

HF - Schools

# District 2 reacts to capital budget

## ■ Superintendent doesn't know when work on new Riverview school will start

BY ERIC LEWIS  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Karen Branscombe says she is pleased to see the new Riverview school on the province's list of upcoming major capital works items as a private/public partnership item, but the School District 2 superintendent is still wondering when work will actually begin on the project.

Branscombe commented on the province's capital works list, released yesterday, at the School District 2 Education Council's regular meeting last night.

"We do not have any dates yet in terms of when the drawings will start yet or construction," she says. "There's no dollar figure attached to that, so we certainly have some questions we're going to be asking in the next few days."

The new school, to be built in the town's east end, is expected to replace the aging Gunningsville and Lower Coverdale schools.

While a start date has not been announced, the province said yesterday in a news release that the estimated

completion date for the K-8 school, expected to accommodate 650 students, is Sept. 2012.

The Department of Education's \$95.7-million 2010-2011 capital budget includes \$1.36 million in projects for District 2, including eight roof repair or replacement projects at Birchmount, Salisbury Elementary, Caledonia, Bessborough, Port Elgin and Edith Cavell schools.

Frank L. Bowser School in Riverview will receive the last phase of a window wall replacement and Tantramar Regional High in Sackville will receive an elevator repair project.

Branscombe says the roof repair projects were top priorities for the district.

"There's never enough projects listed for School District 2, and certainly we'll continue to lobby for more," she says. "The schools that have their needs being met here certainly are priorities on our list, so certainly that's important to us."

She says the only item she's particularly concerned about that was left off the works list for District 2 is the entrance to Bernice MacNaughton High School on St. George Boulevard.

The school entrance is next to a Wheeler Boulevard on-ramp, and there has been discussed in recent years over safety concerns and about possibly fixing the intersection so that the two are not

side-by-side.

However, the City of Moncton budgeted money in its 2010 capital works budget for work in that area. More re-alignment and resurfacing is planned along St. George Boulevard, and the off-ramps from Wheeler Boulevard next to Bernice MacNaughton High School will be realigned and meet at a set of traffic lights along with the entrance to the school.

Also listed on the province's capital works list yesterday is \$29.3 million for the school on Ryan Street. The same budget line was in the capital works list last year and the number is the same as well.

The school is already under construction, leading to some confusion last night on what the \$29.3 million budget line meant.

"We don't anticipate that to be new money," Branscombe says. She suggests that perhaps the budgeted amount is simply the same money being carried over two fiscal years instead of one.

Asked if she was happy with the list of projects, Branscombe says with two new schools coming to the district, she can't say she isn't happy.

"Some districts would be very happy to have any new construction. Clearly, those needs are being met. It's taken a while to get them done.

"But we always are looking for more repair money."