

# Riverview East School opens

■ \$21M kindergarten-to-Grade 8 school was long-awaited by staff, students and parents

GINABETH ROBERTS  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

From the colour scheme of the tiles on the cafeteria floor that represent the tidal bore to the ceiling design that mirrors the old Gunningsville Bridge, the new Riverview East School is a building that's truly reflective of its community.

The kindergarten-to-Grade 8 school, located at 49 Chamber St., was officially opened yesterday morning after welcoming about 650 students and 62 staff members earlier this month.

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The Riverview East Eagles mascot gives a high five to students yesterday.



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Students play outside the new Riverview East School yesterday.

## New Riverview East School officially opens

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"Everyone has worked so hard in making this dream a reality," said principal Adam Rogerson, who was named one of Canada's outstanding principals by The Learning Partnership last year.

Rogerson acknowledged his staff, who spent the first half of the year in three different schools – Gunningsville, Lower Coverdale and Riverview Middle – for making the transition smoothly and their dedication to the students.

"Student learning and growth is paramount to them, and the results show amazing students making amazing achievements," he said.

The principal also celebrated the students for creating a positive and inclusive learning environment so quickly. On a tour of the school, students could be seen engaging with teachers in both traditional and modern pedagogical ways, polishing their descriptive writing skills in a scribbler and learning how to count with the help of SMART Board technology.

The main floor of the two-storey school houses all kindergarten to Grade 5 classes, as well as the two gymnasiums (one elementary, which has rubberized floors, and one middle school), a shared space between the middle school gym and cafeteria, allowing for viewing of performances from both rooms, a library/seminar room, performing arts and music classrooms and resource and special care space.

There's also a currently unoccupied student council office – elections will be held in the coming two weeks.

Pods of classes are identifiable with pop-out wall colours (blue for K-2 and green for 3-5) to help students navigate around the building – a necessity because students moved from much smaller schools. Each pod has a common space for small assemblies.

Many of the 27 classrooms have a shared space, called break-out rooms, for classes of the same grade to work on special projects or support staff to work one-on-one with students.

Kindergarten classes are a bit bigger than their elementary and middle school counterparts, and they have heated floors (for when kids are sitting on the floor for story time and such)



Education Minister Marie-Claude Blais, right, and Pettitcodiac MLA Sherry Wilson check out a prep room for the middle school science lab.

and their own bathrooms.

The second floor belongs to middle school students and features lockers and technology and science labs.

Every morning middle school students have an uninterrupted (no bells) hour or 1½ hours of literacy or numeracy classes with their homeroom teachers.

The school wasn't just designed to make students happy, it was also designed with teachers and staff in mind.

In addition to a front office and staff room, there's a staff work room used by teachers on "breaks" to prepare coursework or correct tests, various preparation and storage rooms attached to specialty classrooms and a space for visiting professionals, such as guidance counsellors, to meet in private with parents. There's also a boardroom, equipped with a SMART Board, for staff to meet with its Parent School Support Committee and Home and School Association.

The \$21-million school, which covers 10,230 square metres (110,074 square feet), was designed and constructed in accordance with the provincial Green Building Policy.

The government investment includes \$80,000 toward the construction of a barrier-free, wheelchair-accessible playground. The Riverview East Play for All fundraising committee hopes to raise \$500,000 in three years to complete the playground.

Parents, dignitaries and district officials spoke of one another's efforts in the several-year journey to making this possible.

Education Minister Marie-Claude Blais congratulated students on making history.

"It's a truly great day for Riverview and it's a truly great day for your school," Blais said to a gym full of students. "Today, you're part of history because all of you are in the first classes of this school."

She encouraged students to be their best selves in a school that would serve as a motivational tool.

"You play a vital role in our province," she said. "You know why? Because you are the future of this province and one day, I know, you will be leaders in our province, and I am very proud of that."

Blais' sentiments were echoed by PSSC chair Michel Poirier, who described both the students and the school as awesome, inspiring, exceptional and amazing.

"It's designed to unlock and realize the potential in each and every one of you," he said of the building.

District educational council chair Tamara Nichol thanked parents and community members who came to council with their request for the new school, as well as DEC members Harry Doyle and John Gallant, who liaise with Riverview schools.