a public information session on September 19 to be held on September 19 from 7 ? 9 p.m. at Centennial Hylands Elementary School.

?The meeting will provide interested parents and guardians with information about French Immersion (FI),? said Heather Loney of the Upper Grand District School Board. ?A survey will be available to gather data on the number of potential FI students. This information will be shared in a Shelburne FI Feasibility Study report to be presented to trustees on October 11.?

An additional public meeting, this time on the Boundary Review process, will be held on October 19 from 7 ? 9 p.m., again at Centennial Hylands.

?During the board's public consultation on the 2015-2016 French review, interest was expressed in having FI introduced in Shelburne,? said Ms. Loney. ?Currently, students who reside in North Dufferin attend FI at Princess Elizabeth PS and Mono-Amaranth Public School. Both schools are experiencing significant enrolment pressure as a result of the growth in FI. Caps placed on JK FI enrolment, beginning in September 2017, will not resolve the immediate overcrowding concerns.

?The purpose of the FI feasibility study is to confirm the viability of offering FI in Shelburne. If FI is deemed to be viable, the boundary review process would also make changes to school boundaries to establish a new North Dufferin JK-8 FI boundary. This will also require a modification to existing JK-8 Regular Track boundaries.

?At the August meeting of the UGDSB, trustees were presented with the Initial Boundary Review Report and approved the commencement of this review. The report included a recommended staff option, which includes accommodating North Dufferin JK-8 FI students at Centennial Hylands Elementary School. The option also involves the reassignment of a portion of the Centennial Hylands ES Regular Track boundary to Primrose Elementary School.?

If you would like to have your say on either the feasibility study or the boundary review, you can sound off at the public information sessions or head over to the Upper Grand District School Board online at www.ugdsb.on.ca/ndbr.