

## **Education Matters**

### **Beautiful Plains School Division Enrollment and Capital Planning**

As of October 31, 2014, Beautiful Plains School Division has 1642 students registered in the Division's 14 schools.

Carberry's enrollment has remained fairly stable over a five year period with enrollment being 522 students in 2010 to 500 as of October of this year.

Neepawa, on the other hand has seen a significant increase in enrollment where there were 756 students registered in 2010 compared to 905 students in October 2014.

JM Young School in Eden currently has 42 students registered which is similar to the enrollment in 2010. Brookdale School has 24 students which is down 7 students from 2010. This is a significant decline for a small school and hopefully the new developments in Brookdale will encourage more families into the town and surrounding area.

This school year our 8 colony schools have a combined enrollment of 171 students which has grown from 135 students in 2010. There are 3 colony schools at various stages of construction which ranges from completely new facilities to major additions.

Overall, Beautiful Plains School Division's enrollment has increased by 158 students since 2010 which is mainly at our Neepawa schools. Since the number of students is expected to rise further, the division has been working toward a plan to accommodate this significant increase.

Beautiful Plains School Division trustees have formally requested new permanent educational space in Neepawa from the province. As well, the Division is willing to bus students to Brookdale or Eden if parents of at least 20 students exercise their choice to attend one of these schools.

The responsibility for construction of major capital school projects, such as the request for additional educational space in Neepawa, rests with the Province of Manitoba.

The Public Schools Finance Board, which is comprised of three senior civil servants and chaired by Dr. Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister of Education, has the responsibility to finance major capital projects and manage the annual Public Schools Capital Program. The Public School Finance Board has staff that work with school divisions to assess and prioritize potential projects and upgrades.

School divisions submit a five year capital plan on an annual basis to identify future capital school needs. The five year capital plan includes rationale for the request as well as projected enrollments. The plan also requires the Division to identify its priority. New educational space for Neepawa is currently the highest priority in Beautiful Plains. All requests from Manitoba school divisions are prioritized by the Public School Finance Board staff using emergencies, new classroom space, health and safety issues and enrollment as their main considerations.

Once and if the new space is accepted for assessment by the Public School Finance Board, the Division will work closely with Public Schools Finance Board staff to identify the space needs, explore all alternatives and

hire an architectural/engineering team for the project. Cost estimates will be provided to the Public Schools Finance Board and ultimately to the Province of Manitoba prior to any formal approval for a major project such as this.

Although no project for Neepawa School space has been accepted for assessment by the Public Schools Finance Board at this time, the Division has hired a consultant to explore alternatives and recently an architect to explore building and site considerations in Neepawa.

Submitted by:

Beautiful Plains School Division Board of Trustees

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