

From: [Hawryluk, Kerri PAB:EX](#)
To: [Hawryluk, Kerri PAB:EX](#)
Subject: NR: COMMUNITY HUB COMING TO THE HEART OF CHILLIWACK
Date: January 20, 2011 11:42:46 AM

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2011EDUC0003-000049
Jan. 20, 2011
Ministry of Education

COMMUNITY HUB COMING TO THE HEART OF CHILLIWACK

CHILLIWACK - Combining a teaching kitchen, community training space and distance education resources all under one roof will allow for online and on-the-job learning at the finger tips of students attending the new Chilliwack Senior Secondary school in the fall of 2012, announced Chilliwack MLA John Les and Chilliwack-Hope MLA Barry Penner.

"The new secondary school will support students and their families - from the youngest learners to seniors - by combining school space with valuable community services," said Les. "Fifteen per cent of the school will be a Neighbourhood Learning Centre with space for community and Aboriginal services that will benefit our entire district of Chilliwack."

A key piece of the new school will be an Aboriginal Centre. This centre will provide cultural and educational opportunities and tutorial support for Aboriginal students as well as the entire school community. Also, Chilliwack Community Services will be supporting teen parents and families by providing access to parent and family resources through the Neighbourhood Learning Centre.

"This facility will help a variety of people in Chilliwack get the support they need to be successful," said Penner. "As B.C.'s Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, I'm particularly pleased that this community hub will help maintain the rich traditions of the Stó:lo People by utilizing an inclusive approach to learning that will benefit a wide range of community groups."

The district continues to work with community partners to include additional services like Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentorship programs, RCMP liaison work, Fraser Health Education Programs, and connection with the University of the Fraser Valley to provide students assistance for a more smooth transition to university.

"I am very impressed with the plans for this new school," said Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. "Incorporating these valuable resources will create a place in which students, parents, staff and the community can work together under one roof to support student achievement in Chilliwack."

As the only secondary school in the town centre, Chilliwack Senior Secondary

rests on the traditional territory of the Stó:lo People and has been a place of learning to students in the area for more than 60 years. The replacement school will retain its name and rich history, while at the same time including resources that respond to the needs of students in the 21st century.

"The Chilliwack board of education is excited about the opportunities the Neighbourhood Learning Centre offers to our students and our city," said Chilliwack board of education chair Doug McKay. "The inclusion of this space in the Chilliwack Secondary school project will enable us to bring community partners into direct daily contact with our students and will support students, families and elders in learning together."

Construction is scheduled to begin on the project in spring 2011 and the new school is expected to be occupied by 1,200 students in grades 8-12 in 2012. Once construction is complete, the existing school buildings will be torn down.

Since 2001, the B.C. Government has invested more than \$46 million in the Chilliwack school district to complete seven capital projects including the replacement of Greendale Elementary and the new G.W. Graham Middle-Secondary school.

The Neighbourhood Learning Centre website, www.neighbourhoodlearningcentres.gov.bc.ca, includes examples of some of the community services and programs already offered in schools around B.C. All school districts are now being encouraged to move toward this inclusive approach to planning the use of new school space by including elements of Neighbourhood Learning Centres in all new and replacement schools.

Since 2001, the B.C. Government has invested more than \$1.7 billion to complete 80 new and replacement schools, 148 additions, 26 renovation projects and 22 site acquisitions across B.C. All new and replacement schools have been constructed to meet the latest seismic standards. By the end of 2010-11, the B.C. government will have committed more than \$3.9 billion in school capital and maintenance projects across the province.

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Media Contact:

Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963

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