

GYMNASIUM FOR ECOLE ALLAIN ST. CYR

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to follow up on a Member's Statement and questions made by my colleague Mr. Ramsay two Wednesdays ago. Over the last several months I have received a large number of letters from parents of students who attend Ecole Alain St. Cyr. They continue to be concerned and frustrated that their children are attending a school without gym facilities. I share their frustration.

Physical education is a critical portion of a child's development. It is about providing children with the knowledge, skill, capacity, value and enthusiasm to maintain healthy lifestyles into adulthood. Many physical education programs are designed to promote physical fitness, to develop motor skills, to instil knowledge and understanding of rules, concepts, and strategies which will be of value throughout a person's life. A healthy body leads to a healthy mind which helps youth excel through their school years and into the future. So, by building facilities without gymnasiums we are making it more difficult for schools to provide these important lessons to our youth. I acknowledge that alternate arrangements have been made to facilitate physical education within Ecole Alain St. Cyr. Unfortunately, I don't believe that they are suitable.

The majority of the school year falls within winter. Asking young children to travel between the school and the Multiplex, or other locations, in the dead of winter (at 40 below zero) is unfair and irresponsible. It increases the school boards difficulty in delivery quality physical education. I was happy to hear the Minister say that discussions with the Minister of Heritage are ongoing. Unfortunately, it also sounds like we're in a holding pattern awaiting a response from the Federal Government.

On behalf of the Board and the Parents I want to encourage the Minister and his Department to take a more proactive stance on this file. Stop waiting for a response and take action. Set up more meetings with the Federal Government. Obtain the funding required to move forward with Phase II and build the much required gym at Ecole Alain St. Cyr. Let's stop talking and start doing. Let's help the children and adolescents of Yellowknife's francophone community by building the facilities they need in their school to reach their full potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.