



# Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Thursday, June 24, 2010

Dear parents and guardians:

I am writing to you about the prospect of potential school closures following the 2010-11 school year.

Last evening, I delivered a report to trustees identifying a number of schools being considered for possible closure. Your child's school is among those receiving pre-notification for possible closure. The complete list includes:

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

Garibaldi Annex has also been identified for potential closure, and is scheduled to have its enrolment reviewed after September 2010 as part of an agreement reached with that school community in May 2008.

As you may be aware, trustees faced difficult financial decisions this spring, and last evening approved a budget that includes approximately \$16 million in spending reductions and eliminates 137 positions. We also received a report earlier this month from a government-appointed special advisor recommending we consider school closures to reduce our costs.

It is in this context that district management prepared a list of schools that trustees might consider for possible closure. The schools on the pre-notification list were selected because of a number of factors, including low enrolment, under utilization and the availability of space at neighbouring schools.

The pre-notification of schools is the first step in a process that may take six months to complete in order to provide for full consultation. The final decision to close schools will be based on a comprehensive review of several factors, including: school enrolment data; enrolment trends and projections; and an assessment of whether neighbouring schools can accommodate the students. Public input will also be received and considered through a consultation process that will involve public meetings at the schools being considered for closure.

This summer, district staff will conduct a thorough analysis of each school on the pre-notification list and prepare an administrative report to be delivered to trustees, likely in late

September or early October. Only then will trustees decide which, if any, of the schools on the pre-notification list will proceed to the public consultation phase in the closure process.

If a school is considered for closure, the schedule for consultation will be organized such that a decision can be made by trustees no later than December 31, 2010 in order to provide families at affected schools with sufficient notice that their child's school will close at the end of the 2010-11 school year.

I respect that the prospect of school closure will be unsettling for many families and that you will have many questions about what may happen. While I cannot offer all of the answers at this time, I can assure you that the school district is committed to conducting an open, and inclusive public consultation process. We will provide at least two weeks advance notice of consultation meetings, including notices placed on the VSB website, advertising in local media, signs posted at the school, and written notice sent home with students.

In the coming days, we will create a section on our website ([www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca)) to keep the public informed about the school closure process. The section will include related reports; links to the school closure process policy; status updates; decision timelines; and information about how to provide feedback and meeting notices when the public consultation process begins.

I understand that the prospect of potential school closure will weigh heavily on the minds of many during the next few months of summer, and it may be troubling for students who do not understand the financial pressures that our school district faces. It is for these reasons that I urge all to focus on celebrating the successes of the past school year and allow our staff and students to enjoy their well-deserved summer break.

There remains much work to be done in the coming months and there will be plenty of opportunity for public input in the fall before trustees make any decision about possible closures; the pre-notification list is by no means final. We will respect and value your input when the public consultation phase begins.

In the meantime, I wish all an enjoyable and restful summer.

Sincerest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Cardwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve Cardwell  
Superintendent of Schools

cc. Trustees  
Brenda Ng, Secretary Treasurer