

Kitsilano Renewal Committee
Kitsilano Secondary School
2550 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 2J6

12 March, 2008

Mr. Gordon Campbell, MLA
Vancouver-Point Grey
3615 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1P2

Dear Mr. Campbell MLA:

Re: Kitsilano Secondary School and the Seismic Mitigation Program

The future of Kitsilano Secondary School is of major concern to many parents whose children attend this school, as well as many members of the surrounding community. The Seismic Mitigation Program has not quieted our concerns, only intensified them. The process of establishing and deciding on options for renovating our existing school, or building its replacement, is one which has proven to be difficult.

We applaud the initial work of the Friends of Charles Dickens and the parents of students at General Gordon Elementary, two groups who are advocating for a re-working of the feasibility study process in order to provide real options for renewal. Like these groups, we believe that the determination of options for renewed schools needs to integrate many issues other than and including the issue of seismic upgrading. We advocate for a process which considers the best practices in preservation, retention and renewal of our historic resource. Design and architecture should not be an afterthought to education planning, but rather a real constituent in the consideration of any building renovation or replacement. This requires innovative thinking and a vigorous inquiry into the possible, not a poverty mentality of what is most expedient.

We fully support the Vancouver School Board's letter to the Minister of Education, dated February 21, 2008. This letter has asked for 'clarification and consideration for change to the current facility area and funding standards.' We feel these issues to be critical in solving some of the problems with the seismic mitigation process. We thank the Board for its efforts.

Kitsilano Secondary acts as a collective hub of education and community identity. This icon in the neighborhood reflects both a history of development and a place of education in the community. The building presently stands as a symbol of a rich past and a promising future. As we all move into a new economy of 'alternatives', our building can invigorate a movement toward sustainability, while embracing our mutual histories and hopes.

In addition to all the concerns raised about the overall process leading to renewal options, the Kitsilano Renewal Committee has concerns particular to our site:

- the absence of any value assigned to the existing school building as a community and historic resource.
- a lack of concern for the continuation of existing adult and youth education programs
- current inadequacy of space allocations sufficient to house what exists now and/or what could be required in the future.
- the lack of funding for Green technologies to ensure an environmentally responsive and responsible building, be it renovated or new. Funding for LEED Gold schools should be a part of the funding formula, not carried as a contingency.

We, the larger Kits community, embrace all that is desirable in a vibrant community. This must include quality education for our youth as well as enriching programs for the larger community. Articulating an open community process to renew this most valuable of community resources will be a benefit to the long term future of our neighborhood, city and province.

Sincerely,

per.
Kitsilano Renewal Committee, chair J. Burton
Kitsilano Parent Advisory Council