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Halifax students visit jobsite for construction primer

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DARTMOUTH, N.S. — Grade 6 students from Holland Road Elementary School in Halifax got a glimpse into the world of building and construction when they visited the Ikea construction site in nearby Dartmouth Crossing recently.

The idea came about after Rene Cox, chairman of the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS) board of directors and vice-president Atlantic of Bird Construction, had a conversation with his daughter's teacher at Holland Road about the importance of educating children at an early age about the opportunities available in the industry, states a release.

"As industry professionals and parents, I think there is opportunity to take a more active role in helping kids connect their learning to real life practice," said Cox in a statement. "I am passionate about informing our kids how exciting and rewarding the construction industry can be. There are so many dynamic career opportunities in this industry it could make your head spin."

In advance of the site visit, students were asked to complete a homework assignment that allowed them to calculate various material quantities and construction cost estimates.

"This initiative engages students and educates them about the various aspects of the construction industry and how it relates to the work they are completing in school," said Duncan Williams, president of CANS. "At this age, kids are learning about concepts, critical thinking and problem solving, and this exercise allows them to apply what they are being taught to a real construction project."

Williams added, "It is never too early for kids to explore opportunities in skilled trades, project management, engineering, etc. Even if they don't want to actually participate in the building process, there are plenty of opportunities to work in the industry as an accountant, designer, human resource professional, lawyer, estimator, architect, safety officer — the field is wide open. It is an amazing industry that is constantly evolving and changing."

After the site tour, students gathered in a site trailer for an educational session on BIM (Building

Information Modeling) 3-D computer technology as well as a crash course in safety principles on a construction site.

Glenn Wells, the Grade 6 teacher at Holland Road, attended the site visit with his students.

"During this exercise, students were exposed to a variety of topics they are currently learning about, like technology and math, but also had the opportunity to explore green energy, mapping and other elements that go into the building of a construction site," he said. "It is a great learning experience that opened their eyes to future jobs they can explore."
