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Highland Heights unveils $3.3 million expansion

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Students at Hyland Heights Elementary School will spend the school year together in a cohesive building with a new addition added to the existing school.

Staff, students and parents gathered on the school grounds of Hyland Heights Elementary School last Thursday (Sept. 26) for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the school's new expansion.

?It's so important for our school community to have the students inside the building together as much as we can,? said Tammy Fleming, Principal of Hyland Heights. ?There's more collaboration, which gives kids a different kind of learning opportunity, and when you have beautiful classrooms like these it motivates kids because it's a pleasant environment.?

In July 2020, the provincial government approved a multi-million-dollar expansion to Hyland Heights Elementary School that would see a four-classroom addition added to the local elementary school, replacing the school's existing four-portable complex. The approval of the expansion came following an announcement from the provincial government that they would be investing $500 million to build 30 new schools and upgrade 15 existing ones.

Construction of the expansion to the elementary school began in September of 2022 and was completed last September.

?As we all know, Shelburne is growing rapidly and we want to be able to accommodate all of our students with state-of-the-art facilities for them to learn in,? said Belal Taha, Superintendent of Education. ?Before this was built, we had a number of portables, which are useful when the school capacity doesn't allow for us to all be in one building. However, the reduction of portables increases the amount of space that kids can play in and also ensures that we have as many students inside because ideally, we want them inside the school.?

Hyland Heights Elementary is a junior kindergarten to Grade 8 school, located at 200 Fourth Ave in Shelburne. in Shelburne. The school provides education to students from Shelburne and the surrounding rural communities of Amaranth, Riverview, Melanchthon and Corbetton. The school shares property with Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) and replaced the Shelburne Junior School, which had served the town and surrounding area for over 100 years.

In 2020, the Upper Grand District School Board said the expansion to the school would add an additional 92 spaces to the school's population.

?It really was built for the students who were here that we were struggling to find a spot for,? said Fleming.

The expansion to the elementary school comes at a time when student capacity within local schools becomes an ever-increasing concern for many local families.

According to the Upper Grand District School Board's (UGDSB) Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) enrollment growth at Hyland Heights Elementary School is projected to reach 510 students by 2025/2026 school year and reach over capacity by 2030/2031 with 585.