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LOCAL NEWS

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Province announces site for new SOSD school

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AMBER TRAILS

The northwest area of Winnipeg is growing rapidly, creating a demand for new facilities to address the needs of the new residents.

A new school for the Amber Trails area was essential, and on June 7, the province announced funding for the construction of a new Seven Oaks School Division dual-track kindergarten to Grade 5 school on Templeton Avenue east of Pipeline Road. This is one of the seven new schools the province has committed to building in the next few years.

"Our community is a growing community. Over the past decade, Seven Oaks (School Division) has been the fastest growing and most crowded school division in Manitoba," Derek Dabee, SOSD board chair, said. "This new school will ease the overcrowding of seven of our schools, and this means few students will be bussed out of the area into other schools where there is some room for them."

Dabee added there would be fewer kids studying in portable classrooms that have been added to meet the growing number of



Photo by Ligia Braidotti

Community members joined Kildonan MLA Nic Curry, Seven Oaks School Division board chair Derek Dabee, Premier Brian Pallister, Coun. Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan) and Minister of Education and Training Ian Wishart on June 7 for the announcement of a new kindergarten to Grade 5 school in Amber Trails.

student enrolment. The new 56,423-square-foot school will have 15 regular classrooms and kindergarten rooms, a music room, a STEM lab, life-skills and resource teaching and guidance suites, and an English-as-an-additional-language room, a library and gymnasium and energy-efficient design with a LEED Silver rating and Manitoba Hydro Power Smart components and enhanced indoor air quality.

Coun. Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan) was present at the announcement and said she is thrilled with the news. She said the area has been growing steadily and the new school

will serve the community well.

"This new school will alleviate overcrowding in other schools in our community and to have that pressure taken off teachers and students puts the focus back on providing the best learning environment possible," Sharma, who is a SOSD graduate, commented.

"A solid education is what prepares children for future challenges and success which is why your investment here today is so valuable."

Furthermore, it will also be used after hours for sports, student activities and as a

community space and it will be designed to allow for future expansion. The school will be built for 450 students with the ability to accommodate increased enrolment to a capacity of 600.

The child care centre will have space for 20 infants and 54 preschool children and will include 2,000 square-feet of flexible space to accommodate 30 additional children if needed.

Last year, the provincial government explored the possibility of building new schools using a public-private partnership and identified at least \$18 million in savings using an enhanced conventional procurement approach that enabled the construction of one additional school.

"For years we've known that this area of Winnipeg needed a new school to accommodate the tremendous growth that's been happening in this part of our city," Premier Brian Pallister said, adding the school is one of seven that they will be building throughout Manitoba over the next two years.

The new school is currently in the design phase and will be ready for tender in December 2018. The province expects construction to be completed for the beginning of the school year in September 2020.