
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

UPGRADED ABBOTSFORD COLLEGIATE TO BECOME COMMUNITY HUB

ABBOTSFORD – Abbotsford Collegiate Secondary is set to become a Neighbourhood Learning Centre as part of an upcoming \$45-million renovation and upgrade, Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid and Abbotsford South MLA John van Dongen announced today.

“Government’s vision is to turn schools into community hubs – bringing valuable educational and community services together under one roof,” said MacDiarmid. “I’m pleased that the Province is able to support a new Neighbourhood Learning Centre for Abbotsford as part of the upgrades at Abbotsford Collegiate.”

Construction work is scheduled to begin in late 2010 and is anticipated to be completed in 2012. The construction work will include the replacement of some classrooms and shops, and a new administration area in a three-storey addition that will be connected to the existing building. New playfields are also part of the project.

“For more than 50 years, Abbotsford Collegiate has proven that it is an excellent place for learning in our community,” said van Dongen. “This upgrade to Abbotsford Collegiate is an excellent opportunity to formalize the school’s central role by creating space for important community services and programs.”

The new Neighbourhood Learning Centre is expected to include shared common spaces for community agencies, Fraser Health offices, a computer lab, counselling and seniors’ services, a day care, kitchen and other offices. Public consultation will be undertaken to confirm final usage of the centre.

“Outside school hours, the school is a great space that is affordable for community groups to use,” said Attorney General and Abbotsford West MLA Michael de Jong. “This investment is going to create even more space, giving many groups the opportunity to provide activities and services to the people of Abbotsford.”

The Neighbourhood Learning Centre website, www.neighbourhoodlearningcentres.gov.bc.ca, includes examples of some of the community services and programs already offered in schools around B.C. All school districts are now being encouraged to move toward this inclusive approach to planning the use of new school space and including elements of Neighbourhood Learning Centres in all new and replacement schools.

Since 2001, the Province has invested more than \$103.6 million in the Abbotsford school district, including an addition to Abbotsford Traditional school, seismic upgrade to William A. Fraser Middle school and the replacement of Abbotsford Middle school.

“We are absolutely thrilled to learn of the renovations and seismic upgrades to Abbotsford Collegiate. This is great news for our students, their parents, staff and our community,” said Cindy Schafer, chair of the Abbotsford board of education. “The school will be able to continue to provide a healthy environment for staff, community members and students for years to come, and the Neighbourhood Learning Centre reflects our strong commitment to education in Abbotsford.”

Since 2001, the Province has invested more than \$1.7 billion to complete 80 new and replacement schools, 148 additions, 26 renovation projects and 22 site acquisitions across B.C. All new and replacement schools have been constructed to meet the latest seismic standards. By the end of 2009-10, the Province will have committed more than \$3.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects across the province.

From 2001 to 2009, more than \$469 million has been invested to seismically upgrade schools across B.C. A total of 118 projects are either completed, under construction or have been approved to proceed. Over the past five years, the Province has provided a total of \$25 million to districts in seismic zones to complete non-structural seismic work, including attaching cabinets to walls, covering some windows with protective film and securing lights.

Architectural rendering of renovation and upgrade to Abbotsford Collegiate Secondary:
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/photos/construction/2010/abbotsford/0990_AbbotsfordCollegiateRendering.pdf.

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