

Espanola schools receive funding for next stage: Part one

By JESSICA BROUSSEAU

Mid-North Monitor

Tuesday, May 6, 2014 9:03:25 EDT AM

It's an exciting time for staff, parents and students of the Rainbow District School Board.

The Ministry of Education has confirmed funding to be provided to the school boards to help in the stages of renovations in the amalgamations of local schools.

Rainbow District Schools, AB Ellis and Espanola High School are set to join under one roof by the 2015 fall school year.

The school board got confirmation on April 25 that the Ministry of Education is providing a capital grant of \$4.47 million to help renovate the high school. The board also got another \$400,000 from the childcare funding, \$200,000 from the District Service Board and \$1.4 million from the Rainbow District School board for a total of approximately \$6.5 million.

"It's an exciting time for Espanola," said Rainbow District School Board chair Doreen Dewar. "It's going to create sustainability in Espanola for a long time to come in education."

Dewar said the ministry came out with a memorandum last year to have school boards look into ways to share spaces within their school.

"With that directive, we launched a look at AB Ellis and Espanola High School with the idea that the French (school) indicating that they wanted to leave the high school," she said. "At the same time, the French Catholic school board and the English Catholic also started looking at their buildings and holding information sessions."

An information session was held for the Rainbow District School Board last fall, where Dewar said they had a great turnout from community residents and partners.

"The suggestion was, based on funding from the ministry, we would create two schools, completely separate yet on the same site. We presented that to the ministry, and last Friday we received noticed that we would be receiving capital grants from the ministry."

The funding will be used to renovate the current Espanola High School to incorporate AB Ellis. Work is set to begin after this school term.

The money will also be used to improve not just the aesthetics of the building, but other aspects that Dewar said are not laid out in specifics quite yet.

However, the Rainbow District School Board is holding another public information session on the revitalization of the high school on May 15 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Espanola High School gymnasium.

See next weeks edition of the Mid-North Monitor for part two of the story.