

Consideration to close QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX

Backgrounder

Staff at the Vancouver School District have recommended [the Board of Education](#) (Board) consider the closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) school site by June 30, 2023. The Board has approved a public engagement process to gather community feedback on the proposed closure, in accordance with Board policy. The recommendation to close a school is not taken lightly and must be made in alignment with Board policy and informed by data. District staff have recommended this closure to the Board to ensure responsible use of resources to benefit all students while prioritizing education opportunities for Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) students.

Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) offers French immersion to Vancouver students in kindergarten to Grade 3. There are 71 students attending QEA. QEA is the feeder school to Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ), which offers K to 7 French immersion programming. As a District program, the Annex does not have a neighbourhood catchment, rather it enrolls students from across the District.

Should the Board decide to close QEA, staff propose that students could be relocated to either JQ or Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE).

CURRENT DISTRICT CONTEXT

Despite an overall increase in Vancouver's population, both the birth rate and the percentage of school-aged children continues to decline. In fact, enrolment in Vancouver schools has been declining since 1997. Over the 10 ten years, the District has seen approximately an 8.4 per cent decline in enrolment, representing approximately 4,400 fewer students. Current forecasts indicate further enrolment decline in the years ahead.

WHY IS QEA BEING CONSIDERED FOR CLOSURE?

RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES | QEA has high operating costs. Costs to operate QEA are 40 per cent higher (\$11,288 per student in 2019) than the provincial enrollment allocation of \$7,885 per student. Closing QEA would result in significant operational savings of between \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually, which could be re-allocated into programs and services supporting students across the District. Effectively managing District resources aligns with the recent Board approved [Education Plan](#), where the Board has made the commitment to *"improving stewardship of the District's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability."*

PRIORITIZING STUDENT LEARNING | District staff believe that there is greater educational benefit for students in a language program to be part of a larger community because it allows for more robust French programming, increases students' cultural experiences and enhance opportunities for teacher and student collaboration. Moving the French immersion program at QEA to JQ would also allow students to stay in one school from kindergarten to Grade 7, reducing one transition for QEA students, who currently continue their French immersion program at JQ from grades 4 to 7.

Bringing QEA students together with JQ or QE students allows them to be part of a larger school community within the [preferred school size range](#). This provides additional access to shared resources and supports for learners, as well as increased opportunities for staff collaboration.

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It is important to note that if this closure proceeds and the QEA students join a new school, their access to French immersion programming is protected. The proposed closure guarantees QEA students continued placement in French immersion. If QEA is closed, staff will work closely with the QEA community to ensure a successful transition to the new site.

The recommendation also considers other factors such as advancing the District's goal of having all students attend seismically safe schools, potentially generating significant capital revenue and resolving ongoing legal proceedings related to the QEA school site.

Visit govsb.ca/QEA for more details.

...continue below

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Policy requirements

As per Board policy 14 (School Closure), section 7, the following factors are provided for the public engagement.

Policy 14, 7.1.1: The number of students who would be affected, at both the school to be closed and surrounding schools

School	Enrolment - September 2021
Queen Elizabeth Annex	71
Queen Elizabeth Elementary	269
Jules Quesnel Elementary	356

Note: Students at other nearby catchment schools will not be affected if QEA is closed.

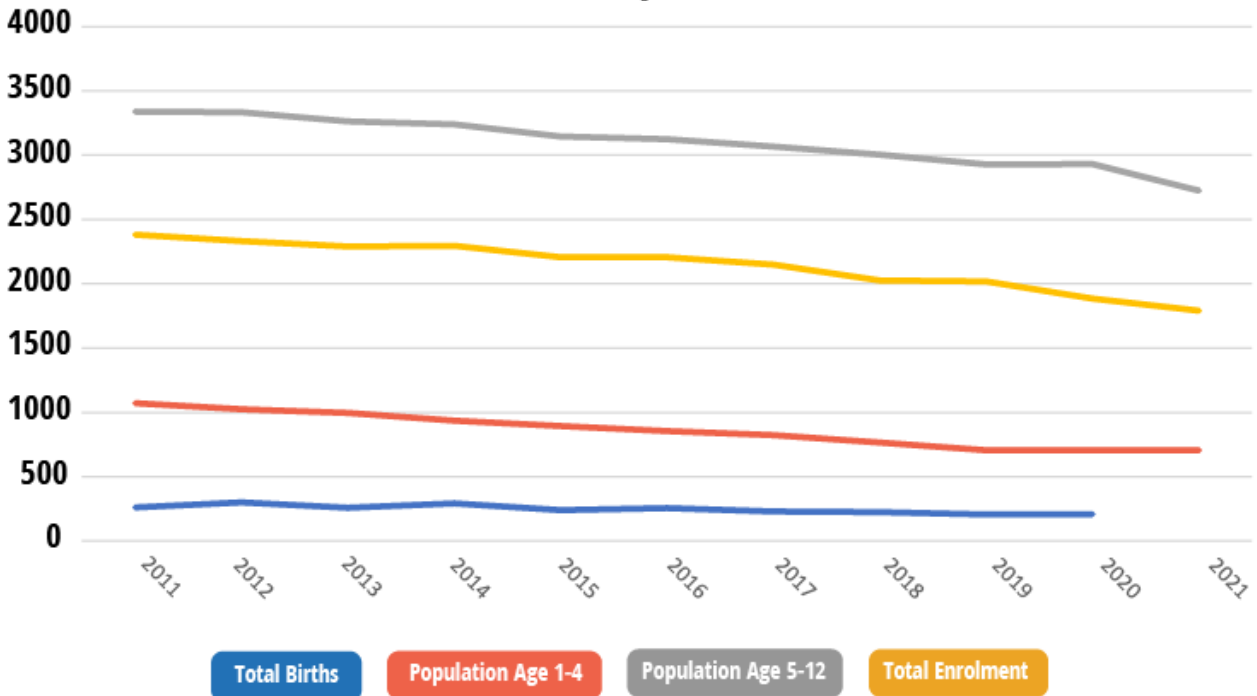
Policy 14, 7.1.2: Enrolment trends and utilization for the school and surrounding area

QEA is situated on the west side of Vancouver. Enrolment on the west side of Vancouver (west of Granville Street) has been declining for many years mirroring the decline in birth rate and youth population. Between 2011 and 2021 the number of births on the west side of Vancouver declined by 22 per cent. During the same period, the number of children aged 1 to 4 years declined by 41 per cent and the number of children in the 5 to 12 age group decreased by 28 per cent.

Enrolment has decreased by 25 per cent between 2011 and 2021 in the area, mirroring the estimated 28 per cent decline in youth population during the same time frame. Elementary schools in this region have surplus capacity and enrolment forecasts indicate that there will be additional enrolment decline in coming years.

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WEST SIDE BirthRate vs. Youth Population vs. Enrolment



Note: Data for total births in 2021 will be available in the fall of 2022

Based on declining enrolment in the area around QEA, staff do not foresee impacts to surrounding schools other than QE or JQ, should the Board decide to close QEA.

School Name	2021 Enrolment	Operating Capacity	Capacity Utilization	Enrolment Trend
Bayview Community Elementary	224	331	68%	Declining
Carnarvon Elementary	294	353	68%	Declining
Ecole Jules Quesnel Elementary	356	398	89%	Stable
Lord Kitchener Elementary	381	462	82%	Declining
Norma Rose Point Elementary	735	793	93%	Increasing
Queen Elizabeth Annex	71	98	72%	Stable
Queen Elizabeth Elementary	269	398	68%	Declining
Queen Mary Elementary	283	372	76%	Stable
Southlands Elementary	204	308	66%	Declining
University Hill Elementary	355	371	96%	Stable

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Note: JQ and QEA are stable in their enrolment trend because these schools only offer French immersion, a District choice program, where the catchment area is all of Vancouver. Families from across the city choose to travel to attend the District choice program.

Note: Enrolment trends at University Hill Elementary and Norma Rose Point Elementary are discussed under future developments

Policy 14, 7.1.3: Availability of space at receiving schools

If the Board decides to close Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA), staff are proposing to move students to either Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ) or Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE). Both JQ and QE have sufficient existing classroom space to accommodate all students from QEA.

Indoor space

Queen Elizabeth Elementary

QE has 18 classrooms as well as the following non-enrolling spaces: three resource rooms, a multipurpose room, a library, a gym, and a separate auditorium that is utilized as an additional gym space. There are many ancillary spaces available for use by area counsellors, and other school and district resource staff.

Jules Quesnel Elementary

JQ has 18 classrooms as well the following non-enrolling spaces: three resource rooms, a multipurpose room, a library, a computer room and a gym.

Outdoor Space

QEA, QE and JQ all have access to outdoor play space with natural surfaces, natural features, and play structures. Both QEA and QE have direct access to Pacific Spirit Regional Park lands. In addition to having their own dedicated outdoor play space at JQ, that school is connected with Byng secondary and shares outdoor field space with the secondary school.

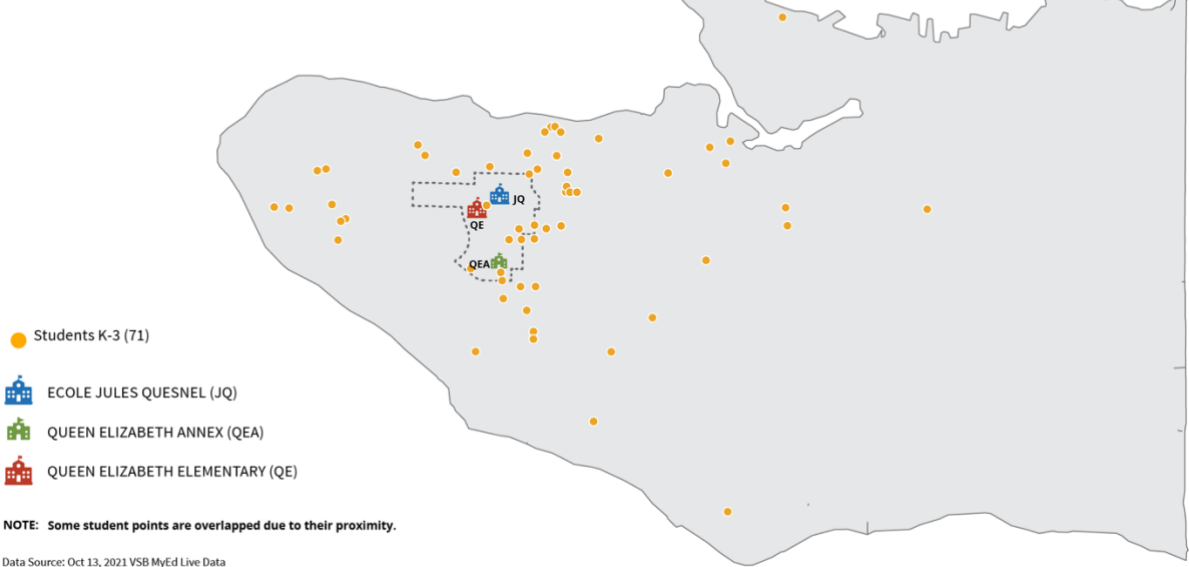
Location	Site Area	Notes
QEA	1.54 ha	Direct access Pacific Spirit Regional Park
QE	6.60 ha	Direct access Pacific Spirit Regional Park
JQ	1.16 ha	JQ site is connected to Byng secondary site, total site area is 3.67 ha. Byng students do not share the field with JQ students during recess or lunch.

Policy 14, 7.1.4: Proximity to possible receiving schools and the routes to schools

QEA offers French immersion, a District choice program, where the catchment area is all of Vancouver. The map below shows families from across the city choose to travel to attend the District choice program at Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA). As such, QEA is not considered a neighbourhood school in the sense that most students are travelling further to attend QEA than they would to attend their own catchment school.

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**QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX
Current Student Distribution**



Distance from QEA

It is about the same distance to Queen Elizabeth (QE) and Jules Quesnel (JQ) from QEA. The table below shows both schools are about one kilometre away from QEA. If the Board decides to close QEA and students relocate to JQ or QEA, staff will work with QEA families to identify safe walking routes with families. For students who are driven, take public transit or cycle, there would not be a significant impact in getting to QE in terms of commuting times given the proximity of the schools to each other.

Distance Between Schools

School 1	School 2	Distance
Queen Elizabeth Annex	Queen Elizabeth Elementary	1.3 km
Queen Elizabeth Annex	Ecole Jules Quesnel	1.2 km
Queen Elizabeth Elementary	Ecole Jules Quesnel	0.6 km

Policy 14, 7.1.5: Financial considerations including anticipated cost savings

Should the Board decide to close Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA), the District would realize substantial annual operating savings, which can be reallocated into programs and services supporting students across the District. See operational cost for more information.

Additionally, closing QEA will provide the option to the Board to consider using the site for other purposes. This is a separate process, as per [Policy 20 – Land Disposal](#). There has been serious interest from the Francophone public

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school board, CSF to acquire the site (through long-term lease or sale), which could generate significant revenue that could be used to support other capital projects such as building a new school, expanding an existing school or enhancing seismic projects from an upgrade to a replacement. Visit govsb.ca/QEA for more details about the potential future revenue.

Operational cost

Starting in 2020, the District undertook a detailed analysis of the average cost per student at each school in the region. The overall results of that analysis are available in the [VSB Preferred School Size Working Group Final Report](#).

The annual cost per student to attend QEA is \$11,288 (based on a 2019 analysis). This is approximately 40 per cent higher than the provincial enrollment allocation of \$7,885 per student.

School Name	Enrolment (2019)	Average Cost Per Student
Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA)	67	\$11,288
Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE)	295	\$9,079
Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ)	377	\$6,876

Closing QEA would result in significant operational savings of \$148,003 annually if students moved to QE, and \$295,604 annually if students moved to JQ. These funds could be re-allocated into programs and services supporting students across the District.

Option	Estimated Annual Savings
Consolidate Program at JQ	\$295,604
Relocate QEA students to QE	\$148,003

Furthermore, QEA is an older building with approximately \$2M in deferred maintenance. If the Board decides to close QEA, that amount will be avoided. Additionally, costs to maintain the building could be directed to support other District priorities.

Potential future revenue

Should the Board make the decision to close QEA, it could then make the decision to dispose of the land. Should the Board decide to dispose of the land, this could generate significant revenue that would support projects identified in the capital plan, such as building a new school at Olympic Village, expanding schools in the Cambie corridor, or enhancing seismic work at David Thompson Secondary or Grenfell Elementary. As per the capital plan instructions, the BC government expects all school districts to contribute up to 50 per cent of project costs for new school or expansion projects identified in the capital plan.

There is serious interest from [CSF](#) to acquire the QEA school site. However, any decision about future use of the school site must occur after the Board decides to close QEA. A separate engagement process with stakeholders and impacted groups would take place, after the Board decides whether to close the school. As outlined in [Policy 20 – Land Disposal](#):

“...prior to disposing of Real Property, the Board shall undertake, with stakeholders, local governments, community organizations and/or the public, such consultations as the Board may consider appropriate with respect to the Real Property involved. This consultation process shall include:

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2.1.1 Consideration of future enrolment growth in the School District, including K-12, adult programs and early learning;

2.1.2 Consideration of alternative community use of surplus space in school buildings and other facilities;

2.1.3 A fair consideration of the community's input and adequate opportunity for the community to respond the Board's plan for the Real Property.”

Policy 14, 7.1.6: Facility age and condition

The following information identifies QEA, JQ and QE seismic rating, Facility Condition Index (FCI), deferred maintenance costs, building accessibility and childcare space.

School	FCI	Deferred Maintenance	Seismic rating
QEA	0.69	\$2.6M	H3
JQ	0.07	\$0.68M	Low
QE	0.47	\$6M	H3

Note: A building's seismic safety is rated at high (H), moderate or low. There are three levels of high with H1 buildings having the most vulnerable structure.

Note: FCI is an industry benchmark used assess the current and projected condition of a building, with 1 being in critical condition and 0 in very good condition. FCI is a measure of depreciation and represents a future cost risk.

Queen Elizabeth Annex

QEA is a one-story school with six classrooms built in 1964. The school has an H3 seismic rating. A seismic upgrade for the school is not a prioritized project in the 5-year capital plan.

The school has significant deferred maintenance which results in a FCI rating of 0.69 (out of 1) from the most recent assessment conducted in 2020. The estimated deferred maintenance cost for QEA is \$ 2.6M.

Jules Quesnel

JQ is a three-storey building originally opened in 1926. A seismic upgrade of JQ was completed in 2011. A three-storey classroom addition, a two-storey gym and a multipurpose room were added to the school during the seismic upgrade project. The school shares a VSB-owned site with Lord Byng Secondary school and a Vancouver Park Board swimming pool. The Elementary school has direct access to a courtyard area, parking lot, playground equipment and a basketball court.

JQ consists of three sections, which have been seismically upgraded. The school has minimal deferred maintenance requirements, with a FCI rating for 2020 of 0.07, indicating a very good building condition.

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Queen Elizabeth Elementary

QE is a one-storey school built in 1940 that was added to in 1957 and 1967. There is a group of modular buildings located on school grounds, which are used, as required, as temporary accommodations for schools under construction due to seismic work.

Currently, Bayview elementary is temporarily staying on site at QE, and is scheduled to return to their new replacement school by summer 2022. There are no other schools scheduled to use QE as temporary accommodations at this time.

QE consists of eight sections and has an overall seismic rating of H3. The school has deferred maintenance which results in a FCI rating of 0.47 from the most recent assessment conducted in 2020. The estimated cost of deferred maintenance at QE is \$6.0M.

Policy 14, 7.1.7: District choice and special education programs offered at the school

QEA is the feeder school to JQ offering a District Early French immersion program. Currently, QE students leaving QEA in Grade 3 move to JQ in Grade 4. Should the Board decide to close QEA and students are relocated to QE, Grade 3 students will continue to move to JQ in Grade 4, as per current practice. Should the Board decide to close QEA and students are relocated to JQ, the entire Early French immersion program will be consolidated at one school.

Policy 14, 7.1.8: Impacts on surrounding schools

As a result of declining enrolment in the surrounding area, students at other nearby catchment schools will not be impacted, other than QE or JQ depending on the final decision about the relocation of QEA students, should the Board decide to close the school.

Policy 14, 7.1.9: Impacts on community users operating in the schools offered at the school.

If QEA is closed there will be no impact on community users operating at the site. Currently there are no community users renting the school site.

There is no out-of-school care at QEA.

Bayview pre-school currently operates at QEA on a temporary basis until the Bayview seismic project is complete in summer 2022. Should the Board decide to close QEA, the closure will occur in 2023, a year after the Bayview pre-school operator is scheduled to leave the site.