



Media Release

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Student Enrollment Increases

As of September 25, 2017, enrollment in schools across the district increased by 2% or just over 100 students. The population of the school district is now over 5150 students. As predicted student enrollment increased by just over 2% with the majority of the growth occurring in the City of Grande Prairie. However, St. Mary Beaverlodge also continues to grow now that the school in Beaverlodge due in part to the opening of a larger school a year ago.

“Of particular note is the growth that will occur in the next 5 to six years, stated Superintendent Karl Germann. “These students are already born and in our community. Our data, backed by Stats Canada data and with assistance from a demographics firm in Vancouver, BC, indicates our school district will grow by 500 students in the next three years and 1000 students in the next 5 to 6 years.” Long term data suggests the Catholic district will grow by an additional 2000 students in 10 years.

“The next group of Trustees will need to ramp up lobbying efforts and articulate Grande Prairie’s need for additional student space,” stated Board Chair Eldon Wyant. “With the assistance of local City and County Officials and with the help of other Boards our region, together we need to tell Edmonton that Grande Prairie continues to grow and needs additional infrastructure.”

St. John Paul II Phase 1 nears Completion

St. John Paul II High School is on track to be handed over to the Board in two separate phases, with the first phase set to be turned over in mid-November 2017 and the second phase to open in April 2018. District staff will begin installing Information Technology in October and November 2017 while furniture will arrive in December 2017. Staff will move into the school just before the Christmas Break and the first day of classes in St. John Paul II will be January 8, 2018.



Classrooms, the Gymnasium, Counselling and Student Services spaces, the Band room, Commercial Cooking, Learning Commons, Flex Spaces and Gathering areas will be opened. In April 2018 the Construction Lab, Cosmetology Lab, Multi-Purpose Theatre, Drama Room, Main Student Gathering Area, and Career Technology Area will be turned over and opened for students.

During the winter of 2017/18, students will be dropped off on the east side of the building, allowing for construction to finish on the south side of St. John Paul II. Both parents and buses will be asked to park on the east side of the building. This will ensure students and staff are safe while Phase 2 is completed.

A highlight of the school is the grouping of students into cohorts, or families. Each family has their own learning area and café area to allow for flexible learning and a sense of belonging.

Phase 3 of St. John Paul II to commence in 2021

Phase 3 is expected to start in 2021 with the addition of 10 modular classrooms to alleviate growth at the school. The school was provisioned to easily accept 10 additional modular classrooms bringing the capacity of the school up to 1000. The gymnasium and other spaces were already enlarged in the original to accept the increase in student population. "One of the unique features of the school was to create a Flex Space adjacent to the modular classroom wing so the modular classrooms and the people in them are an integral part of the school and not separate," stated Karl Germann, Superintendent.

Remediation of St. Patrick begins

St. Patrick will be completely rebuilt and open in 2-3 years. Currently work is underway to completely remove all of the old building materials and leave the facility as an open shell so modernization can begin. Students and staff are now settled into Holy Cross and Mother Teresa. Both Holy Cross and Mother Teresa are excited to welcome St. Patrick students and staff. "We are extremely pleased with our staff who are helping out in so many ways. Based on the work done to date, students and staff from St Pat's will have an awesome year," stated Superintendent Germann.

St. Patrick will be completely redesigned to allow for a new and larger Gymnasium, Career and Technology classrooms, Arts and Science Rooms and flexible learning spaces. An architect was selected by the province and an announcement will be made shortly.



O'Brien Lake School is the Board's Next Project

To ensure there are sufficient spaces for students and staff, the Board has identified a 950 student school in O'Brien Lake West as its number one Capital project. Recently officials from Alberta Government met with District's Officials to finalize the district's needs. While a 950 student school is large, grouping students into areas and continuing to create a strong community focus will ensure every student is cared for and has a sense of community. The school will feature a larger Three (3) station Gymnasium, 24 classrooms, 2 large Science Rooms, 2 Wet Labs for elementary science and art, eight (8) large rooms for Career & Technology courses, and multiple Learning Commons throughout the school.

The province is indicating that the size of new elementary schools in growing communities will be in the 700-900 student range. The district has worked hard to ensure that smaller families are created inside large school to ensure a sense of community and belonging.

French Immersion is a Popular Choice for Families

Ecole St. Gerard experienced healthy growth again this fall. Once again French Immersion and Late Immersion was a popular choice for families, with Ecole St. Gerard as a trusted choice for families. This fall over 120 students entered Kindergarten at St. Gerard, a number that was a bit higher than predicted. However, there is sufficient space due to the change in Grade configuration at the school last year. Work continues to ensure the program has the proper sized facilities with many opportunities for students.

The Late Immersion program continues to growth, with another Grade 5 cohort joining the school this fall. Late Immersion students are full immersed into the St. Gerard culture, allowing individual students to grow and expand their second language skills.



Grande Prairie and
District
Catholic Schools