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Upper Grand District School Board exploring potential reshuffling of students from high capacity schools

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The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) is exploring the plausibility of moving students from high-capacity elementary schools to ones with more enrolment space.

In a press release issued on Monday (Oct. 23), the school board said it would be conducting a boundary review in order to address the accommodation pressures at Primrose Elementary School in Mulmur.

The rural school, which is 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 enrolment, and the current number of students enrolled in the school is approximately 580.

During a regular meeting in July, Shelburne Town Council received a report from the school board regarding their draft plan for long-term accommodation at schools.

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

While looking at the capacity of the elementary schools, Shelburne councillors at the July meeting also urged the school board to investigate a boundary review of Centre Dufferin District High School, particularly regarding students from Grand Valley.

?It's an awfully long way to be bussing students from Grand Valley to Shelburne, and I know traditionally it's been the case because there are limited options for secondary schools, but in my humble opinion that's one area where I think the school board should be looking at a boundary adjustment,? said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills.

Centre Dufferin District High School has a capacity of 798 students, and the school currently has 853 students enrolled. The enrolment at the high school is projected to grow to 895 by 2025 and 1,140 by 2030.

?This council in the last term has had a lot of complaints come to it that were not council related complaints due to the over crowding at the high school,? said Coun. Walter Benotto. ?When it's crowded things erupt, problems start existing and parents turn around and who do they blame ? us ? and we have no control over it.?

A boundary review is a staff process that allows the school board to review a variety of options for resolving issues with overcapacity and underutilized schools or when determining a new school boundary.

The UGDSB will be hosting a public information session at Primrose Elementary School on Nov. 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., where the public will be able to ask questions and provide feedback on the boundary review.

All questions and inquiries on the boundary review can be directed to planning.info@ugdsb.on.ca.

Any approved changes to the school boundaries are expected to be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.