

# Language school expands, shares gym

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YOUR CITY

If all goes as planned, the Calgary French and International School's graduating class of 2009 will be trilingual.

French and Spanish are already offered at the private school and in a few years, Chinese dialects such as Mandarin are being added as part of a growing immersion plan to turn out savvy grads skilled in languages and cultural sensitivity.

There are other big changes for the private school. On Dec. 17, the school received a \$125,000 cheque from the Community Facility Enhancement Program to build its new gym.

The \$12 million campus, being built at Old Banff Coach Rd. and 77th St. S.W. by next fall, will share its gym with the community — the first joint-use facility in the area.

The school, which is leaving its former Glenmore and Crowchild Trail location, fills a niche for new community neighbours in Cougar Ridge and West

Springs because the area lacks a community facility.

"We're sharing our gym and playing field, which is kind of good news to the community," said school president Donna Finley, adding plans have been in the works for the past three years as the school expands.

"Alberta Economic Development's research shows that China is going to be our major trading partners in four or five years," said Finley.

The 33-year-old private school, which changed its name this past fall, is basing its future curriculum expansion on market research that shows the city is looking for alternative languages such as Chinese, German and Spanish, she said.

"Calgary commerce goes north to south as well as into China."

Currently, there are a dozen children enrolled in Spanish, and the 415-pupil school expects to expand its pre-school to Grade 7 classes to offer the eighth grade next year, according to parent volunteer Brigitte Moore.

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