



March 27, 2026

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David McTimoney:

Thank you for correspondence dated December 22, 2025, from Thomas Geburt and subsequent meeting on January 19, 2026. Since M. Geburt has resigned from his position on the District Education Council the response is being sent to you in his stead.

Please note the omission of the Garden Creek/Kingsclear Study in the 2026-2027 Stable Departmental Infrastructure Priorities (SDIP) list was not an error. The previous year's request for a study was funded. But a project request was not received in May 2025.

During the 2025-2026 budget submission project evaluation process, the merits of potential rationalization for the schools scored well, but the school district's intent for the scope of the project was still in question. Once the study is complete, the District Education Council (DEC) will have the option to submit a project based on the study results. Assuming a project with clear scope is submitted in May 2026, the project will then be added to the SDIP.

As you know, when districts submit their major capital project lists for the upcoming fiscal year, the QBL tool is used to evaluate all Anglophone and Francophone districts equitably. Projects are assessed against a range of criteria, including current population, future enrolment projections, building age, deferred maintenance costs and growth within the surrounding area. This standardized process applies to all districts and result in a ranked list of projects. Projects with elevated space deficiencies are identified as Tier 1; SDIP projects remain on the list until funding is provided and move up the list as others are funded. In the most recent capital budget process, Devon Middle School advanced from 18th to 11th position on the SDIP, indicating progress towards future approval. Evolving data play a critical role in this process. As with all projects the Devon Middle School replacement project was evaluated but did not meet the requirements to be a Tier 1 project. As noted above, this project ranking high in the SDIP which should see it moving forward in the near future.

Minister / Ministre

Education and Early Childhood Development / Éducation et Développement de la petite enfance

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The priority lists submitted by DEC are carefully considered. Within the QBL framework, priority and waitlist scores are incorporated into the overall evaluation and are given importance. These factors can influence a project's total score and its movement within the overall rankings.

Following project approval, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) is engaged to identify and secure a suitable site, generally within the location identified during the DEC project submission. While the confirmation process for some sites can be completed relatively quickly, others require more time due to factors such as land availability, location constraints and site characteristics. Site selection involves detailed consideration of surrounding conditions, natural features, catchment areas, traffic patterns, and neighborhood impacts.

In instances where suitable land cannot be secured in the area initially identified, the process must be restarted with alternate locations. This may result in delays. Furthermore, land acquisition processes may involve negotiations or expropriation, both of which require time. Every effort is made to proceed efficiently and proactively, drawing on lessons learned from past projects, with the shared goal of delivering new facilities as quickly as possible for students.

Effective consultation and collaboration between the EECD and DEC are recognized as essential. In previous years, approved projects were communicated directly through media announcements, which sometimes served as the first notice to DEC. Beginning this year, advance meetings with the DEC and other stakeholders have been implemented prior to public announcements. These forums provide opportunities for questions, discussion, and the exchange of perspectives, and concerns raised by DEC prior to public announcements.

Historically, elementary schools were constructed with Early Childhood Development (ECD) spaces integrated within the school buildings. Over time, educational needs have evolved, and there has been an increased demand for additional specialised and program-specific spaces, contributing to higher construction costs. In comparison to other provinces, school facilities are being built at a larger scale in our province. Integrating ECD spaces within school buildings also increases costs, as these spaces must meet institutional building standards. To improve cost efficiency, it has been decided that ECD spaces will be developed as separate entities within the school complex. This approach will be implemented on all new school projects, with plans to potentially utilise modular construction, which offers a more cost-efficient and accelerated building process. Communication of the changes could have been better. That has been noted and will be improved in the future.

The establishment of catchment areas by district superintendents that serve students and communities in an effective manner is recognised. However, boundary realignments must not negatively impact school infrastructure capacity by not utilising existing school space adequately.

Regarding the Saint Mary's School addition, the planning committee reviewed and approved the scope of the project. As agreed in our January meeting, staff met to review the latest student projection data. Following this review it has been agreed to increase the number of classrooms by an equivalent amount of 2 full classrooms. This space will be provided by adding 4 half size classrooms with movable partitions into the project's scope. Should future growth in the area significantly exceed projections, consideration would be given to the development of new school infrastructure.

The new Fredericton Southeast K–8 school has been approved to accommodate 450 students as part of the 2025-2026 budget process. Following discussions at the planning committee and based on information provided by the school district and the City of Fredericton's development plans, the planned capacity was increased to 550 students. Approximately 427 students are expected to transfer from existing schools as a result of boundary adjustments, leaving room for anticipated growth. Current projections indicate stable, rather than rapid, population growth in the area. This does not warrant the construction of a larger facility at this time. The focus remains on responsible and efficient use of public funds. Should future growth planned by the City come to fruition, the matter of additional schools would be reconsidered at a that time. This was also discussed in the staff level meeting held between ASD-W and EECD and was agreed.

We would like to express our gratitude for the concerns raised; they reflect a shared commitment to serving students and communities effectively. It is hoped that the above information provides clarity and addresses the matters outlined. It is vital that we continue to collaborate in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claire Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon. Claire Johnson, Ph.D.

c.c. Ryan Donaghy, Deputy Minister, EECD
Robert Penney, Assistant Deputy Minister, EECD
Christine Gilbert Estabrooks, Assistant Deputy Minister, EECD
Tiffany Bastin, Assistant Deputy Minister, EECD
François Godin, Director, EECD
David McTimoney, Superintendent, ASD-W