

## NORTH CENTRAL SHARED FACILITY

# Students excited about opportunity

By **JOE COUTURE**  
Leader-Post

The North Central Shared Facility will go from concept to reality with \$38 million in capital funding promised by four partners on Monday.

The integrated learning facility has been in the works for eight years. The concept is to have multiple agencies — including a school, a library and other services — sharing a space.

“It’s good to see new change,” said John Goodwill, 19, a Grade 12 student from Scott Collegiate and one of two students from that school who made presentations during a news conference on Monday. “I want my little brothers to go a school in the neighbourhood, close to the community, full of their friends and filled with positive role models. It’s going to be an amazing experience once it happens.”

“I find it exciting because my little sister is going to be going to high school soon and she’s going to have way more opportunities to learn and have different experiences than we did,” said Keena Aisaican-Checkosis, 17, a Grade 11 student.

The province’s Ministry of Education is contributing \$16.2 million toward the funding of the new facility. Regina Public Schools is chipping in \$8.72 million. The City of Regina is contributing \$8.8 million and the Regina Public Library’s share is \$1.25 million.

The city and school division also donated land — at the site of what is currently Scott Collegiate — valued at about \$3 million for the project.

“This means a facility that will bring students and community together,” said Education Minister Donna Harpauer. “We heard from the students loud and clear when they did their presentations about how they’re working with community and corporate partners as part of their learning. I think that’s quite exciting. We look at it as a revitalization piece and a very important piece for growth.”

School board chairwoman Barbara Young noted the students were presenting details about a new style of learning that has already started in schools throughout the city and that will be facilitated in the new complex.

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Regina Public School Board chairwoman Dr. Barbara Young (centre) talks with Scott Collegiate students John Goodwill (left) and Keena Aisaican-Checkosis about the exhibits on display during a news conference at Albert Community School on Monday.

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It involves “service learning, project-based learning, internships and mentors from the community,” Young explained, noting students get academic credits while working on projects that are of interest to them.

“They’re learning how to learn. This puts them in the driver’s seat. They learn all the academic things as they go along,” she said.

“This means we can now go forward to the drawing board and do the final planning for this school,” she added about the funding. “The student parts of the building are spread throughout. We want them to interact with other programs and activities in the building.”

Mayor Pat Fiacco said the city’s commitment will go toward creating the North Central Community Learning Centre at the facility.

“We’ve been part of this initiative since 2003 and obviously our city council and the community has really been focusing on the revitalization of our inner city,” he noted.

Library board chairwoman Darlene Hincks Joehneck said its contri-

bution will go to support the creation of a new library at the site, located within the new learning centre.

“We’re excited that our Albert Branch will be moving into this particular facility,” she said. “It’s part of our whole branch renewal. It will all be funded from our fundraising campaign.”

The project will soon enter a detailed design phase. The funding won’t allow a project of the scope that was proposed in concept form in 2009 because of a lack of federal government involvement, Harpauer said.

“This will be a smaller project in that the federal government has not committed,” the minister explained. “But it will be designed in such a way that it can be added to. We encourage them to become involved.”

Timelines for the design processes aren’t yet clear, as various partners need to co-ordinate and designs will need to be approved, according to Young. But once construction begins, it is expected that it will take about 15 to 18 months to finish.