

Education
November 21, 2007

Williams Government Responds to Needs in Paradise School System

The community of Paradise is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada. To accommodate its future growth and development, the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education, announced today significant investments to build a new K-6 school, as well as renovate and extend Holy Family Elementary. This is in addition to a new school to replace Paradise Elementary which was announced in August.

"We have never before undertaken school construction plans of such magnitude for a single community," said Minister Burke. "These additional schools are necessary to support this growing area of our province and the many young families who now call Paradise home. The new school facilities will keep this momentum of growth going."

In August 2007, government announced its intention to build a new school to replace Paradise Elementary at an approximate cost of \$12 million. More than \$14 million will be invested for the second new school and more than \$2 million for changes to Holy Family School.

Milton Peach, Chair of the Eastern School Board said that today's announcement is welcome news for the Paradise school community. "We appreciate this government's recognition that the Paradise school system requires a tremendous investment in new school construction," said Mr. Peach. "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank government for supporting our efforts to ensure facilities are in place to address the educational needs of this growing community."

The new elementary schools will each have a gymnasium, a challenging needs suite, modern learning resource centre and a ventilation system. Holy Family will be extended to include a new lunchroom with a kitchen and additional classrooms.

The residents of Paradise are represented by three Members of the House of Assembly who each responded to today's announcement.

"I am absolutely delighted with this announcement," said Beth Marshall, MHA for Topsail. "These projects have been a very high priority for me and this is a banner day for the residents of Paradise. I am pleased that Holy Family School will have the amenities to provide an environment that will be better for the students to learn and for the staff to work. I would like to thank the school councils and the parents for their support and patience all along the way."

Dianne Whalen, Minister of Transportation and Works and MHA for Conception Bay East and Bell Island said, "

"Today's announcement is excellent news for the families in Elizabeth Park, many of whom reside in the new District of Mount Pearl North," said Mount Pearl North MHA Steve Kent. "Over the past few months, I have spoken with many Paradise residents on the issues related to our schools, and I am extremely pleased that our government continues to listen and respond to the concerns of families in my District."

Minister Burke noted that the investments announced today for school infrastructure in Paradise are just a portion of the massive school construction program underway in towns and communities throughout the province. This announcement brings the number of new schools either constructed or announced since 2003 to 11. Since that time, \$111 million has been allocated for school construction, major repairs and maintenance.

"Our government is pleased that the Town of Paradise is bucking the trend of declining enrolment and will ultimately spend approximately \$30 million to ensure there are sufficient school facilities in place to serve the elementary students and parents in the area. And with a 67 per cent increase in operating grants to boards, these schools will serve the Paradise community well into the future," said Minister Burke.

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Backgrounder

The following is an overview of school capital construction projects since 2004:

Completed projects:

Leading Tickles Primary, Leading Tickles - new school (\$1 million)
St. Bernard's Elementary, Witless Bay - extension/renovations (\$2 million)
St. James Regional High, Port au Basques - renovations/roof repairs (\$1 million)

Corner Brook High (Regina Complex), Corner Brook - renovations/minor extension (\$1.8 million)
E.A. Butler School, McKays - renovations (\$558,000)
Holy Cross School Complex, Eastport - rebuild after fire (\$3.25 million)
Carmanville School Complex, Carmanville – rebuild after fire (\$6.9 million)
Amos Comenius Memorial School, Hopedale – rebuild after fire (\$3.3 million)

Leary's Brook Junior High, St. John's - extension/renovations (\$1.5 million)
St. Andrew's Elementary, St. John's – renovations (\$683,000)
Botwood College, Botwood - extension/renovations (\$1.2 million)
Gander Collegiate, Gander – extension (\$2.1 million)

Projects Under Construction:

Herdman Collegiate, Corner Brook – redevelopment (\$18.1 million)
Mobile - new K-12 school (\$9.3 million)
MSB Academy, Middle Arm - extension/renovations (\$1.5 million)
Exploits Valley Intermediate, Grand Falls-Windsor – extension and renovations (\$2.9 million)
Beachy Cove Elementary, Portugal Cove/St. Phillips – extension (\$950,900)
Sheshatshiu - new K-12 school - Provincial contribution (\$4 million)

Projects in the Planning Stage:

L'Anse au Loup - new K-12 school
Holy Trinity Elementary, Torbay - new K-6 school
Baie Verte - new K-12 school
Placentia - new 7-12 school
Port Hope Simpson - new K-12 school
St. Anthony Elementary - redevelopment
Port Saunders - new K-12 School
Lester Pearson Memorial School, New-Wes-Valley - extension/ renovations
Happy Valley-Goose Bay - new francophone school
Paradise – two new K-6 schools, redevelopment of Holy Family School