



Synergy in Spaces

Vaulting over the Challenges of Capital Project Development in Today's Landscape



Lloydminster Catholic School Division

Board Chair: Paula Scott
Director of Education: Nigel McCarthy

GOAL OF PROGRAM:

To ensure new student spaces continue to develop and serve the needs of students in a growing community.

Two years ago, the Lloydminster Catholic School Division Board of Education recognized that while growth in schools is continuing at 7% per year, Capital Budgets have been curtailed in order to ensure the health of Provincial finances. Recognizing this dual pressure, the Board focused on developing a space that would put LCSD Capital Reserves to work in serving the needs of students while ensuring sustainable use of the Facility to pay for operating costs.

“We were faced with the same problems that all Public Schools have faced in times of austerity, but this time we were determined to do it differently. We wanted to use this time to engage our community in creative solutions for development.”



What the LCSD Board has achieved is a model to ensure operating costs are covered by community partnerships, while creating a fully utilized, state of the art facility to accommodate growth in the number of students we serve.



This partnership has involved the Board working with a number of community groups and the Ministry of Education over the last two years. The **Synergy Vault - Home of the Raiders** is the result.

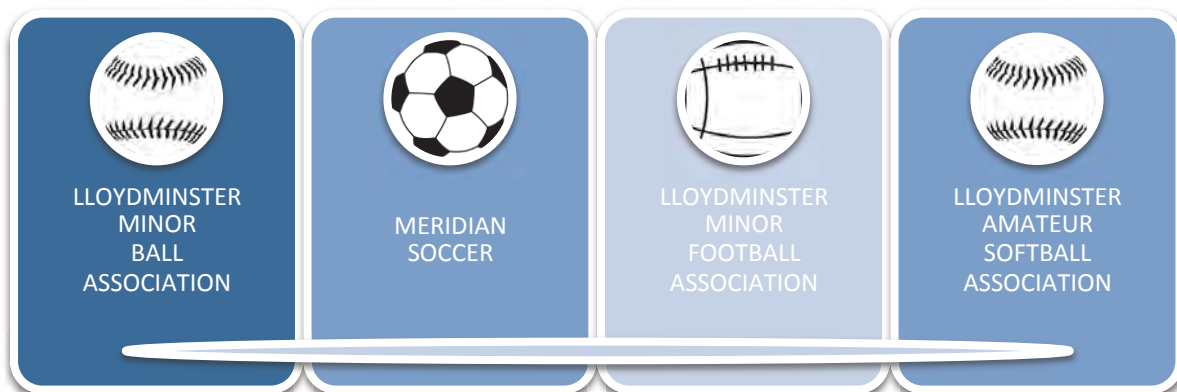
The Synergy Vault is a two-station gymnasium specializing in baseball, soccer, football and softball. A covered 23,000 square foot artificial turf field affords a space for Physical Education classes from schools where gym space is limited. This removes rental and transportation costs from the Board and ensures that cutbacks in offerings do not occur despite utilization rates in excess of 125% at the High School Level.



Board negotiated partnerships have been the centerpiece of success. The City of Lloydminster, the Board's first partner, agreed to provide the land for this development out of its reserves. Synergy Credit Union invested seed money of nearly \$400,000 into the project. Capital Reserves were moved from the balance sheet to complete the remainder of the development. At each step in negotiation, the Board of LCSD sat at the table and designed a solution that the Ministry of Education, City of Lloydminster, Synergy Credit Union, and the entire community could support.



In order to ensure sustainability, in the form of unfunded operating costs, the Board approached and founded partnerships with four community groups. This ensures continuous operational funding for the Synergy Vault. The Board of Education Partners in this development include:



Each of these partners is able to expand their programs to a full year schedule as a result of the Synergy Vault. The development extends the season for each sport in Lloydminster and promotes healthy lifestyles for our children. Student Achievement is promoted by opening enough classes so that all students can access Physical Education programs.

This innovation does not end with our high school students. Elementary schools are also gearing up to make use of the facility for specialty sport instruction. As Principal Lisa Kreesse recently put forward, “We are excited about the idea that students from our elementary schools will be able to play in a covered stadium. Where else in Saskatchewan, can children as young as 6 years of age have access to a ‘field of dreams’ without renting in the middle of a prairie winter. This is where the innovations made by our community really impact all of our children.”



Principal Vince Orioux has fostered student coaches for 10 years through the Little Raiders program in Lloydminster, and already has ideas of how working with elementary students from across the Division will continue develop students into leaders. “Our classrooms at Holy Rosary High School are ultimately about building citizens and the Synergy Vault will allow us to build on this tradition, and additionally support primary education.”

This two-station gymnasium is the single most expensive classroom built in the Province of Saskatchewan thus far. Typically, these developments cost 4-5 million dollars. This does not include the \$60,000 annual operating costs over the life of the building. At half of this cost and with committed community use, the Synergy Vault will achieve cost neutrality for the Board of Trustees. Savings of \$20,000 per year are added back into instructional dollars given that bussing and rentals have been eliminated by the development. This while accommodating up to 10 classes of instruction per day with no net operational cost. “With the understanding that our buildings sit idle 160 days per year, and most evenings and weekends, it allowed us to develop a business case to ensure full use of the Facility. This giving students in our entire school system the opportunity to use an indoor field for an athletics classroom,” said Paula Scott, LCSD Board Chair. “This thinking is not limited to a sportsplex. Laboratories and trades facilities could be seen in this light as the future unfolds for Saskatchewan. All it takes is the will to form partnerships.”

The Board's vision, now achieved, was to wed community needs to school design spaces. Through this process, the Board Chair, Paula Scott, Vice Chair, Michelle Rusteika, along with the Director and CFO of LCSD have worked directly with community coaches and teachers.



Many LCSD coaches and educators supported the design of the turf so it would fit Physical Education courses but also suit specific sports offered in our Division. Luke Kuypers explained, "From day one, the development team has been very involved in how to best accommodate every aspect of every school's needs into a versatile and unique facility. As a new teacher, I was very pleased helping with the customization of the field, which included applying Pythagorean's Theorem to determine the baseball dimensions and informing my math class at the time, 'When I was your age I never thought I'd have to use the Theorem either but here I am, using it to calculate field dimensions for our



baseball program." From building, to the designs, and to use- there is no end to the educational opportunities the Synergy Vault offers our community."

The Synergy Vault is a joint use model for the future. It portrays a vision where School Division capital reserves can be put to work for students while sustaining shared costs for Boards of Education, cities and community athletics.

As the lead for this project, the Lloydminster Catholic School Division Board of Directors proudly and respectfully submits the development of the **Synergy Vault** for your consideration in the 2017-2018 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education.

As Paula Scott, Board Chair of the Lloydminster Catholic School Board said, *“Without community partners, the vision of the **Synergy Vault: Home of the Raiders** would not have become a reality. Our work over the last two years shows that schools, sport organizations and the Business community can provide youth with the best in programming, while ensuring that our investment in education is never idle.”*

