



# *News and Information*

**October 31, 2011**

## **Capital Project Announcements for the Central Okanagan School District**

### **Kelowna, B.C.**

Rolli Cacchioni, Chairperson of The Board of Education for the Central Okanagan School District, is pleased to acknowledge the approval by Education Minister George Abbott of two major capital building projects for School District No. 23. This announcement comes following many years of hard work by the local Board to lobby for support to address critical facility issues in the District. The Board would also like to recognize the support of local MLA's, Ben Stewart, Steve Thomson and Norm Letnick, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that provincial capital is committed to these projects. Members of the local community can also be thanked for participating in a 'Citizens' Survey' that was coordinated by the MLA's and gave valuable feedback. Parents who participated in last year's community forums organized by the school district, focusing on the future of the Mission area schools and the French Immersion Program, were also helpful in giving input to the Board and the MLA's.

The approval of a new elementary school on the Rosewood Drive property in West Kelowna will provide permanent space to house several hundred students, many of whom are currently located in portable classrooms at alternate sites. Additionally, it will address the growth that has happened in the corridor between the existing Rose Valley and Shannon Lake Elementary Schools. Chairperson Rolli Cacchioni indicated "this new facility also provides us with the opportunity to partner with the District of West Kelowna to explore the potential to establish a 'Neighbourhood Learning Centre' through the Provincial Government's initiative that supports facilities where people of all ages can access education, community services, recreation and culture".

The addition of permanent space for up to 300 students at Okanagan Mission Secondary School recognizes the rapid increase in enrolment that has been taking place in Mission area schools. The continued growth in the Upper Mission area, especially with the new 'Neighbourhood 3 – The Ponds' development taking place, has resulted in pressure on all existing facilities. Okanagan Mission Secondary School will also now be able to consider plans to partner with the City of Kelowna on possible joint use opportunities, and to explore whether a community theatre project is viable.

Once again, the Board acknowledges with appreciation the support that is coming for public education in the Central Okanagan. With the completion of these projects, along with the recent addition of eight classrooms at Shannon Lake Elementary and the reopening of Anne McClymont Primary School, the School District will have addressed many of the significant priorities on its capital project list. Board Chairperson Cacchioni commented that "we now look forward to working closely with Kelowna-Lake Country MLA, Norm Letnick, to secure funding for a replacement for the aging Rutland Middle School", which remains as a high priority.

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