

MEDIA RELEASE

Significant investment for Grimsby families with school expansion and new child care centre

NIAGARA REGION, June 12, 2007 – Even though there are still two more weeks of school left before the long-awaited summer break, students and staff at Nelles public school and local families in Grimsby found a reason to celebrate last evening. The portable classrooms are gone and a new 51-space child care centre on site at Nelles is officially open.

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and Niagara Region celebrated the completion of a \$2.5M project to create five new classrooms, staffroom, washrooms, renovations to improve the library resource centre, improved parking and the new licensed child care centre, Kidzdome at Nelles. Elected officials from the federal, provincial, regional and municipal level joined DSBN-elected officials, senior staff from the DSBN, the Region, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), students and families at Nelles school and Kidzdome at an Open House and ribbon cutting ceremony last evening.

The celebration was the culmination of a two-year project that benefited from collaborative problem solving between the District School Board of Niagara and the Regional Municipality of Niagara. "Our plan to replace portables with permanent classrooms coincided with the Region's decision to create a childcare facility in Grimsby. The timing for addressing both issues simultaneously was perfect," explained Warren Hoshizaki, Director of Education, District School Board of Niagara.

"The Nelles Public School Re-Opening is a celebration of both the future of our students, and the improved quality of life of our community," said Kevin Maves, Board Chair of the District School Board of Niagara. "The collaboration between all of the stakeholders was essential to the success of the Nelles School project, and certainly, we look forward to future partnerships."

Grimsby had previously been identified as in need of additional licensed child care spaces. These 51 spaces (10 infant spaces, 15 toddler, and 26 spaces for pre-schoolers) are part of Phase One of the Best Start initiative which has seen the expansion of more than 300 licensed spaces across Niagara. Best Start is an initiative of the provincial Ministry of Children and Youth Services which involves a massive expansion of quality and affordable child care and investments in healthy,

early development for children and youth. Phase Two of Best Start will see the development of “hubs” which will provide early learning opportunities, support and care services at the neighbourhood level in or near schools, accessible to families who require it.

The centre is operated by Kidzdome Preschool, who has been operating at another location in Grimsby for more than eight years. The new site has been in operation since March and the spaces in each age group are already full. The 10 infant care spaces are the first ever infant care spaces in Grimsby.

Regional Chairman Peter Partington noted, “Early childhood education is an important investment in the future of Niagara region. This new licensed child care centre is providing children with the opportunity to learn through play and to reach their full potential. The centre is supporting the parents of these children so that they can contribute to our economy by working or continuing their academic pursuits while knowing that their children are in a safe and nurturing environment.” He added, “The effort of our partners in this project, the District School Board of Niagara, Kidzdome, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is a fine example of the synergy working in Niagara for the betterment of Niagara.”

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