

The ROCKWOOD Miller

East Wellington parents schooled on French Immersion program

Some East Wellington (Rockwood, Eden Mills and Everton) parents feel like the school board is asking them to take a "leap of faith" and send their children to Erin area schools for French Immersion (FI) based on the hope that there will be enough interest to begin a French Immersion (FI) program in Rockwood for their children by September 2014.

The issue of a new FI program arose after the Upper Grand District School Board recently completed a boundary review which re-routes all East Wellington FI students to Brisbane Public School, and then Erin High School, instead of the Guelph schools they now attend. Many parents do not want to reorient their children to Erin, and have

threatened to pull their kids from the FI program. To ease the transition, the Board will allow students now at Edward Johnson PS in Guelph, and their younger siblings, to attend Guelph's King George PS for two years. If an FI program can't be established in Rockwood by 2014, all East Wellington FI students would attend Erin schools.

The Board kicked off a FI feasibility study with a town hall meeting last Wednesday at Rockwood's Centennial PS, which drew approximately 50 people. Three options were offered – leading some parents to complain that important decisions had already been made by the Board – but officials promised to listen to concerns and comments from parents who want to enrol

or continue their children in FI, but do not want to send them to Erin schools, which are under-capacity and are able to accept them from overcrowded Rockwood and Guelph schools. The Board has the intent to build an Early Learning Centre (ELC) in south Rockwood by 2014 to accommodate the expected influx of Junior Kindergarten students to the new provincial Full Day Kindergarten program. This facility could also accommodate East Wellington FI students, if there is enough interest and the program received Board approval.

Former Board superintendent Dave Walpole co-chairs the feasibility study and he stressed to parents there will not be another boundary review, and that a FI program in



DATE NIGHT: Jazz group Side Bar, featuring vocals from Pamela Maloney (left) and Regan Clark, with Sue Thurston on guitar, delighted listeners at a free-will offering concert on Friday at St. John Anglican Church in Rockwood. – Ted Tyler photo

Rockwood would require a much higher percentage of students participating than the 30 per cent currently enrolled in FI from East Wellington.

Walpole said they would survey parents with a questionnaire that would be available on the Board's website and at local schools. They want to hear from prospective parents who have children either going into the program this year, next year (or) the year after, "so we can have some pretty good grasp on how many we're expected to see..." Walpole said, inviting people at the meeting to suggest questions for the survey so they "get it right."

Rockwood parent Olivia Morreale said the Board is asking parents to make a "leap of faith" and enrol their children in FI in Brisbane on the hopes there will be a FI program in Rockwood. Several parents suggested the survey should ask if parents would be interested in the FI program if their children could attend Edward

Johnson PS, not Brisbane PS, until a FI program begins in Rockwood. "If we can build a program here [in Rockwood] that would be good, but it will depend on numbers," Walpole said.

Rockwood resident Jen MacLeod, mother of a five-year-old enrolled in FI at Edward Johnson School, and a babe-in-arms, said they have a "tremendous opportunity" to offer FI to their children, but is worried the Board has already "narrowed the issues" with its "really biased" three options.

The Board has set a short timeframe for the FI feasibility study – another issue for some parents who feel they are being rushed. Parental surveys must be in by March 30, and the issue goes to a Board committee on May 23, to the Director by June 4, to a second committee on June 12, and to the June 26 Board meeting for a final vote by trustees.

The options, all with a September 2014 start

date, include:

Option A – Establish a JK to Grade six FI program at Rockwood Centennial, and move the East Wellington JK to Grade six students from King Edward to Rockwood.

Option B – Register new JK East Wellington students in a new Rockwood FI program, either at Centennial or the proposed ELC. Move SK and Grade one students from King George to the new program in Rockwood. SK to Grade one FI students attending Brisbane PS would attend the Rockwood program, which would be grown year by year to become a full JK to Grade six FI program.

Option C – Establish a JK/SK FI program at either Centennial or a new ELC. Students in Grades one through six would attend Brisbane PS, and student in Grades seven and eight would attend Erin PS, and Grades nine through 12 would attend Erin High School.



East Wellington Family Health Team

Check out our upcoming FREE workshops:

Living Well with Diabetes

Rockwood: Thursday, March 1st 6:30 – 8:00pm

Carbohydrates and You

Erin: Wednesday, March 7th 6:30-8:00pm

Pre-Diabetes: Your Chance to Change the Future

Erin: Thursday, March 8th, 6:30-8:00pm
Thursday, March 29th, 6:30-8:00pm

Diabetes, Sodium & Fat. Oh, my!

Join EWFHT and the Canadian Diabetes Association Dietitian and Cookbook author, Sharon Zeiler, via the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), to learn how to read product labels & make healthier food choices at home and on the go.

Erin: Thursday March 22nd, 6:30-8:30 pm

Better Sleep

Learn how to fall asleep, or back to sleep, more easily and about clearing the mind of unproductive self-talk, worry and mental chatter

Rockwood: Thursday, March 22nd, 6:30-8:30pm

You must pre-register by either calling 519-833-7576 ext. 341 or by going to www.ewfht.ca and clicking on "Workshops"

All Erin sessions are held at the
Erin Wellness Centre, 6 Thompson Cres.;
all Rockwood sessions are held at 175 Alma Street

Nobel Ridge models

Charleston Homes Ltd. can build two – not one as allowed – model homes in its Noble Ridge subdivision, which will finish off housing development at the south end of Rockwood, the so-called Harris Street development.

Guelph-Eramosa Township Council agreed to Charleston's request last

Tuesday after Andrew Mulder, Charleston's Manager of Land Development, said other municipalities allow two model homes, and it makes for a better streetscape because "people buy what they see," and the more model homes available, the more variety of houses are built.

Mulder said Noble

Ridge will consist of 258 units, 130 which are on municipal roads, and 128 condominium townhouses. He did not know how much the various units would cost. Construction will begin this spring and summer with occupancy in late fall and the first move-ins slated for spring 2013.

TED ARNOTT, MPP
Wellington-Halton Hills

Web: www.tedarnottmpp.com
Phone: 1-800-265-2366

