

update

Update
July 15, 2014

Christine Meikle Replacement School

The following update responds to the common themes from feedback received at the open houses on June 18 & 19 and via email up to July 3, 2014.

Christine Meikle School and its students

Christine Meikle School (CMS) provides educational programming for secondary school-age students who have moderate to severe developmental disabilities/delays with complex learning, medical and emotional needs.

The School Act ensures the entitlement of every student to attend school.

The program draws junior/senior high school students who are 12 to 19 years of age from across Calgary. Programming components include: functional academics, work experience, activities of daily living, adaptive physical education, fine arts, assistive technology, augmentative communication and sensory motor development. It is an approved school, meeting the definitions set out by Alberta Education.

Like other CBE schools, Christine Meikle School is not an isolated facility and may provide community amenity space after-hours.

Curriculum

Every school in the CBE teaches the Province's [Alberta Mandated Program of Studies](#). Christine Meikle, as a CBE school, follows the Alberta Education [Essential Components of Educational Programming](#). Students receive 1,001 hours of programming annually, meeting the standards set out by Alberta Education for high school students.

Enrolment

The initial concept was for accommodating 160 students but the functional design for this school is 125. The new school is designed for 125 students who are supported by 70 staff. The 2013-14 population was 75 students and 70 students are projected for 2014-15.

In 2014-15, the school will have 23 students who use wheelchairs or strollers for mobility, and 47 ambulatory students. This 33 to 67 per cent non-ambulatory to ambulatory student ratio has been steady for the past six years.

The CBE's [Three-Year Capital Plan](#) mentions a “weighted enrolment of 375”. This doesn't refer to the number of students but rather that the space per student would be the equivalent of a school built for 375 students. The Provincial standard utilization rate allows for more space for students with complex learning needs.

Medical care

The school does not provide respite or physical therapy. Any therapeutic interventions done are for the sole purpose of setting up our students to maximize their learning. These interventions are opportunities for educational programming to occur in a different way.

Support staff includes educational assistants to meet the educational needs of the students.

Over the past seven years, an ambulance has been called to the school on 10 occasions to respond to the emergency medical needs of a student or a staff member.

School hours

- 8:55 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.
- Caretaker arrives at 7 a.m. (one car)
- Staff arrive between 7:30 – 8:45 a.m. (up to 55 cars)
- Students arrive at 8:55 a.m. (12 Handi-buses, one taxi in 2013-14)
- Students depart at 2:35 p.m. (12 Handi-buses, one taxi in 2013-14)
- Cleaner arrives at 3 p.m. (one car)
- Staff depart between 3:10 – 5 p.m. (56 cars, 55 staff, one caretaker)
- Cleaner leaves at 7 p.m. (one car)

Operational funding

Alberta Education funds all CBE schools.

Capital funding

As limited capital funds are available to the CBE, a municipal reserve site was chosen that was owned by the CBE and was zoned for a school. The Varsity site is approved for a school development.

History of site

The City of Calgary received the Varsity site from an area developer in 1971 and it was allocated to the CBE as an approved school site via the Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between the City, the CBE and Calgary Catholic School District. There is no contractual obligation in the JUA for the CBE to consult with affected communities. The CBE seeks feedback from the community regarding such matters as: siting concepts, traffic, parking and environmental issues.

In 2007, the CBE declared the site surplus to its needs and returned it to the City of Calgary as part of the Joint Use Agreement. In 2012, the CBE requested that the City return the site and was approved for use as a school.

On March 13, 2013 the CBE advised the Province of Alberta and the City of Calgary that the Varsity location would be used as the site for a replacement school for Christine Meikle School if and when provincial funding was approved. (Attachment I). The Province publicly announced approval on Jan. 21, 2014. On Feb. 14, 2014, the Minister of Alberta Education formally advised the CBE that approval had been granted for construction. (Attachment II)

Site Selection

Central location

This site is favoured because Christine Meikle students come from across the city and are transported to the school by Handi-bus. A central location is needed to minimize the average travel time for students on the buses.

Other factors in site selection

- Site topography – in order to minimize the cost of site development and allow for barrier-free access to facilities it was desirable to have a reasonably level site and not to have a site on the side of a hill.
- Environment –geotechnical investigations have yet to be concluded but initial engineering assessments indicate that the site is acceptable.
- Natural environment – the site offers natural surroundings, providing solitude and usability for students.
- Site utility services – to facilitate the planned construction schedule, it was desirable to have a site with all services in place. The main sewer supply has been checked and found not to be an issue.

Varna Crescent

This approved school site is a favourable location for the school because of its proximity to the Alberta Children’s Hospital. The community of support for these students and their families is centred around the Alberta Children’s Hospital, . University of Calgary, Ronald McDonald House, the Child Development Centre, and Sinneave Family Foundation’s Ability Hub, which provides assistance to students, their families and CBE staff. The location surrounding the new site offers a variety of opportunity for work experience, leisure and daily living skills development.

There is a misconception that the site was chosen because the students travel to and from the hospital during the day. That is not the case. The students come to the school and spend the day there.

Other sites that have been suggested

Questions have been raised if there is another CBE school site or another suitable site for this school.

- Other CBE sites

The attached map (Attachment III) illustrates the CBE school sites which are currently vacant with no schools erected on them. Currently, there are 39 empty school sites, of which 13 school sites have been selected for the recently approved new schools. The Varsity site location is shown. There is no other vacant CBE 5 acre site centrally located that meets the needs of this project.

There have also been suggestions that vacant schools be used; however the CBE has only one vacant school at this time and it is expected to be utilized in the future. A vacant school would also require significant structural and functional upgrading and modernization to meet the special and complex needs of this school program.

CMS was also considered for renovation in 2011. It was determined that the existing CMS footprint was inadequate to meet the needs of a growing population of students with complex learning needs.

- Non-CBE sites

Other non-CBE sites that have been suggested as alternative locations for the school include:

- Vecova Centre

- The CBE has been in conversation with Vecova.
 - Vecova is not a school, they provide services and support for persons with disabilities.
 - Services contracted through the Vecova Centre are an option for some CBE students as they transition from high school. Currently there are no CMS students accessing services at Vecova.
 - The Vecova site is 4.95 acres and is predominantly occupied by buildings and parking. The adjacent land owned by Alberta Infrastructure is 2.1 acres. Neither site is a suitable size for a school.

- West Campus

- West Campus is in the early planning phase of development. There are currently no approved development plans for West Campus. As a result, the availability of a school site on the West Campus is seven to 10 years away. The need for a new Christine Meikle School is immediate and the Provincial funds are available now.

- Richmond Road Diagnostic Treatment Center (former Children's Hospital)

- This site belongs to Alberta Health Services and is an operating health care facility. Historically there was a school in the facility, but the space has been repurposed.
- Calgary Rotary Challenger Group
 - The proposed facility for the Calgary Rotary Challenger Group is intended to meet the recreational and community space needs of the many local residents, at all levels of ability.
 - The anticipated Rotary Centre is proposed to be 100,000 square feet. The Christine Meikle School facility would consume approximately half of the Rotary's proposed space, greatly limiting the intent of the Rotary's proposed usage/application.
 - The proposed location isn't central.
- University Field House
 - The University of Calgary is proposing a multisport facility that will be available to service the needs of its students, as well as the greater Calgary area community. It will house an indoor track, as well as facilities for a wide variety of both turf and court sports, such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, badminton and tennis.

Traffic and parking

In accordance with City of Calgary requirements, a traffic impact assessment will be completed as part of the development permit process. Students arrive at school via Handi-bus minimizing the traffic congestion experienced at other schools. We anticipate that the current cul-de-sac (formed by the concrete barrier) will remain in place. Bus drop-off and staff parking will be onsite.

Green spaces and trees

We appreciate the value of this green space to the neighbourhood. It's important to the school community as well. A design consideration on the school site is the retention of as many trees and as much green space as possible. Current conceptual drawings maintain access to Bowmont Park and perimeter walkways.

Construction and noise

This construction project will follow City of Calgary bylaws.

Process

The CBE develops school plans in accordance with the [School Capital Manual](#) of the Government of Alberta. The CBE does not develop land, but receives sites from developers. After a school project is approved for funding by the provincial government and a public announcement is made, the CBE engages consultants, architects, and other contractors to undertake the school design and construction process. All projects are publicly tendered for contract and begun.

School Project Steering Committees are struck composed of members representing the Alberta Government, School Parent Council or parent representative, school staff, architectural and cost consultants, and CBE education and service units. The CBE applies for development and building permits from the City of Calgary in accordance with Provincial and Municipal regulations.

The CBE is currently working with the City of Calgary and the Government of Alberta on 16 capital projects including Christine Meikle School. All projects will follow the City of Calgary building permitting process.

Communication

The CBE Area Director connected with the Varsity Community Association (VCA) May 26, 2014 and arrangements were made for her to attend the next executive board meeting (Wednesday, June 18). In addition to this meeting two public events were held to present information and gather public feedback:

- Wednesday, June 18 open house at Calgary Board of Education Centre
- Thursday, June 19 open house at F.E. Osborne School

The public is also welcome to provide comments on a dedicated project page on the CBE website at:

http://www.cbe.ab.ca/schools/underdev/Christine_Meikle/christine_meikle.asp

The page provides background and current project information and is updated as new information becomes available. Questions and comments received at the public forums are compiled and shared on this site.

The CBE acknowledges that it should have spoken to the community about its plans when funding approval was announced by the province in January 2014. We misjudged the community understanding of “designated school site”. We are committed to working with all communities that have vacant school sites to ensure they understand that schools might be built on these sites in the future.

The CBE also appreciates the 150 people that were able to attend the June open house. When working with the public the CBE follows the International Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Participation. For this project we are at the “Consult” level on the spectrum due to the number and diversity of stakeholders involved and regulations both Provincially and at the Municipal level that govern this work. The goal is to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. This means that we promise to keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision(s).

We acknowledge that the June open house was crowded and that some people found it difficult to have their questions answered. Important feedback was provided and is located here

http://www.cbe.ab.ca/schools/underdev/Christine_Meikle/christine_meikle.asp.

Timelines

Christine Meikle School Pre-Construction Timelines (dates are subject to change)

Date	Milestone
March 13, 2013	Letter to Province advising that the Varsity site would be used for Christine Meikle School if and when funding approved (Attachment I)
January 21, 2014	Public Ministerial Announcement of Project http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=357181D24049C-CB81-18A5-841EBF24CF37B7D1
February 12, 2014	Functional Programme Value Management Design Charette
February 14, 2014	Ministerial Letter to the CBE Confirming Project Approval (Attachment II)
February 25, 2014	Project Kickoff Meeting with Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure
March 27/28, 2014	Prime Consultant Proposals Received
April 16, 2014	Prime Consultant (Marshall Tittlemore Architects) Appointed
April 29, 2014	CBE Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting
May 20, 2014	Project Management Proposals Received
May 2014	Commencement of Functional Programme Development/Site Options & Investigations/ Preliminary Urban Planning Schematics
June 2, 2014	Appointment of Project Manager (Stantec Consulting Ltd)
June 2014	Interested and Affected Parties School and Public Community Engagement
June 2014	Preliminary Design Options/Massing/Access & Traffic Assessment
July 2014	Design Development and City Pre-Planning Issues
August 2014	Development Permit Application
August/September/October 2014	Development of Construction Documentation
November 2014	Tender and Award
December 2014 to September 2016	Construction Commencement
October to December 2016	Fit-up
January 2017	Open for students

Attachment I



Board of Trustees

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March 13, 2013

Honourable Jeff Johnson
Minister of Education
424 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Honourable Wayne Drysdale
Minister of Infrastructure
324 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Johnson and Mr. Drysdale:

RE: Varsity Vacant School Site, 3525 - 50 Street NW
To be retained by Calgary Board of Education

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) advised the Joint Use Coordinating Committee at the meeting of September 20, 2012 that it will not transfer the Varsity Vacant School site (Plan 5895, Block S) of 8.92 acres to the City of Calgary as originally planned. A letter (Attachment I) has been sent to Scott Lockwood of the City of Calgary Planning Department and copies to Kyle Ripley, City Parks and Jocelyn Culton, City Corporate Properties. Scott Lockwood was to advise the City of Calgary departments as to the CBE need for this property. The site has not been transferred to the City by the CBE and is still in CBE title.

Although this site was identified as surplus several years ago, the CBE has determined an emergent need for the Varsity site for school purposes. As discussed with Avi Habinski, Alberta Education, the School Capital Plan 2014-2017 submission will identify our city-wide Christine Meikle School as a priority, and this Varsity site will be used for this school.

I have attached our previous correspondence on this matter from fall 2007, where the CBE requested approval (Attachment II) to declare the Varsity site surplus and the Province provided approval (Attachment III) for this declaration. Please acknowledge this letter as actions for this

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Attachment I

Varsity Vacant site to be retained by the CBE and the original fall 2007 documentation to be superseded by this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Pat Cochrane, Chair
Board of Trustees

pc: Naomi Johnson, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Avi Habinski, Director, South Region, Alberta Education
Frank Coppinger, Superintendent, Facilities and Environmental Services
Eugene Heeger, Director, Capital Planning and Development Services
Brent Hughes, Manager, Capital and Urban Planning Services
Sherri Lambourne, Manager, Leasing and Property Development Services
Scott Lockwood, Manager, New Communities, City of Calgary



Attachment II



Office of the Minister
MLA, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater



AR82869

FEB 14 2014

Mrs. Sheila Taylor
Board Chair
Calgary Board of Education
1221 - 8 Street SW
Calgary, AB T2R 0L4

Dear Mrs. Taylor

We are pleased to advise you that as part of the recent announcement of school capital projects, approval has been granted for the following projects in Calgary:

- modernization of Jack James High School;
- modernization of Aboriginal Family Community School (the former Harold W. Riley School);
- modernization of Bowness High School; and
- replacement of Christine Meikle School.

Wayne Cao, MLA for Calgary-Fort; Honourable Donna Kennedy-Glans, MLA for Calgary-Varsity; and Alana DeLong, MLA for Calgary-Bow; have been strong supporters of these projects and have worked actively on behalf of your school division.

Further information will be provided to your superintendent in the near future. A meeting will also be held with representatives of your jurisdiction and the ministries of Education and Infrastructure to discuss project scope, any partnerships that have been identified and your involvement in the process. Partnership agreements must be finalized and signed off by the end of March 2014.

We are pleased to advise that for all of the newly announced projects, Infrastructure will co-ordinate the ordering and installation of site signage and will oversee sign unveiling, sod turning and any other events during the development of the project. After the project is completed, your school board will be responsible to co-ordinate and undertake official opening ceremonies in its usual manner.

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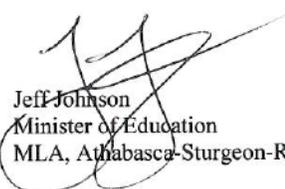
Attachment II

Mrs. Sheila Taylor
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Should your jurisdiction staff have any questions prior to this meeting, please have them contact Avi Habinski, Director, Capital Planning South, at 780-427-2272 (dial 310-0000 first for toll-free access) or avi.habinski@gov.ab.ca.

Investment in school infrastructure remains a high priority for the Government of Alberta, and this project advances our promise to invest in Alberta's families and communities as part of our Building Alberta Plan. We are pleased to approve these projects for the benefit of Calgary students.

Sincerely,



Jeff Johnson
Minister of Education
MLA, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater



Ric McIver
Minister of Infrastructure
MLA, Calgary-Hays

cc: Honourable Donna Kennedy-Glans
MLA, Calgary-Varsity

Wayne Cao
MLA, Calgary-Fort

Alana DeLong
MLA, Calgary-Bow

Naomi Johnson
Superintendent of Schools, Calgary Board of Education



Attachment III

