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Community Celebrates Opening of New Centennial Secondary School

Centennial Secondary School students, school and district employees, parents, alumni, and community members gathered on Thursday, May 31, 2018 to celebrate the opening of the new school, 51 years after the original school first opened.

Centennial Principal Anthony Ciolfitto presided over the event attended by SD43 Board Chair Kerri Palmer Isaak, Vice-Chair Michael Thomas, Trustees Carol Cahoon, Chuck Denison, Barb Hobson, Lisa Park, Judy Shirra, Diane Sowden, Keith Watkins, Superintendent Patricia Gartland, Secretary Treasurer Chris Nicolls, and other dignitaries and guests.

The celebration began in the afternoon with student-led activities including school tours, musical performances, and fun for all. The formal ceremony began at 4:30 p.m. in the school's beautiful new theatre where a video was played showing the school's history and speeches were made. The ceremony concluded with the handing over of the school key from Board Chair Palmer Isaak to Principal Ciolfitto and the unveiling of a plaque.

The original Centennial Secondary School was established in 1967, the centennial year of Canadian Confederation. It was the first and only high school in Coquitlam at the time and was considered a leading-edge new school design. It has served its students and the community very well for 51 years.

When that school first opened in 1967, students made a mile-long trek that started at Como Lake School and wound its way to the new building at Winslow and Poirier. Eleven hundred students joined employees, school board trustees and Coquitlam Council members in the grand march. Thousands of Coquitlam residents witnessed the "trek", which was notable for the variety of colour and costumes. In September 2017 when students and employees moved into the new school they trekked also, but only across the parking lot.

The new seismic replacement school welcomed its first students on September 5, 2017. With approximately 1,400 students, the new school features significant amounts of natural lighting, wood interior features, a large open foyer/cafeteria, a state-of-the-art science lab, teaching kitchen, 234-seat theatre, high speed Wi-Fi among other features. Phase two, which includes deconstruction of the old school and construction of an additional gym and sports field is underway.

The school may be new, and with features that were not yet conceived of in 1967, but what remains the same after all these years is the 'Cent' pride of students, employees, alumni and retirees for SD43's first and one of its most memorable high schools.

Quotes

Rob Fleming, Minister of Education

“It gives me great pleasure to see Centennial students now enjoying a seismically-safe building,” said Minister of Education Rob Fleming. “Having quality resources and an inspiring space to learn is so important to support student success. The new school will surely foster innovation and a sense of community for everyone who walks through its doors.”

Kerri Palmer Isaak, School District 43 Board of Education Chair

“I am very pleased to celebrate in the official opening of this beautiful new school and even more pleased about how it will support the many students who will learn here over the coming years,” said SD43 Board Chair Kerri Palmer Isaak. “I attended Centennial and this school will always hold a special place in my heart. I am and always will be a ‘Centaur’ and will carry that pride with me forever.”

Patricia Gartland, School District 43 Superintendent of Schools

“As a graduate of Centennial, and now as Superintendent of this school district, it was very special for me to be part of this memorable event,” said SD43 Superintendent Patricia Gartland. “The attendance of so many students, employees, alumni, retirees, local residents, dignitaries and others truly demonstrates the connection and pride our entire community has for the school and each other.”

Event Pictures







Learn More

Centennial Secondary School website:

<https://www.sd43.bc.ca/School/centennial/Pages/default.aspx>

Centennial Secondary school page on SD43 Capital Projects website:

<https://www.sd43.bc.ca/CapitalProjects/Pages/CentennialSecondary.aspx>