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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

BUILDING B.C. COMMUNITIES ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME

VICTORIA - School districts across B.C. will be partnering with local governments to make use of \$2.85 million in School Community Connections (SCC) grants from the Province and create dynamic community space within schools, announced Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid.

"I am pleased to announce another round of grants for these projects which strengthen the ties between communities and schools." said MacDiarmid. "School Community Connections supports Neighbourhood Learning Centres by bringing people of different ages, cultures and interests to learn, work and celebrate together."

The School Community Connections program has supported communities with a \$10- million investment first announced in 2005. Forty-eight school districts across B.C. have worked with local communities this year to bring \$1.35 million worth of innovative projects to the table. The application process for an additional \$1.5 million now available under the program will begin in October.

The SCC program continues the goal of actively encouraging boards of education and local governments to work co-operatively with community partners to expand the use of schools. These funds have so far supported 412 projects with a total investment of \$9.35 million across B.C. including:

- \* Financing renovations to increase community access to schools, expand school facility hours of operation, and expand services offered within schools.
- \* Enabling community planning and consultation to ensure that school use supports local priorities.
- \* Incorporating Aboriginal and cultural learning programs into schools and libraries.
- \* Implementing after-school buddy programs for adults and seniors to mentor students.
- \* Creating community gardens to support healthy lifestyles and build community spirit among residents.

In the first round of the 2010 SCC program, school districts, in partnership with local governments, submitted up to three applications - totalling no more than \$30,000 - for grant funding. The School Community Connections grants are jointly administered by the Province, Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA).

"All the partners involved are showing real leadership and innovation in the way they are using the School Community Connections grants," said

Community and Rural Development Minister Ben Stewart. "This is a real model of co-operation and citizens across B.C. are benefiting from expanding the use of schools in their communities."

"This project continues to encourage the use of spaces for a wide range of activities and services," said Harry Nyce, president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. "Projects like these show the potential for the Province, school districts and local governments to come together to benefit their communities."

"Expanding the use of school space for community programs just makes sense," said BCSTA president Connie Denesiuk. "These grants provide a point for discussion between boards of education and local governments to strengthen the commitment to education and community programs."

All school districts in B.C. are encouraged to find unique and innovative ways to include community use in their facilities and create places where people have better access to educational and community services and programs.

The province is working to incorporate Neighbourhood Learning Centres in all new schools and major renovations, so far we have supported 17 centres across B.C. at a figure close to \$50 million.

Neighbourhood Learning Centres respond to community interests and may include a wide variety of programs and resources including child-care programs, sports programs, office space, health clinics, seniors' centres and family resource centres.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.neighbourhoodlearningcentres.gov.bc.ca/>

A backgrounder detailing the first round of SCC Grants announced for 2010 is available at:

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2010/bg\\_FirstRoundOfSCCGrantsFor2010\\_100929.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2010/bg_FirstRoundOfSCCGrantsFor2010_100929.pdf)

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