

Melancthon council asks for delay for proposed boundary changes

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Melancthon Council has submitted a letter to the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) regarding a proposed school boundary review.

In the letter, Melancthon Council asked for the Upper Grand to postpone the decision to adjust the Primrose-Centennial Hylands school boundaries by 12 months or until a more thorough process can be completed.

"The decision to move children from one school to another cannot be made lightly. It must balance short-term needs with medium-term trends that will impact all involved," wrote the councillors. "Melancthon Council is concerned that those who are most impacted by the boundary change – Melancthon families – have not been adequately engaged while UGDSB staff developed their proposed options."

In a press release issued on Oct. 23, the school board announced it would conduct a boundary review to address the accommodation pressures at Primrose Elementary School in Mulmur.

The rural school, serviced by a private well and septic system, has an operating capacity of 377 pupil spaces. In recent years, Primrose Elementary has experienced an increase in enrollment, and the current number of students enrolled in the school is approximately 580.

According to the report, the proposed school to accommodate the boundary review, Centennial Hylands Elementary School, has an enrollment of 413 students with the capacity to accommodate a total of 541 students.

Melancthon Council raised concerns about not being consulted throughout the boundary review process.

"Our staff have unique insights on future development projects that will impact schools over the short and medium term. Municipal staff and UGDSB staff should be working together to account for actual growth, ensuring that interim solutions align with the medium-term trends we are seeing," reads the letter.

The letter also noted the concerns from families with children attending Primrose Elementary, which included the psychological toll separating children from their friends could have, as well as the fact that some of the students who transferred to Primrose in 2017 due to a boundary adjustment, may be asked to return to Centennial.

"Melancthon families are not unreasonable – they understand the pressures that UGDSB is facing. Indeed, their kids live those pressures every day. Engaging families throughout the process would ensure that all perspectives and options have been appropriately considered."

Should the boundary adjustment be approved by the Upper Grand District School Board, the changes would be expected to be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.