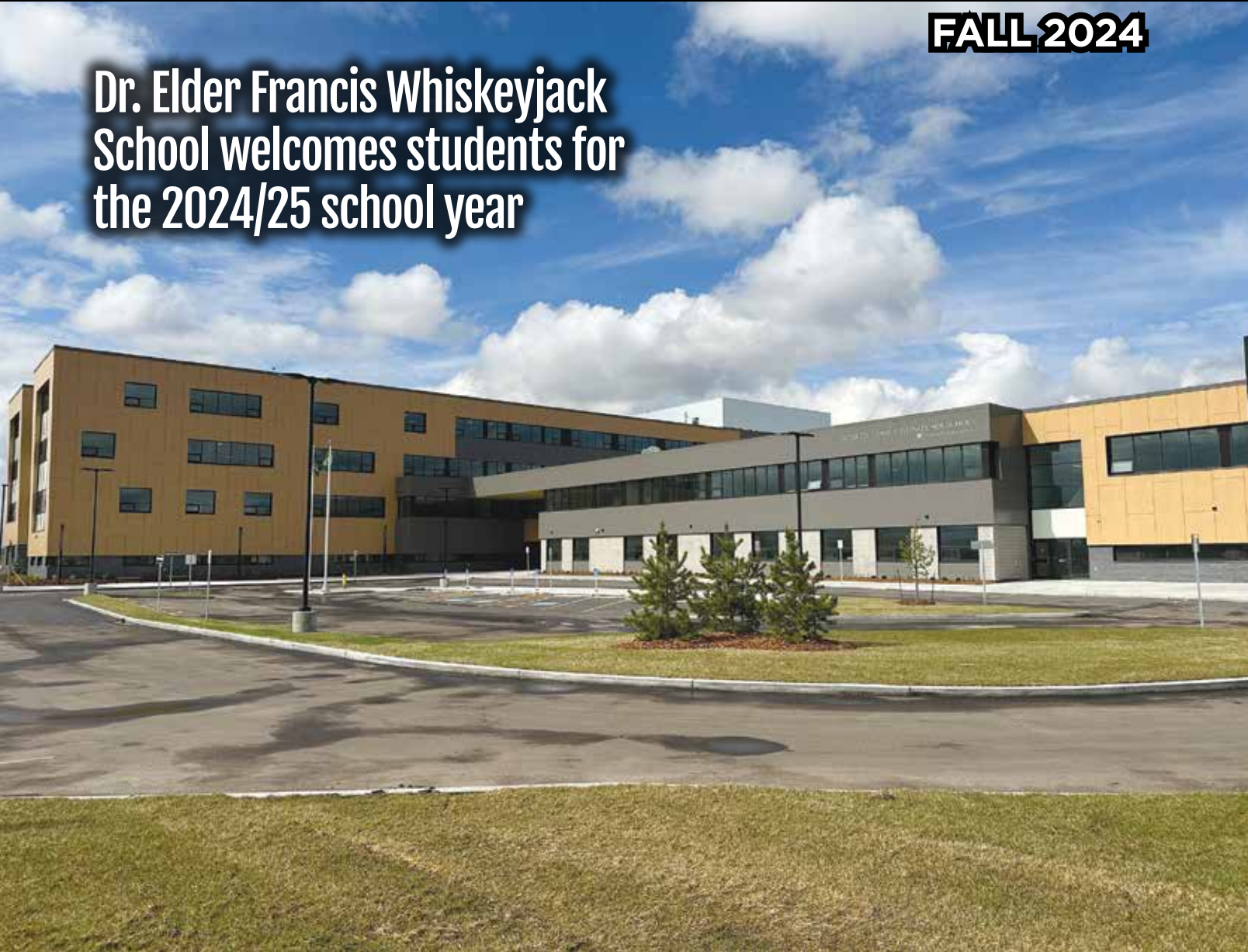


FACILITY FOCUS

The Official Publication of the Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators' Association

FALL 2024

**Dr. Elder Francis Whiskeyjack
School welcomes students for
the 2024/25 school year**



**Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary
opens alongside new town recreation centre**

**Integrated Project Delivery (IPD)
in school design and construction**



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Message from the AEFAA president **Rod Swartzenberger**

I would like to first thank all the members and vendors for a successful 50th anniversary Spring Conference & Trade Show. It was great to see participants dressing up - including our friends from EFMA - as well as great round table discussions wrapped up with a fantastic dinner theatre to round out the celebration. As I learned through planning this event, there are always little things to be prepared for. In addition, we received some great feedback on things we can improve on as an organization to continue to grow and evolve. Since being elected to the board, I have wanted to make sure we are prepared for the unexpected. As we all know in our lives, unknowns pop up all the time. This year, as we were planning for the fall workshop in Jasper, their community was devastated by a wildfire. There are now many unknowns for the

residents of Jasper. However, due to strategic planning, there were no lives lost and the resiliency of the community is amazing to see.

When faced with this unexpected event, the AEFAA executive and our executive director worked hard to collaborate with the hotel to come up with a backup plan to host the conference at Lake Louise this October. This unforeseeable event also shed light on the necessity of having information stored in a manner that is easily accessible. We need to ensure continuity of our organization to promote ongoing success for years to come.

The need to have information easily accessible and prepare for the unexpected became even more apparent to me when I was diagnosed with cancer in August. In my work role, I can pass along

information through emails or documents stored in our shared Google Drives. Was I always on top of this? No. However, it did bring to my attention how important it is to have information shared and accessible to ensure others can be successful moving forward. I will take what I am learning to do the same in my personal life and within AEFAA. It demonstrates respect, trust, and transparency when we ensure our teams and those in our lives have the information necessary to make decisions and continue the work when the unexpected happens.

Although I cannot predict exactly what the next several months will hold for me as I go through cancer treatments, I can say with complete confidence that I believe in the work of our organization and want to continue to be involved to the best of my ability. As a result of having a strong executive team working together, I am confident that we have what it takes to be successful now and for years to come. ■

Editor's note: It is with great sympathy that we announce the passing of Rod Swartzenberger. He was not only a valued member of the Palliser School Division in Lethbridge, but he just started his second term as president of AEFAA earlier this year. Our thoughts go out to his friends, family, and colleagues. He will be missed.



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AEFAA member benefits



Membership advantages:

- AEFAA memberships can attend all AEFAA functions. Currently, AEFAA conducts a spring conference and trade show that hosts professional development sessions pertinent to the field of educational facilities and their safe operation and maintenance. The tradeshow component of this event showcases all the prominent vendors that provide our industry with the necessary and new goods and services required to properly operate and maintain these educational facilities.
- AEFAA also conducts an annual fall workshop. The primary function of this event is to

provide continuing education for its membership. The sessions are hosted by SAIT and provide the attendees with the latest in educational requirements for managers and supervisors pertinent to our industry.

- Members also receive copies of *Facility Focus* magazine, which focuses on all things related to the educational facility operational and maintenance. There are two editions: spring and fall.
- AEFAA members also gain access to the members area of our website. The members area of the website has a platform designed to promote networking

with other colleagues from similar educational jurisdictions.

- AEFAA also hosts spring workshops. These events range from facility tours to further education on current challenges.
- Members are also made aware of current and new insurance facility requirements, as well as updates from Alberta Education that are presented at both major spring and fall sessions.

Associate membership advantages (exhibitors and vendors):

- This membership enables all vendors and exhibitors to be invited to participate in the annual spring trade show.
- It also enables those who hold this membership to possibly be invited to the fall workshop.
- Members will receive two copies, spring and fall, of *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Associate members are also able to advertise in *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Members will also receive the full AEFAA delegate membership contact list, complete with names, school jurisdiction, position, phone numbers, and email addresses. ■





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AEFAA member profiles

Meet two members



Brian Orge

Brian Orge has been with Grande Yellowhead Public School Division for over 20 years. He started

in the Facilities department as a carpenter in 2001, working on various projects throughout the division. In 2013, he accepted the position of Assistant Director of Facilities as well as the division's Health and Safety Coordinator and Crisis Incident Commander, ensuring that division facilities are kept safe with healthy working conditions and compliant with provincial laws and regulations governing workplace safety. He became the Director of Facilities in 2021.

Receiving his journeyman carpentry ticket from Fairview College in 1995, Mr. Orge has also received various occupational health and safety accreditations

during his time with the division, including his Principles of Health and Safety Management in 2013 followed by a National Construction Safety Officer designation in 2015 from the Alberta Construction Safety Association. GYPSD's Director of Facilities is responsible for an annual operational budget in excess of \$8 million and accountable for a large portfolio, including major capital projects, facility enhancement and maintenance projects, project services, an integrated workplace management system, energy management, and sustainability for 17 schools and other division-owned facilities, as well as a bus compound in Hinton.

He has been happily married to his wife, Roxie, for over 25 years, and has two beautiful daughters who have both graduated from GYPSD schools, and a new grandson. When Brian is not answering the call of duty, you can find him out on the lake – fishing!



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Mike McNeil

Mike McNeil grew up in a small fishing/coal mining community of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia.

On completion of high school, he worked as an insulator apprentice and travelled and worked in the oil sands. With the

constant downturn and the unforeseen employment, he switched gears and attended trades school where he moved through apprenticeship programs and, within three years, completed his apprenticeship as a fully qualified high pressure pipe welder.

In 1997, he decided to change his career path and pursued employment as a member of the

Canadian Forces. Over his 21 years, he travelled all over the world and participated in Canada's mission on the fight against terror in Afghanistan.

From 2010 to 2012, he was employed as an instructor in the Canadian Forces recruit school in St Jean Sur Richelieu, Quebec. He spent most of the time as an

instructor on multiple career courses for future officer candidates.

In 2017, he decided to retire from the Canadian Forces and pursue a career as a Facilities Supervisor with Living Waters Separate Catholic School Division in Whitecourt. For over three and a half years, he worked on CMR/IMR projects, new school builds, modernizations, and major capital projects.

In 2020, he received employment with St Albert Public Schools as the Assistant Manager of Facilities services, where he's currently employed. He's also an active member of the Divisional Occupational Health and Safety committee.

He's been happily married to his wife, Kimberley, for 12 years. They have four children that are starting their careers in education, carpentry, and with the Canadian Forces.

On his down time, you can find him at his lake lot, enjoying family events and, of course, fishing and boating. ■

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITY MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF BC

TRAVIS ELWOOD



It's September as I write this and hope this message finds everyone in a positive frame of mind as we begin another school year. As we reflect on the recent months, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to each of you and your teams for the incredible work accomplished across departments and districts. Whether it was summer cleaning, work on playgrounds, or a construction project, the grand opening in September was the same for everyone. Now we all are transitioning into a phase of routine maintenance around students and teaching staff to be as invisible as possible. All this work is vital to ensure the longevity and efficiency of our collective efforts to provide learning environments that we are proud of.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the EFMA executive team for their unwavering dedication. Their efforts in organizing more learning opportunities, particularly through the upcoming workshops, are invaluable. These workshops will provide vital tools and insights to keep us all at the cutting edge of operations and maintenance excellence.

EFMA remains committed to fostering the strong partnership between ministry staff and those working within school districts. Together, we share the same mission: ensuring that our schools are safe, functional, and supportive environments for students and staff alike. This collaboration is crucial as we continue to navigate the evolving needs of our education system and its facilities.

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to not only set personal and departmental goals for the months ahead, but also to take time to celebrate the hard work and dedication of your teams. Recognizing and acknowledging your staff's accomplishments and efforts helps foster an environment of motivation and pride.

Facing challenges together as a group is always more effective than facing them alone. I urge you to make the most of the opportunities that EFMA provides to build relationships, share knowledge, and support one another. Our strength lies in the community we've built and, together, we can overcome any challenge that comes our way. Coming up there will be great opportunities for this at zone meetings, workshops, and the EFMA convention in June.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to excellence. I look forward to seeing the strides we will make together in the coming months. ■



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EVERYONE WINS TOGETHER: **Integrated Project Delivery (IPD)** in school design and construction

By Jeff Rabinovitch, MSc, P.Eng., LEED® AP

Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) is on the rise, breaking barriers on construction projects. Hallmarked by open communication in a shared space dubbed as the “Big Room,” IPD unites all project stakeholders from start to finish. The collaborative framework champions shared risks, rewards, and a cohesive vision, often accelerating construction.

The popular method encompasses:

- Team collaboration from early design
- A unified vision among stakeholders
- Shared financial risks and rewards based on agreed-to project outcomes

- Fast-tracked communication in the Big Room
- Fiscal transparency
- Enhanced innovation
- Streamlined decision-making via team consensus

Next-level collaboration

IPD has a great reputation for integrating the actual end user. These end users are in the Big Room to represent their experiences about what works best, supporting the validation process through to design procurement. Their feedback is invaluable for understanding holistic community needs. For school construction, this means more than including local educators.

IPD also carves space for operations and maintenance staff to engage directly in early design stages. For boards that operate and maintain their own schools, IPD creates buildings that can be tailored to the specific needs of each district. This optimizes new schools for the long term – streamlining how education is delivered to students and delivering school buildings that are designed to last.

Collaboration drives healthy competition. When you have a room of seasoned professionals drawing on white boards and detailing high-level coordination, personal interests are stripped away. The Big Room encourages



lots of challenging design conversations that often would not happen in a traditional project. Utilizing Lean principles, all significant project decisions are tested against clearly defined conditions of satisfaction, ensuring quick and confident resolution.

As innovation yields successful outcomes in design and construction, IPD allows savings to be reinvested back into the project through added value incentive items. These wish list items are developed early, ensuring any available opportunity to provide increased value to the end user is realized. Shared risks and rewards mean everyone wins together.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School: A case study in IPD excellence

With a fast-growing population, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools needed a new middle school for 700-plus students. IPD stood out as a natural choice for its collaborative nature. Stakeholder consultations for the \$28.2-million project began in January 2021. Geotechnical testing was completed as a first step to understand site conditions and optimize layout. A decision to shift the building location within the site avoided some of the most challenging soil conditions and resulted in significant foundation cost savings. Next, a traffic

assessment led to the addition of a bus loop, making pick-ups and drop-offs safer for St. Lorenzo Ruiz's students.

Construction broke ground in spring 2022 with a challenging timeline of 15 months. IPD allowed stakeholders to assess all budget components using Lean construction. Materials were chosen for resiliency, featuring a structural steel frame above slab-on-grade with masonry in the gym, stairwell, and elevators. LEED Silver standards were met through HVAC efficiencies and enough solar panels to run the school on sunny days.

Working with the structural steel contractor, RJC Engineers modified the design from a conventional open web steel joist structure. This made it possible to avoid costly materials and long delivery times that were impacting other construction projects amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The structural team designed floor and roof decks that overlap in corridors, eliminating beams while adding mechanical and electrical space for duct coordination. This seemingly simple solution reduced floor-to-floor height, facilitated the installation of mechanical and electrical equipment, and created a ceiling space that could be more easily maintained by school operators. ■



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Due to population growth, Canada's housing authority, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates that we need to build around 5.8 million new households by 2030 to avoid a housing affordability crisis. That's about 3.45 million more than are already planned. If the construction industry seems busy to you today, then consider the fact that if we more than double the pace we're planning to build at, it still won't result in enough housing.

This means a lot of commercial-scale construction is coming. The popularity of the multi-unit residential building (MURB) will grow, as high-density housing is easier to build quickly and efficiently and with less labour per door. It also means a boom in demand for all the associated facilities, including things like schools, retail centers, hospitals, and offices. But as this surge gets under way, Canada's efficiency regulator is tightening things up.

Last July, the minimum thermal efficiency that Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) will accept for a commercial water heater in a new building changed to 90 per cent. They left an exemption for those tanks being installed as a direct replacement of an existing unit, but all new facilities are shifting to high-efficiency product. Come January 1, 2025, the minimum efficiency for all commercial boilers will change to 90 per cent, regardless of whether the facility is new or existing.

What all this means is that dealing with the service and operating requirements of high-efficiency equipment is going to become the norm. Today, a service company repairing and maintaining a fleet of equipment may only ever work on mid-efficient, atmospherically vented appliances. Their technicians may not know much about combustion tuning on

high-turndown equipment, for example, or never have needed to ask themselves what a condensate neutralizer is for. When that changes, will they be ready?

Take the neutralizer example. Condensate from high-efficiency products is water vapour extracted from the flue gas of a fuel burning appliance. It's highly acidic (about the same as citric acid) so, if it gets routed untreated to a cast iron floor drain in an older facility, it will corrode the drain, very possibly until there is a leak. It needs to be passed through a neutralizing media, like limestone rock, before entering the drain. And the devices that contain that media need to be routinely inspected, otherwise the media may be completely consumed, letting acidic condensate through and into the drains.

To get very high efficiency from an appliance requires a lot more precision and control than was the case with the older units. Therefore, a lot more skill on the part of the installing or servicing technicians is also required. The likelihood of nuisance lockouts on equipment is higher. Controls offer a solution, allowing detailed warnings to be automatically sent out to facility operators when equipment goes down, but this also requires additional training and expertise. Redundancy in design is key as well, dividing service loads across more units rather than fewer, so that each equipment lockout is less threatening to system up-time.

It's going to be harder to manage the facilities of the future and to integrate new high efficiency equipment into existing buildings. As the market goes through significant changes, operating a facility successfully is going to require even more thought and forward thinking, and much longer-term planning of equipment maintenance and obsolescence. ■

The relevance of third-party testing and association collaboration



By Kevin Kramers

In a world overflowing with information, we often encounter challenges in determining the credibility and accuracy of the sources we rely on, especially when making decisions that can have long-lasting consequences. In facility planning and construction, this uncertainty can be amplified with thousands of decisions that are required for choosing different materials, application techniques, and design decisions. For many decisions, this uncertainty can

be reduced by using recognized third-party standards, combined with industry accepted testing by accredited testing agencies.

A prime example of when to use these standards is during detailed design where the specification writer consults and includes many third-party standards. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), Factory Mutual (FM), and American

Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) are a few examples of industry led standards that allow for a level playing field amongst manufacturers. Many building professionals are unaware of the method in which these standards are developed and maintained. The CSA standards, which are highly referenced in every Canadian code document (building, electrical, plumbing, fire, and energy), are consensus-based standards that



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require industry collaboration and agreement on not only what specific metrics are tested but also what is considered a pass or fail. The testing parameters are developed by the committee with the intention that third-party testing agencies will complete these tests when requested by the manufacturing community for compliance to code documents and specifications. It is important to note that all third-party testing agencies in Canada testing to these standards are accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) to ensure objectivity and compliance.

Material standards are not the only standards referenced during design and construction. Many trade associations also provide trade specific application standards that ensure work is completed not only to manufacturers requirements, but also to an elevated and measurable standard that ensures a high level of quality. Some well-known trade specific standard associations include the Master Painters Institute (MPI), Architectural Woodwork Manufacturers Association of

Canada (AWMAC), and the Alberta Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA). These associations publish standards that drill down on industry specific application techniques to ensure every trade contractor performs to an equivalent objectively based standard.

A unique application standard is the ARCA Roofing Application Standards Manual, which also considers the challenging and often hostile environment that buildings are subject to in Alberta. This industry led application standard is based on decades of experience that consider high wind areas, extreme cold regions, and the effect that a Chinook can result in a thermal shock that affects all building materials. This is becoming increasingly important as climate resiliency is a high priority when building for a sustainable future.

Being intimately aware of the details in each of these standards can be quite daunting. When a third-party standard is included in any document, it is the responsibility of the author to

understand why they are including the standard and what the standard requires. Whether it is the tensile strength of a roofing membrane or the linear dimensional stability of an insulation, this is where specification writers, manufacturing representatives, and industry technical advisors can provide assistance. If you encounter a standard and wonder how it affects your project or facility, reach out to the industry - we are always there to help.

Kevin Kramers (C.E.T., R.R.O., C.T.R.) is the Technical Officer for the Alberta Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA) and has over 30 years of construction experience in Alberta.

He is responsible for maintaining the ARCA Roofing Application Standards Manual, managing the ARCA Interdisciplinary Technical Committee, researching new products and applications, and providing technical education for building professionals in Alberta. Kevin is also a member of the CSA A123 Working Group and CRCA National Technical Committee. ■



The image is a promotional graphic for Workun Garrick. It features a central collage of architectural photographs, including a sports arena (Edmonton Oilers arena), a modern building with a glass facade, and an outdoor courtyard. The collage is composed of several overlapping, angular shapes in shades of yellow, blue, and white. Below the collage is the Workun Garrick logo, which consists of a large orange 'W' and a grey 'G' followed by the text 'workun garrick' in a sans-serif font. At the bottom left, there is contact information: 'Edmonton | Calgary P: 780.428.1575 | 403.277.4357 W: workungarrick.com'. At the bottom right, there is a bold statement: 'PROUDLY PROVIDING ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTING SERVICES ACROSS ALBERTA FOR OVER 70 YEARS'.

New Alberta high schools open for 2024-25 school year

Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School opened in southeast Edmonton while Ohpaho Secondary School welcomed students in Leduc

By Kelsey James



Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School was named after a community leader and Elder who acted as a cultural advisor and provided guidance to educators and students in Edmonton Public Schools.



Edmonton's newest public high school is over 230,000 square feet and four stories. The school features specialized learning and career and technology studies spaces, including a 20,000- square foot gymnasium on the main floor and 5,000 square foot fitness centre on the second level.

With the strength of Alberta's economy driving its growth, the demand for new and modernized educational spaces throughout the province is high.

The Alberta government Budget 2024 Capital Plan allocated \$2.1 billion over three years to build and modernize Alberta schools. This included five new high schools located in Blackfalds, Langdon, Leduc, and two in Edmonton that were built using a public-private partnership, or

P3 method. These five high schools were completed in time to open for the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. The total build-out student capacity for the five schools is 6,938 spaces.

Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School opens in southeast Edmonton's Meadows neighbourhood

Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School was named after a community leader and Elder who acted as a cultural advisor and provided guidance to educators and students in Edmonton Public Schools.

The city's newest public high school is over 230,000 square feet and four stories. It features specialized learning and career and technology studies spaces, including a 20,000 square foot gymnasium on the main floor and 5,000 square foot fitness centre on the second level. The gym has three side by side full basketball courts, one main basketball court (running in the opposite direction), three volleyball courts, and 12 badminton courts.

The library learning common is one of the school's central focal points. It's located at the south wall of the school's central gathering (flex) space. Exterior glazing and glazing from the flex space provides an abundance of natural light and promotes views from within the building to the existing park south of the school's property.

The design of the school incorporated a Master Chef kitchen

with four full size kitchen stations and eight additional stations, accommodating up to six students each. The CTS foods area has two garage-style doors opening to the school's adjacent flex gathering space to serve large events.

Other school features include a music room that can accommodate a 40-piece

orchestra, an automation lab designed for automobile diagnostic services, and a drama/theatre suite with two adjacent classrooms capable of opening to each other to produce a 140-seat theatre.

A key component of the new high school is its uniqueness in Alberta as a four-story school. Due to the small lot provided for the school, it



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Above: Ohpaho Secondary School is 106,358 square feet and two stories.



Far left: The design of the new facility includes a 7,800 square foot main gymnasium along with a 5,000 square foot secondary gymnasium.



Left: Students can take advantage of a foods space and cosmetology lab, as well as areas for woods/fabrication, photography, band, choir, drama, broadcasting, fine arts, horticulture, robotics/3D printing, and business.

had to be built up to accommodate the program area within the relatively small site boundary.

New Leduc school high school's name features the Cree word for 'taking flight'

The new Ohpaho Secondary School in Leduc also opened at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. More than 80 names were submitted for consideration to the Black Gold School Division's naming committee before Ohpaho Secondary School was chosen, which honours First Nations in the region.

The learning commons/library is the school's central focal point. The space is located on the southeast wall of the school's central flex-gathering space. The learning commons and flex area are connected with a sliding glass partition. A multi-purpose classroom is also in the commons area and is separated by a sliding glass partition.

The design of the new facility includes a 7,800 square foot main gymnasium along with a 5,000 square foot secondary gymnasium. The main gym has one basketball and volleyball court with

two practice basketball courts, two volleyball courts, and six badminton courts. There is also a 1,184 square foot fitness centre.

Students can also take advantage of a new foods space. The design features a 1,600 square foot kitchen along with a demonstration station and camera display system. Ohpaho Secondary School also boasts a cosmetology lab on the southeast corner of the school, which will serve members of the community. The lab is equipped with a small waiting and reception area, 24 hair styling (mannequin) stations, and five shampoo

stations. The reception desk has a sales area and a display case for products.

There are other spaces in the school dedicated to woods/fabrication, photography, band, choir, drama, broadcasting, fine arts, horticulture, robotics/3D printing, and business.

In total, Ohpaho Secondary School is 106,358 square feet and two stories.

Schools represent Government's commitment to building new facilities in province's fastest growing communities

In 2021, following the Government of Alberta's competitive procurement process, Concert-Bird Partners was awarded the contract for the P3 bundle of five high schools. Construction costs for all five schools are included in the P3 bundle valued at \$300.3 million. This P3 method saved Alberta taxpayers \$114.5 million when compared to the cost of Alberta's government delivering these schools using a traditional delivery method

Included within the \$300.3 million total project cost for the five high schools, the cost for Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School was \$95 million and \$51 million for Ohpaho Secondary School.

Like all of the P3 high schools, these two schools were designed to meet a minimum LEED Silver Certification. Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School provides a maximum build-out student capacity of 2,513 spaces and

Ohpaho Secondary School provides 1,121.

It is a priority for Alberta's government to provide students with the state-of-the art learning facilities they need to learn and succeed within their community, close to where they live. The

construction of these school created about 1,600 construction-related jobs and now that they are open, the schools will support many jobs related to teaching, programming, maintenance, and custodial work long into the future. ■

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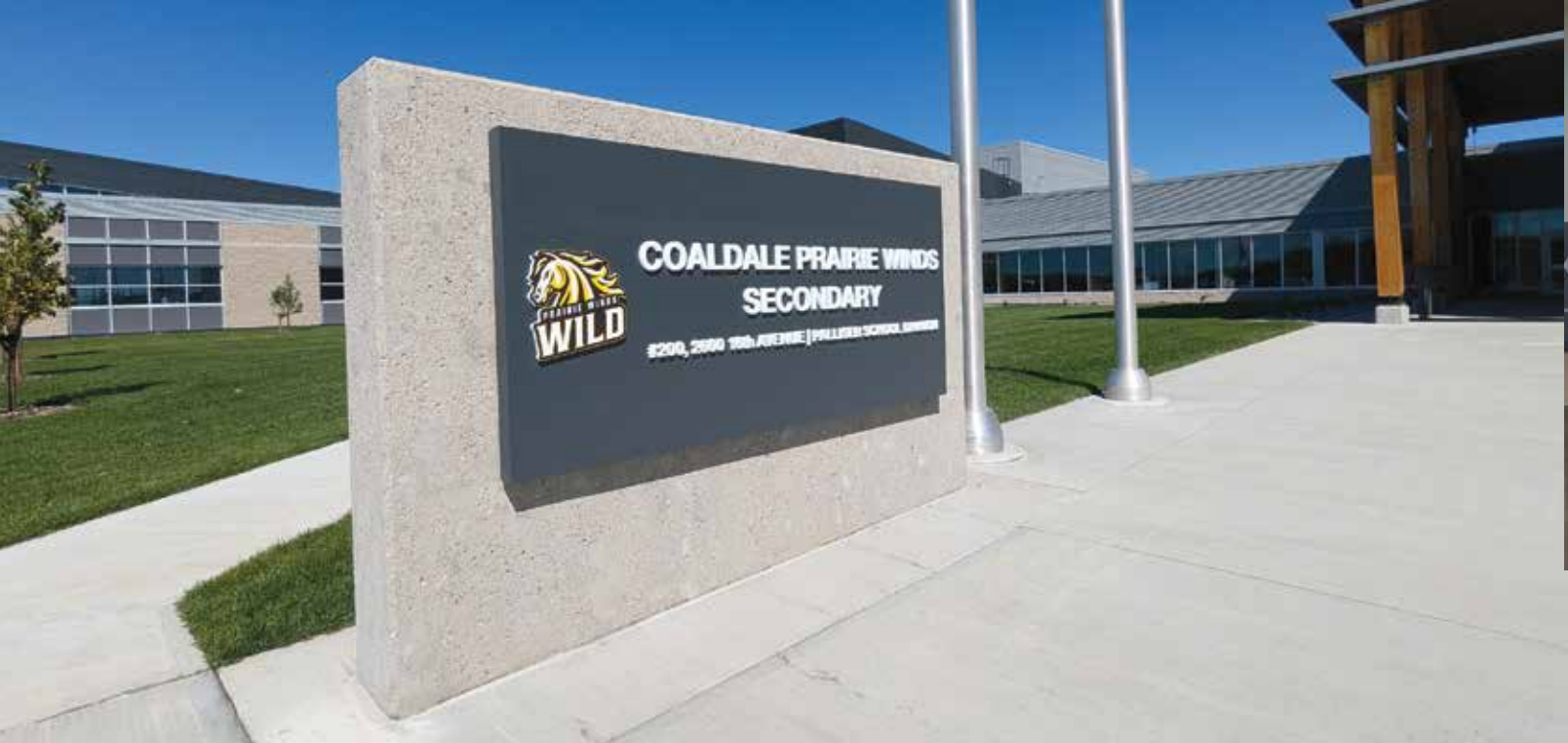
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Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary opens alongside new town recreation centre

By Kelsey James

Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary is now complete and has welcomed students and staff for the 2024-25 school year.

“The new school can accommodate up to 855 students in Grades 7 to 12 but will be able to open to more students as the community grows,” said Palliser School Division Superintendent Dave Driscoll.

“It’s an innovative building with lots of natural light and opportunities for students to grow and learn and we delivered it on time and on budget,” Driscoll added. “The design included a lot of good use of space and we’re looking forward to seeing what the future brings for us.”

As a result of the new build, the two other schools in Coaldale have undergone a grade reconfiguration. R.I. Baker School is serving students in Grades 4 to 6 and Jennie Emery Elementary School is serving students in Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary was built to replace the aged Kate Andrews High School.

“We went from Kate Andrews High School, a 1950s precast cement building, to something that is helping us move forward,” Driscoll said. “The new school has large gathering spaces and a lot more natural light. The gathering space feeds into a moveable wall in the gymnasium so we can open it up.

It also opens into the recreation centre, so there can be free flow during tournaments or other special events.”

Palliser School Division first learned the community would be receiving the new school in March 2021. The ground-breaking ceremony took place at the beginning of September of the same year and construction was completed on June 7, 2024.

The project was estimated to cost \$41.3 million and was funded by the Government of Alberta. Ward Bros. Construction Ltd. acted as general contractor on the project while FWBA Architects was the architect.



In terms of the design of the school, Palliser School Division conducted a vision – or management – session to get feedback from the community on what features they’d like to be included.

“We also took the time to go in and meet with each of the staff at all the other schools that feed into this school, as well as students in the higher grades to find out what they’d like to see in the new school, or what they foresee as things they would need to have,” Driscoll said. “We were building it for the future, not the past, so we wanted

to make sure we were going in the right direction.”

The single-story school, located on the north side of town, features e-sports facilities, an atrium, and glass floor to ceiling windows throughout the hallways. There is also a large band room, commercial kitchen, drama room, 3D printer space, breakout rooms, and a theatre that can seat 180 people.

“Anybody that walks into the building is just wowed,” Driscoll said. “It’s brought a lot of new opportunities for students they just wouldn’t have in a school from

the ‘50s and ‘60s. When you have an older, smaller school and you’re only 10 minutes from a city, people start thinking that if they go into the city, they can get programs they wouldn’t have here. The new school provides us the opportunity to compete with any of the schools in southern Alberta. Students will want to stay in the community; they won’t see a need to leave.”

Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary principal Curtis Uyesugi said he had a ‘sense of awe’ when he walked into the building for the first time.

“I was thinking about the



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opportunities for students and how excited they would be,” Uyesugi added. “The potential for this building is huge. We talked about it today with our staff and the words that came up are ‘optimism,’ ‘excitement,’ and ‘overwhelmed.’ It’s a whole mix of emotions for all of us because there’s so much promise but still so much to do.”

Coaldale’s new recreation centre, which opened in July, is on the same grounds and connected to the school. In 2021, the town introduced a two-phase capital campaign – called ‘Coaldale STRONG!’ – to raise funds to support the construction of the new recreation centre and ensure they had the equipment required to facilitate full programming upon opening. Funding came through donations, pledges, sponsorships, and the opportunity to secure naming rights of the facility.

The new recreation centre boasts 55,000 square feet of space for various activities, including indoor squash and basketball courts, an indoor soccer/lacrosse field, a 200-metre indoor walking and running track, a daycare centre, and outdoor play spaces for kids. Users can also play pickleball, volleyball, and badminton. The rec centre includes space for banquets and community events as well.

“These are all things our students will have an opportunity to take advantage of,” Uyesugi said.

The name for the school was selected by a committee consisting of members of town council, individuals from the school councils, principals of the town’s schools, and Palliser School Division’s senior leadership team and board members.

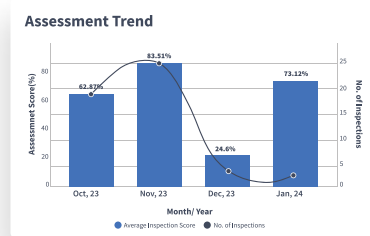
“Our board has a policy on names and it guides us as to who’s going to sit on the naming committee and how the process goes,” Driscoll said. “We have a policy that states we won’t name it after an individual; instead, it’ll be named after historical context or something about the location. We also asked people if they have any passions they’d like to see it named after. Through that, we had quite a few good names that came up, but Coaldale Prairie Winds Secondary was what the board really liked.” ■



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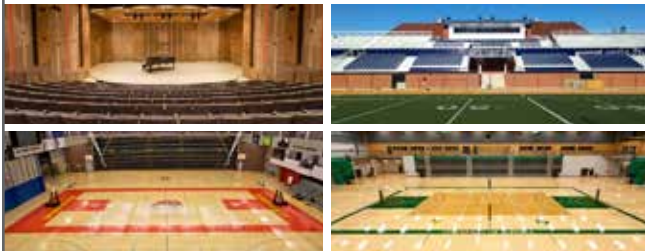


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