



## SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** Thursday, February 23, 2006

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#### **George O'Neill Public School Slated for a Facelift**

**MARATHON, Ontario** – Superior-Greenstone District School Board Trustees approved a motion at the February board meeting which will initiate a renovation / addition project at the George O'Neill Public School in Nipigon.

The school which has seen generations of Nipigon residents graduate over the last 75 years recently passed all the ministry assessments in their search for schools which were prohibitive to repair.

“Although the structure is sound, the school definitely needs a facelift,” said Director of Education Terry Ellwood. “As part of the retrofit, we need to see the school become more accessible to the handicapped, perhaps linking the main floor areas and provide a more pleasant and effective library space that lends itself to the concept of a resource showcase area. We want to give the school a more welcoming atmosphere with a main office area that is conducive to receiving the students, staff and public who use the school.”

Bette Bartlett, Chair of the Board said she was both excited and happy for the community of Nipigon.

“George O'Neill Public School has history in the community of Nipigon and we care about that. The school is structurally sound but it is time for an upgrade. We want George O'Neill Public School

students and staff to have a learning environment that is more inviting and welcoming. Board administration will initiate the project by enlisting the services of an architect to provide a conceptual design. We are hoping to have a process that shares the design and allows community stakeholders opportunity for input. There was unanimous support from the Trustees of the Superior Greenstone DSB for this project. I am very grateful for the support of this project which is so very near and dear to my heart," concluded Ms. Bartlett.

Wayne Chiupka, the board's Manager of Plant Services said, "George O'Neill Public School is by far the oldest school in the Superior-Greenstone DSB and it will be treated with respect and dignity through the entire process. It is our intention to bring the building into the 21st century, while remaining connected to the heritage of the structure."

School Principal John Foulds expressed his pleasure for the welcome news saying, "The retrofit project will maintain the character of the old school and at the same time improve the facilities so that they comply with present day standards and the educational needs of our community."

Upon completion, the school will be a fully modern building offering the latest in technology for the students, while providing a rare view into the past history of the region. With the original section of the school being constructed in 1929 and now with this renovation, it is possible that within the walls of George O'Neill Public School over 100 years of education history could be chalked up for the Nipigon area children.