

# Executive Summary

Alberta has one of the best Kindergarten-Grade 12 education systems in the world. An important part of this system is our school facilities that host nearly 600,000 students<sup>1</sup> every school day. “*Schools for Tomorrow*” is a comprehensive plan with recommendations to address Alberta’s school infrastructure needs over the next 5 years.

“*Schools for Tomorrow*” is based primarily on input from locally elected school boards, their administrators, and numerous other education stakeholders, and in particular on information gathered during Ministerial meetings with School Board Trustees and Administrators in February-March 2005 and October-November 2005, and during March 24, 2006 and November 4, 2006 Ministerial meetings with school board chairs and superintendents. This plan also incorporates to the extent possible the 3-year capital plans submitted by school jurisdictions in June, 2006.

“*Schools for Tomorrow*” outlines 3 key-priority categories:

1. **New Schools** – New schools must be constructed to provide space to meet enrolment needs, to accommodate educational program demands, or to replace aging and/or obsolete facilities.
2. **Major Modernizations** – Major modernizations of existing schools will improve the physical quality and functionality of school facilities across the province and will further address the backlog of deferred maintenance projects.
3. **Steel-framed Modularity** – New, state-of-the-art, steel-framed modular classrooms will provide timely and flexible solutions to address changing demographics and other space issues.

Current demands and trends in Alberta will require changes in the management of school capital planning. For example, changing enrolment patterns and demographic shifts are creating challenges in getting student spaces in the right places. “*Schools for Tomorrow*” provides recommendations and/or expected next steps to address these and other capital planning issues, such as surplus school reserve sites.

“*Schools for Tomorrow*” outlines a realistic albeit an aggressive recommendation for \$3.17 billion in additional funding over 5 years to address school infrastructure needs in Alberta, as summarized in the table below. Cost escalations are the largest cost-driver in this scenario.

**Table 1 - Recommended School Capital Plan (\$ millions in 2006 Dollars)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>5-Year</b>
1. New and/or Replacement Schools (82 projects over 5 years)	\$280	\$1,400
2. Major Modernizations and Preservations (71 Projects)	180	900
3. New Steel-Framed Modular Classrooms	40	200
4. Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal (IMR)	104	520
5. Career Technology Studies (CTS) Equipment	10	50
6. Leasing Costs for Alternative Programs and Charter Schools	12	60
7. Facility Evaluations and Regional Planning Initiatives	8	40
<b>Totals (over and above existing budgets):</b>	<b>\$ 634</b>	<b>\$3,170</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source - Alberta Education’s preliminary student count for 2006/07 is 592,087.

# Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations in “*Schools for Tomorrow*” reflect a comprehensive, 5-year school infrastructure plan in two broad categories: “Capital Funding Recommendations” that require an additional allocation of \$3.17 billion (in 2006 dollars) over five years, and “Other Major Recommendations/Next Steps” that relate to capital planning considerations which are described in detail in the Plan.

## A. Capital Funding Recommendations

1. **New and/or Replacement Schools** – \$1.4 billion over 5 years, to provide 82 projects in 42 public and separate jurisdictions. Recommended funding includes \$50 million in initial funding for unspecified new Francophone school projects.
2. **Major Modernizations and Preservations** – \$900 million over 5 years, to provide 71 major projects in 51 public and separate jurisdictions. Recommended funding includes \$20 million in initial funding for Francophone schools.
3. **New Steel-Framed Modular Classrooms** – \$200 million over 5 years, to provide about 125 additional, new steel-framed modulars per year.
4. **Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal (IMR)** – \$520 million over 5 years, to provide numerous smaller school modernizations and revitalizations, to help address the deferred maintenance backlog.
5. **Career Technology Studies (CTS) Equipment** – \$50 million over 5 years, to help school jurisdictions upgrade existing technical and trade-related CTS facilities and equipment.
6. **Leasing Costs** – \$60 million over 5 years, to support government-funded leasing costs for alternative programs and Charter Schools.
7. **Facility Evaluations and Regional Planning Initiatives** – \$40 million over 5 years, for facility evaluations and regional (i.e., cross-jurisdictional) planning.

## B. Other Major Recommendations / Next Steps

1. Encourage school jurisdictions to work with community partners to use educational space in ways that address the individual needs of the learner and of the community at large. Explore innovative approaches that recognize the effective use of space beyond the standard instructional day.
2. Continue consultations with stakeholders to facilitate removal of legislative and regulatory barriers, thus allowing surplus school buildings and surplus school reserve sites (vacant lands) to be used more efficiently and for a broader range of purposes.
3. Evaluate funding requirements to enable and support additional distance learning opportunities.
4. Develop and implement a post-occupancy evaluation model for Alberta’s schools.
5. Review the stakeholder report, Non-School Building Initiative, and examine the feasibility of implementing the report’s recommendations.
6. Review government policy regarding funding for private school facilities.
7. Broaden the regulation on school jurisdiction borrowing to include projects that can demonstrate a clear long-term operating costs savings.
8. Consider a new policy for well-established and proven Charter Schools regarding school infrastructure.
9. Implement a pilot project to further evaluate the “core/modular” school design concept.