



**Good Spirit School Division No. 204**

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~ MEDIA RELEASE ~

**September 4, 2018**

**Good Spirit School Division Consolidation Project**

Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) will begin the preparations for renovations and amalgamation of the Sturgis, Yorkton, and Kamsack bus garage facilities to a new location in the Yorkton Plumbing & Heating facility located in the RM of Orkney.

“This new venture is an exciting opportunity in the history of Good Spirit School Division,” Board Chair Lois Smandych said. “This project is about ensuring we are using facilities in the most efficient way.”

Since 2006, GSSD has continued to operate with multiple buildings acquired through the amalgamation of legacy school divisions. GSSD has continued to operate its entire original infrastructure such as garages and maintenance shops. While many divisions built new central administration offices, GSSD made the decision to renovate a pre-existing building to service its needs. While these choices were seen as cost saving measures they have limited the division’s ability to address inequities in workload, inefficiencies within departments, and failing infrastructure in various locations across the division. As a result, the division has incurred increased operating costs through the continued operation of multiple facilities.

“This exciting new project will mean significant cost savings for our division,” Director of Education Quintin Robertson said. “Our division remains committed to ensuring our students come first.”

Over the past year, the division has identified areas where operational efficiencies could be realized and has undertaken a non-school facilities audit to identify key deficiencies found within the bus garages located in Melville, Sturgis, Kamsack and Yorkton, the Fairview Education Centre, as well as the maintenance shops in Sturgis and Yorkton. As part of the audit, PMGM Architecture was contracted to perform a condition assessment. The estimated cost of the necessary upgrades was determined to be more than \$2 million. This estimated cost does not address any costs associated with some of the division’s current operational needs such as additional storage for facilities material, supplies and equipment, a bus wash bay, or a training space for professional development.

Based on the audit, the Good Spirit School Division has explored a variety of cost effective ways to address its operational and infrastructure shortfalls including consolidating numerous buildings into one location. Though a number of buildings were considered, one location met the needs for the consolidation of bus garages, maintenance facilities, and the administration office with minimal renovation. The consolidation into this facility will result in reduced building operation costs, increase in staffing efficiencies, and when combined with rental income, will allow GSSD to save in excess of \$2 million over a 10 year period which is equivalent to the cost of the proposed upgrades of GSSDs current facilities outlined within the PMGM audit.

Recent changes to education funding allows the division to access its restricted reserves, which can only be accessed with Ministry of Education approval for one-time expenditures such as

capital projects, to purchase the building rather than incurring new debt. Reserves cannot be used for staffing purposes.

“We are confident that even with using a portion of our reserves to fund this new facilities project, that we still have enough of a reserve balance to meet the emergent needs and plans for future capital expenditures,” Smandych added.

After analysis of the information, the Board of Education agreed through board motion to request permission of the Ministry of Education to purchase the current Yorkton Plumbing & Heating facility located in the RM of Orkney immediately north of Yorkton. In addition, the division requested permission to divest of three buildings, the Fairview Education Centre and the Kamsack and Yorkton bus garages and use the proceeds from the sale of these properties to fund the minor renovations required to accommodate the division in the new facility.

Upon review of the data, the Minister of Education formally granted approval of this project on August 30, 2018.

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For more information, contact:

Quintin Robertson  
Director/CEO, Good Spirit School Division

The Good Spirit School Division provides education opportunities to more than 6,000 students operating 27 schools in 17 communities throughout East Central Saskatchewan. Caring for children in a supportive environment is as important as offering excellence in educational programming. Our public schools value belonging, respect, responsibility, learning, nurturing, and perseverance by ensuring “Students Come First”. Visit us at [www.gssd.ca](http://www.gssd.ca); contact 306-786-5500 or 1-866-390-0773.