



## Vancouver Board of Education Educational Facilities Review

### **We have some proposals for the UBC to Dunbar Street Study Area.**

Since 2005, the Vancouver Board of Education has been reviewing school facilities to find ways to improve its ability to serve the educational needs of its communities. This has led to some proposals for change that we would like to have your reaction to. These changes will affect:

1. Educational Priorities - the quality and variety of programs and services offered in schools;
2. Financial Sustainability – the financial management of district assets and revenue;
3. Seismic Safety– the physical security and improvement of our buildings.

The opportunities arising from this review could include two new schools, expanded opportunities for students to attend a broader neighbourhood of schools, an increased opportunity to enroll in French Immersion programs and, potentially, a wider range of learning experiences available to students. These opportunities will not be realized, however, without some adjustments, including the possibility of temporary dislocation of some students and the possibility of a school closure.



### **Our schools have purposes and possibilities: Neighbourhoods of Learning in a Network of Learning**

We believe our financial resources should be committed to students, not empty spaces. We believe all our school buildings must be safe, dynamic and healthy places to learn. We also believe our schools must be distinct, vital, accessible places of learning within a common neighbourhood of learning which is also part of a broad, citywide and global network of learning. This means that we want students to have more options to choose programs that provide access to schools in their neighbourhoods as well as access to a broader network of schools and programs in the district. We will talk more about this during our community consultations.

However, our schools must also offer programs that respond to community needs and reflect your expressed priorities. With that in mind we seek your opinions concerning the options to be contemplated.

### **Community Consultation: We are asking for your input.**

It is our intention that these proposals for change be discussed in a series of community meetings at schools within the UBC to Dunbar Street Study Area. By asking for your input, we promise your ideas and concerns will be heard and directly communicated in a report the Board will use in making its decisions. Your opinions will be weighed along with the district's educational goals, financial constraints and seismic requirements. Your input may directly influence the options the Board considers and affect the final decisions made on these matters.



## Why are we doing this?

### **Schools and programs should serve the educational priorities of its students and their communities.**

We believe students' learning must be supported in programs and spaces that reflect the best of what is possible and what is relevant. Currently, there are increased demands for French Immersion, and a desire for alternative options



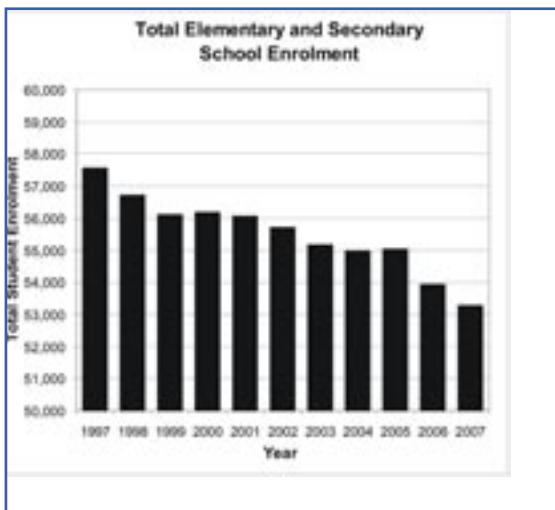
for elementary students. There is also a need to ensure equity of, and access to, educational opportunities across the district, and the possibility of expanding a young person's opportunities for learning within a broadened, common "neighbourhood of learning" like the UBC to Dunbar Street Study Area.

### **Protecting funding for students.**

Over the past five years, the Board has reduced its budget for staffing, supplies and services by \$34 million. Efficiencies must be found in every part of the school district's operations to minimize financial impacts on programs and services that directly affect students. School facilities must operate at peak efficiency so that necessary funds are spent in the classroom. Still, a significant part of our school district's budget goes towards operating schools. Apart from the normal instructional budget, it costs \$200,000 per year (or \$1,380 per space) to operate a typical annex, \$475,000 (or \$1,032 per space) to run a typical elementary school, and \$1.328 million (or \$910 per space) to operate a typical secondary school. Clearly there is an additional cost associated with operating smaller facilities which is not related to service, but rather simply the cost of keeping smaller sites open.

### **District enrolment is declining.**

The school district is not immune to the demographic shifts occurring in the city. Although the overall population of Vancouver is increasing, there are fewer school-age children. The population is aging, fertility rates have declined;



and households are smaller than they used to be. The total student (elementary and secondary) population has declined 7.5% (4,300 students) since 1997. Using enrolment projections from Census Canada, BC Statistics, and school district and city databases, it is expected that student enrolment will continue to decline until 2011 to about 52,500 students from over 57,000.

The decline in the city's school-age children means there is, and will continue to be, surplus space in many schools. The shift in demographics also means that schools are over capacity in some parts of the city and under capacity in others. In the UBC to Dunbar Street Study Area, University Hill Elementary and Secondary are operating above capacity (not enough space), while Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth Elementary are operating below capacity (empty spaces).

There are fixed costs involved in ensuring schools are properly maintained whether they are full or not. We believe that, especially in a period of declining student enrolment, as much available funding as possible should be focussed on supporting and extending student security and learning opportunities rather than paying for empty space.

The choice is simple: should we spend the money on students or empty spaces?

## **Our facilities must be earthquake safe.**

Another important reason the district is reviewing its facilities is that the school district is one of the oldest in the province with some of the oldest buildings. This means a number of schools do not meet current building earthquake standards. To address this, the government has implemented a program aimed at increasing the earthquake safety of schools – called the BC Seismic Mitigation Program. The funding in this program will be extended based on the district spending this money in a prudent fashion, taking into account where student spaces will be needed and fully used in the foreseeable future.

## **We must balance needs with opportunities.**

The seismic mitigation program can be a catalyst for rejuvenating schools. In this study area, Jules Quesnel, Queen Mary, University Hill Secondary, Queen Elizabeth Elementary and Queen Elizabeth Annex are all schools requiring seismic upgrading. This is an opportunity to take advantage of this government program.

The rapid development of the UBC lands has created an influx of students. The mid-campus and south-campus areas are being transformed into residential neighbourhoods. Currently, many of the elementary and secondary students living in this growing community are unable to attend a neighbourhood school and must travel to one of the surrounding schools. University Hill Secondary is operating above capacity and there are limitations for placing more portables on this site.

French Immersion programs in the UBC to Dunbar Street Study Area are in high demand. French Immersion programs at Jules Quesnel and Queen Elizabeth Annex have been operating above capacity for some time and students entering these programs are routinely wait-listed for admission. A review of programs is needed to see which programs most reflect the needs of this community.



## **We are facing some constraints**

Provincial government funding has been approved for a 350 space addition to University Hill Secondary. However, this project would not be the best solution for the educational and functional needs of the student population because the existing building would not easily be modified to meet the programming demands we have come to expect at the secondary level.

An existing UBC facility at W. 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and East Mall, which previously housed the National Research Council (NRC) could be available for development. The VSB is interested in renovating and converting this site into a public secondary school building, but needs to generate more funds to take advantage of the opportunity. A decision on how to use this site must be made no later than March 2008 to meet UBC's development timelines.

## **Proposals to Consider and Discuss**

These are the proposals and factors we want you to consider and discuss:

1. Renovate the vacant NRC site on the UBC campus to create a new secondary school. The cost of this preferred option exceeds the funding the Ministry of Education will provide for construction. The Ministry has said that the school district will have to make a financial contribution to build the school.
2. The majority of students (currently 81) who attend Queen Elizabeth Annex are enrolled in its French Immersion Program. French Immersion students are drawn from a larger catchment area. Therefore, this district program could be accommodated at schools in this area.

Currently, there are 48 students who are enrolled in the regular English program at Queen Elizabeth Annex. Of this group, 24 reside in other elementary school catchment areas and 24 English program youngsters live within the Queen Elizabeth catchment area.

It is proposed that Queen Elizabeth Annex be closed, its current student enrolment accommodated in neighbouring schools, and the property sold.

3. Convert the existing University Hill Secondary building into a new elementary school at UBC.
4. Consider options for French Immersion or other “choice” programs at Jules Quesnel, Queen Elizabeth Elementary and the proposed new elementary school at UBC. These programs of choice could be ones that reflect the aspirations and wishes of the community - programs such as an Elementary School of Arts.
5. Consider downsizing the schools which are scheduled for seismic improvements; e.g. Queen Mary Elementary.

## A Process of Consultation

A consultation process involving parents, employees, education partners and the general public will begin this month to discuss the district’s proposals.

Public consultation meetings will be held at 7pm on the following dates at these schools:

<b>January 14, 2008</b>	<b>University Hill Secondary</b>	<b>2896 Acadia Road</b>
<b>January 15, 2008</b>	<b>Queen Mary Elementary</b>	<b>2000 Trimble Street</b>
<b>January 16, 2008</b>	<b>Lord Byng Secondary</b>	<b>3939 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>
<b>January 17, 2008</b>	<b>Jules Quesnel Elementary</b>	<b>3050 Crown Street</b>
<b>January 21, 2008</b>	<b>University Hill Elementary</b>	<b>5395 Chancellor Boulevard</b>
<b>January 22, 2008</b>	<b>Queen Elizabeth Elementary</b>	<b>4102 West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>

As well, an “Open House” will be hosted from 10 am-2 pm on:

<b>January 19, 2008</b>	<b>Lord Byng Secondary</b>	<b>3939 West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>
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Consultation meetings regarding a possible school closure are scheduled for 7pm on:

<b>January 29, 2008</b>	<b>Queen Elizabeth Annex</b>	<b>4275 Crown Street</b>
<b>February 6, 2008</b>	<b>Queen Elizabeth Annex</b>	<b>4275 Crown Street</b>

If you are unable to attend any of the public consultation meetings, you can submit your ideas and suggestions in other ways:

1. Online at [www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca);
2. Send letters to c/o Office of the Secretary-Treasurer, Board of Education District #39 (Vancouver), 1580 West Broadway, Vancouver BC V6J 5K8 Fax 604-713-5049
3. Make a presentation to the Board of Trustees at meetings scheduled for February 11 and 12 at 7pm, VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway. Contact the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer @ 604-713-5286 to register as a delegate to present to the Board. Registration is not required to attend this meeting, however.

**Deadline for all submissions is February 15** to allow time for a report to be prepared for the Board’s consideration March 5 and final decision March 11.

