



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Next Steps for Amy Woodland Elementary: Project Definition Report (PDR) Underway

Cranbrook, BC – School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) (the “District”) is continuing to advance plans for the future of Amy Woodland Elementary School following the fire on June 30, 2024. The District extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who provided additional support to impacted staff and students over this school year.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Infrastructure (the “Ministries”) have supported this major capital project which means that the District is able to commence work on a Project Definition Report or Business Case. The PDR is anticipated to be completed within the next 12 to 15 months. This report will guide the District, the Ministry, and community stakeholders in determining the most feasible and forward-looking option for continuing the legacy of Amy Woodland Elementary.

The Ministries have identified the following three core options that the District must explore in the PDR:

- 1. Complete Replacement with a Smaller School Footprint**

This option involves constructing a new facility with reduced capacity (approximately 40 Kindergarten plus 200 primary) compared to the original building (40 Kindergarten plus 325 primary students). The reduced size is a result of anticipated long-term decline in enrolment projections. A new facility would focus on enhanced energy efficiency and inclusive learning spaces tailored to evolving educational needs.

- 2. Rebuild of Damaged Areas Including the Gymnasium**

Structural engineers have confirmed significant damage to the gymnasium, in addition to smoke damage throughout the building. This option would see the damaged portions of the existing building—such as the gym and surrounding infrastructure—completely rebuilt to modern standards while preserving portions of the undamaged structure, where possible. The size of the school would remain at 40 Kindergarten plus 325 primary students.

- 3. Additions at Neighbouring Schools**

Under this scenario, an analysis will be completed to review expansion of nearby neighbouring schools to accommodate all impacted students. The expansions will be focused on adding onto the existing school's footprint with permanent structures and will not be portable classrooms. Transportation logistics and catchment considerations will be central to this approach. More information will be shared as the District continues to gather information on this option.

Commitment to Community and Safety

“The students, staff, and families of Amy Woodland Elementary have shown incredible resilience in the face of such a major disruption,” said Superintendent Viveka Johnson. “We are committed to keeping the community informed and involved as we take these critical steps forward.”

The Board of Education has consistently advocated for a full replacement of the school, and the District remains in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Ministry of Infrastructure, and the Schools Protection Program.

Ongoing Engagement

Community input and transparency will be integral as the District progresses through the PDR process. Once the report is finalized and reviewed, a preferred path forward will be shared with the public, along with timelines and implementation details.

In the meantime, bussing for former Amy Woodland students will remain in place for those attending other schools across Cranbrook, and support for families navigating out-of-catchment placement continues.

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) thanks all families, staff, and community partners for their patience and support during this difficult transition period. We look forward to building a strong future for the entire school community.

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