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New facility replaces Canmore's Lawrence Grassi Middle School

Replacement school will be more energy efficient and flexible

Canmore... Canmore public junior high students will soon have a new \$12.4-million school to replace the existing Lawrence Grassi Middle School.

The school was originally approved for a major \$8.6-million modernization last year. However, after reviewing the extensive renovations that would be required and comparing the project costs, government agreed it made better sense to build a new core school instead and approved an additional \$3.8 million for the new construction and cost escalations.

"After comparing the options and looking at the numbers, the better choice was to build a modern and energy efficient facility that will have the flexibility to meet the current and future learning facility needs of the community," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "One of the benefits of building a new core school is that these facilities are designed to better adapt to enrolment changes, like the ones currently facing Lawrence Grassi Middle School."

The new core school and 12 modular classrooms will be constructed beside the existing facility and will be designed to expand and reduce classroom space as needed, eventually accommodating 536 students in Grades 5-8.

"This new school will help ensure our students are learning in a safe and appropriate school environment that responds to the community's evolving needs," said Education Minister Gene Zwozdesky. "Our decision to build a new school will also help Canmore students access exciting new learning opportunities, including an increased ability to integrate technology into the classroom."

The new, smaller facility is currently proposed as a wood-framed design and includes a permanent total of 3,781m², not including the 12 modular classrooms, for a 54 per cent reduction in space that will result in costs savings for operations and maintenance.

"The new school will provide a modern learning environment that better meets the needs of students and I am pleased the wood frame structure will fit naturally into Canmore's architectural style," said Janis Tarchuk, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

Currently, students from three school boards share a single space within the Lawrence Grassi facility. In May 2005, the government announced \$11 million in funding for the new Canmore Catholic School with construction anticipated to begin later this spring.

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