



June 23, 2010

### **School Closure Notification List**

In her Report to the Minister of Education, the Comptroller General made a number of observations with regard to our facilities and recommended that, “the VSB revisit school closures” (p.43). The report stated that, “Funds (saved through closure and consolidation) can be re-directed to educational programs and services to support the learning environment where they are most needed. As well, closing a school enables the district to relocate alternative programs to the vacant site thereby reducing leasing costs. In addition, closing schools could potentially create more revenue opportunity from lease or rental. Finally, smaller schools with low enrolment may be detrimental to learning. They may lack the resources, specialized assistance and economies of scale found within larger schools that results in a higher quality learning environment” (p.60).

These findings resulted in the following recommendations:

- That VSB review and assess the Garibaldi School community plan \*\*
- That VSB consider closing schools, followed by consolidation, where it is warranted by enrolment and capacity data, and where it is clear that the educational fit and physical condition of the building are no longer useful

According to the Special Advisor’s report, “using information from the district wide facilities audit, the DMT identified five schools for closure with a combined savings of \$1.68 million per year. Rationales included enrolment figures, location, physical condition, adjacent schools and other issues” (p.60).

Our current policy requires pre-notification of schools to be considered for possible closure. This in effect precludes adding schools to the *same* list after the fact. There are various reasons and degrees of support for any of the schools to be included on the preliminary pre-notification list. The initial list provides the district with some flexibility in allowing further analysis of conditions, context and longer-term strategy. The final decision to remove schools from the list and ultimately choosing which, if any schools will proceed to the next step and perhaps, ultimately be closed, will be based on a more thorough and comprehensive review of the data with full consultation as per the policy. It is within the purview of the Board to make this decision. It is also the Board’s prerogative as to whether or not to add or remove schools from the original pre-notification list. Staff will need a minimum of 60 days within the policy to review the potential school closure list and provide an administrative report to the Board on the named schools. Given the more detailed administrative report, the Board may at that point determine, which schools should proceed to the next step in the closure consultation process. At the conclusion of the process, the Board may also decide to postpone or name a later date for the closure of identified schools as it has done previously with Garibaldi Annex.

The EFR: *Neighbourhoods of Learning within a Network of Learning* report (June, 2009) and the earlier EFR report (June, 2007) should serve as useful background reports to the Board.

In addition, the following information will be useful:

- Current capacities/utilization
- Current and projected enrolments for next year (and 5 years, 10 years & even 15 years out)
- Capacity/utilization and projections for neighbouring schools
- In catchment, out of catchment numbers - and where students come from when out of catchment and where students go to when leaving the catchment
- Enrolment and other data on specialized programs including French Immersion
- Projected need for space for full day Kindergarten (and potential programs for 3/4 year olds)
- Updated numbers re: operational savings associated with closure

Other factors such as facility age and condition, community impact, educational impact, alternative uses, proximity to neighbouring schools and possible revenue opportunities will also be required.

In conjunction with consolidation and closure of schools, staff seeks direction to proceed with a consultation process to reconfigure Britannia into a K-12 school with the addition of a mini-school with an Aboriginal focus. This step will enable greater opportunities for multi-graded, multi-age programs, cross grade sharing and fewer transitions. It will also enable a greater focus on providing strong educational support and interest for students within the proposed mini-school.

Consideration may also be given to the relocation and expansion of the Montessori program, which is one of the few “Choice” programs in the province to attract students from the private sector (Traditional schools, Fine Arts, High tech., and Academies being some of the others).

#### **School Closure Policy** (as attached)

Pursuant to the Vancouver Board of Education School Closure policy and regulations (FL and FL-R), district facilities should be regularly reviewed and assessed to ensure district resources are being utilized for efficient and effective delivery of educational programs and services. Schools may be considered for closure when such an assessment:

- a) Identifies that the students could reasonably be accommodated in other local schools, and
- b) Those students can be provided with access to appropriate educational programs

As outlined in the policy, the District Management Team is required to prepare a preliminary list of schools that might be considered for closure (“Potential Consideration of Closure Notice”). The notice must be posted on the VSB website and sent to the school principals and Parent Advisory Committees of each school on the list, at least two months’ prior to finalizing an administrative report to the Board.

The District Management Team must finalize an administrative report, which identifies schools recommended for consideration of closure. The administrative report would be presented to a joint meeting of Committee II - Planning & Facilities and Committee III – Education and Student Services.

If the joint committee supports consideration for school closure, then any recommendation(s) would be forwarded to the next available Board meeting for approval to proceed with a consultation process for schools to be considered for closure.

The Principals and PAC Chairs of the schools on the preliminary notification list have been informed. If approved by the Board of Trustees, this memo will be posted on the VSB website and copies will be sent to school principals and parent advisory councils of each school on the potential closure notification list.

## Notice – Schools for Potential Consideration of Closure

The Vancouver Board of Education hereby provides notice that the following schools will be assessed for potential consideration of closure:

- Bruce Elementary
- Carleton Elementary
- Champlain Heights Annex
- Collingwood Annex
- Dickens Annex
- Hudson Elementary
- Kerrisdale Annex
- Macdonald Elementary
- McBride Annex
- Queen Alexandra Elementary
- Seymour Elementary

\*\* The Board has already taken a position on the potential closure of Garibaldi Annex.

It is noted that the schools identified are mostly on the East side of Vancouver. However, a larger percentage of VSB schools are located East of Main Street and may be a function of greater density in the original formation of the neighbourhoods.

The Special Advisor also references an earlier recommendation to consider the closure of *Queen Elizabeth Annex* on the West side. She states that, "The recommended closure and disposal was disrupted due to the ministry's revised policy, *Disposal of Land or Improvements Order*, which limits the sale of schools to exceptional circumstances in order to preserve the capital asset base. Later it was decided by the school district to use the site as a single track French Immersion School" (p.60). The recommendation to close Queen Elizabeth Annex was included within the EFR June 2007 report. The district has also received requests from the Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) for space. In addition, the district has recently received a proposal from a group of developers for the redevelopment of one of our elementary school sites.

At this juncture, the Board has the discretion and may wish to add other schools to the pre-notification list of schools being considered for potential closure based on previous information and for future planning purposes.

### Next Steps

Within a minimum 60 days from issuance of this notice of potential consideration of school closure, the District Management Team will prepare an administrative report that recommends schools to be considered for closure, closure evaluation criteria, public consultation processes and school closure decision time-lines. It should be noted that if a school is considered for closure, the schedule for consultation will be organized that such a decision can be made no later than December 30, 2010, in order to permit a closure to occur for, at the earliest, the end of the 2010-2011 school year (June 30, 2011).

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT** the Board of Trustees approve the *Notice - Schools for Potential Consideration of Closure* outlined in this report dated June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 and direct the District Management Team to prepare a school closure administrative report, in accordance with School Closures Policy and Regulations (FL and FL-R).

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT** the Board of Trustees direct staff to initiate a consultative process to consider the reconfiguration of Britannia Elementary and Secondary schools into a K-12 school and further that a process be undertaken to consider the inclusion of a mini-school with an Aboriginal focus with an intended start of September 2011.

## **FL: School Closures - Formerly Retirement of Facilities**

Classification:  
F: Facilities Development  
Code:  
FL

The following process will be followed if schools are being considered for closure:

- The District Management Team will prepare a preliminary list of schools that might be considered for closure, and post that list on the VSB website to give affected parties advance notice of the consultation process that will apply if the Board decides to consider those or any other schools for closure
- An administrative report from the District Management Team detailing what schools are being considered for closure will be presented to a joint meeting of Board Standing Committee II - Planning & Facilities and Standing Committee III - Education and Student Services
- If consideration for closure is supported by the joint committee, then such recommendation will be forwarded to the next available Board meeting for decision
- Any school being considered for closure will be identified and notified
- Communication and consultation will include both the school community (staff, students and parents) as well as the general public
- Appropriate mechanisms will be provided within the consultation process to allow feedback from both the school community and the public prior to the decision on closure being made
- Any decision to close a school will be promptly communicated to both the school and the general public

The detailed steps, process and timelines for consideration of a school closure are contained in the companion Regulation **FL - R School Closure**.

This policy has been established by the Board of School Trustees (Board) and may not be changed except by approval of the Board.

This policy does not apply to temporary school closures pursuant to section 73(1)(b) of the *School Act* and section 3(2) of the *School Opening and Closure Order*.

## Exclusions

Nothing in this policy prevents early communication or consultation with schools, their community or the public on the ongoing planning work within the Vancouver School Board or in relation to its partners as may occur from time to time in the daily conduct of district business.

Responsibility: DMT

### Legal References:

School Act Sec. 92(1), 182 (2)(g)

### Cross References:

DFB: Revenues from School Owned Real Estate (pertains to the Board's options for dealing with surplus property); FLA\*: Annex Closures (rescinded May 2007); FLB\*: Secondary School Closures (rescinded May 2007); FLC\*-R: Re-opening School Facilities for Local Needs or District

### Adopted Date:

Monday July 09, 1979

### Revision Date:

Oct, 1979

Aug, 1990

May, 2007

[April, 2010](#)

## **FL-R: School Closures - formerly Retirement of Facilities**

Classification:

F: Facilities Development

Code:

FL-R

All district facilities are regularly reviewed and assessed to ensure they are being utilized for efficient and effective delivery of a comprehensive educational program and associated services. Any school may be considered for closure when such an assessment:

- (a) Identifies that the students could reasonably be accommodated in other local schools, and
- (b) Those students can be provided with access to appropriate educational programs.

### **Closure Process**

If a school is being considered for closure, then the following process will apply:

1. The District Management Team will prepare a preliminary list of schools that might be considered for closure, and publish that list (the "Potential Consideration for Closure Notice") on the VSB website and in a letter to the school principals and PACs of each school on the list, all at least two months' prior to finalizing an administrative report to the Board, to give affected parties advance notice of the consultation process that will apply if the Board decides to consider those or any other schools for closure.
2. At least two months after the Potential Consideration for Closure Notice has been posted, the District Management Team will finalize its administrative report detailing which schools it recommends to be considered for closure, and present the administrative report to a joint meeting of Board Standing Committee II - Planning & Facilities and Standing Committee III - Education and Student Services.
3. If consideration for closure is supported by the joint committee, then such recommendation will be forwarded to the next available Board meeting for a decision on whether to consider closing one or more of the schools recommended for closure in the administrative report.
4. Any school that the Board decides to consider for closure will be identified by name and the school so notified.
5. If consideration for closure is supported by the Board, then at least one public meeting is to be scheduled to allow communication and consultation prior to a final determination being made by the Board. At least 14 calendar days prior to the public meeting:
  - (a) notice of the public meeting(s) is to be posted on the VSB website
  - (b) notice is to be advertised in the appropriate local media
  - (c) at least one sign is to be posted at the main entrance to the school and at other appropriate locations to advise the school community and the public
  - (d) all signs are to be in the appropriate majority languages of the school community
  - (e) the school will provide written notification to the Parent Advisory Committee and parents of students enrolled at the school
6. Appropriate mechanisms will be provided within the consultation process to allow feedback from affected school communities, internal VSB stakeholders and the public prior to a final decision on closure being made. No less than fourteen (14) calendar days will be allowed for the receipt of responses following a public meeting.
7. The District Management Team will coordinate a consultation report summarizing the results of each public meeting to a joint meeting of Committee II and Committee III. The consultation report shall include, at a minimum:

- (a) a fair consideration of the community's input;
- (b) consideration of future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age and adults; and
- (c) consideration of possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

8. Additional consultation may be undertaken if the Board in its discretion determines that relevant circumstances are substantially different from those considered by the District Management Team.

9. Consultation will be re-initiated under Section 4 above if a school not named in the Potential Consideration for Closure Notice is proposed for closure in a consultation report.

10. Final decisions on a school closure will be made by the Board, and will include, without limitation, the considerations listed in Section 7 above. A decision to close a school will only be made by bylaw.

11. If the Board decides to permanently close a school, then the Board will, without delay, provide the Minister of Education with written notification of the decision and the school's name, facility number, address and the date on which the school will close.

12. A decision to close a school will be communicated to the school and the general public as soon as practical following the Board decision. The school will then ensure written notice is provided to the Parent Advisory Committee and parents of students enrolled in the school. The district will provide instructions to parents on relocation options for all students affected by a school closure.

#### Effective Dates for School Closures

If a school is being considered for closure, the schedule for consultation will be organized such that a decision can be made no later than December, permitting a closure to occur at the end of the current school year. This permits:

- (a) Notice to parents and the public prior to registration for the next school year (in January);
- (b) Actual school closures to take effect at the end of a school year (June 30);
- (c) Adequate time to notify other users of the school i.e. childcare, leases, rentals, summer school programs, etc;
- (d) If it is not practical to meet the above schedule, approval from the Board will be sought to permit closure to take effect over the winter break (December/January). In this case:
  - (i) The closure process as outlined above will be followed;
  - (ii) The schedule for consultation will be organized such that the final decision by the Board can be made no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year the school is closed; and
  - (iii) The school would not be opened after the winter break.

Responsibility: DMT

Legal References:

Bylaw No. 2 Disposition of school Board Property (rescinded May 2007)

Cross References:

FLA\*-R: Annex Closures (rescinded May 2007); FLB\*-R: Secondary School Closures (rescinded May 2007); FLC\* -R: Re-opening School Facilities for Local Needs or District Programs; FL -RE: School Closure formerly Retirement of Facilities

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