

Revelstoke neighborhood learning center breaks ground ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A recent groundbreaking ceremony in Revelstoke marked the official start of construction on one of the Province's first Neighborhood Learning Centers. The facility will feature a performing arts centre, early-learning hub, youth programs, gymnastics facilities and medical services for students and families.

"Revelstoke is leading the way by showcasing some of the tremendous opportunities Neighborhood Learning Centers can bring to B.C. communities," said Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. "Health, recreation and lifelong learning services will come together at these schools, serving people of all ages."

The Neighborhood Learning Centre at the new Revelstoke Secondary will include a 275-seat community theater and coordinated health services aimed at vulnerable teens. The new Revelstoke Elementary will incorporate medical and dental services, literacy and community programs, and a gymnastics centre as part of its Neighborhood Learning Centre. In addition, the school will become B.C.'s first early learning hub with a StrongStart BC program, two state-of-the-art childcare centers, an early learning library, and a child-care resource and referral program on site.

"As well as providing a range of facilities, programs and services, these new Neighborhood Learning Centers will champion the latest standards in green school construction," said MacDiarmid. "The energy-efficient designs of both school buildings will help save costs, minimize the carbon footprint, and foster a healthy environment for students, staff and community members."

An agreement has been reached with Revelstoke Community Energy Corporation to provide energy for both new schools. The schools will be designed and constructed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification and will use heat from a renewable source. Wood products will be used extensively in the construction of these schools.

"Community engagement has been key to seeing these projects come together," said Revelstoke board chair Alan Chell. "We consulted widely with a range of partners and pursued every available opportunity to ensure these Neighborhood Learning Centers would provide the greatest value for the people of Revelstoke."

Revelstoke Elementary is expected to open in the fall of 2011, with Revelstoke Secondary to follow in early 2012.

The Province has announced 14 Neighborhood Learning Centers in 10 school districts across B.C. All districts are being encouraged to move towards this inclusive approach to planning the use of school space and including elements of Neighborhood Learning Centers in all schools.

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-reprinted from the Clearwater Times

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