

February 11, 2026

TO: Finance and Personnel Committee

FROM: Senior Team

RE: Three-Year Enrolment Projections

*Reference to
Education Plan*

GOAL: Goal 2: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by:

OBJECTIVE:

- Improving stewardship of the District's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of projected enrolment for the next three years. Every year, the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC) requests that school districts provide a three-year enrolment projection for the purposes of projecting operating grant requirements. Attached are the enrolment projections for the years 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29 which will be submitted to MECC (Attachment A).

ENROLMENT PROJECTION ASSUMPTIONS

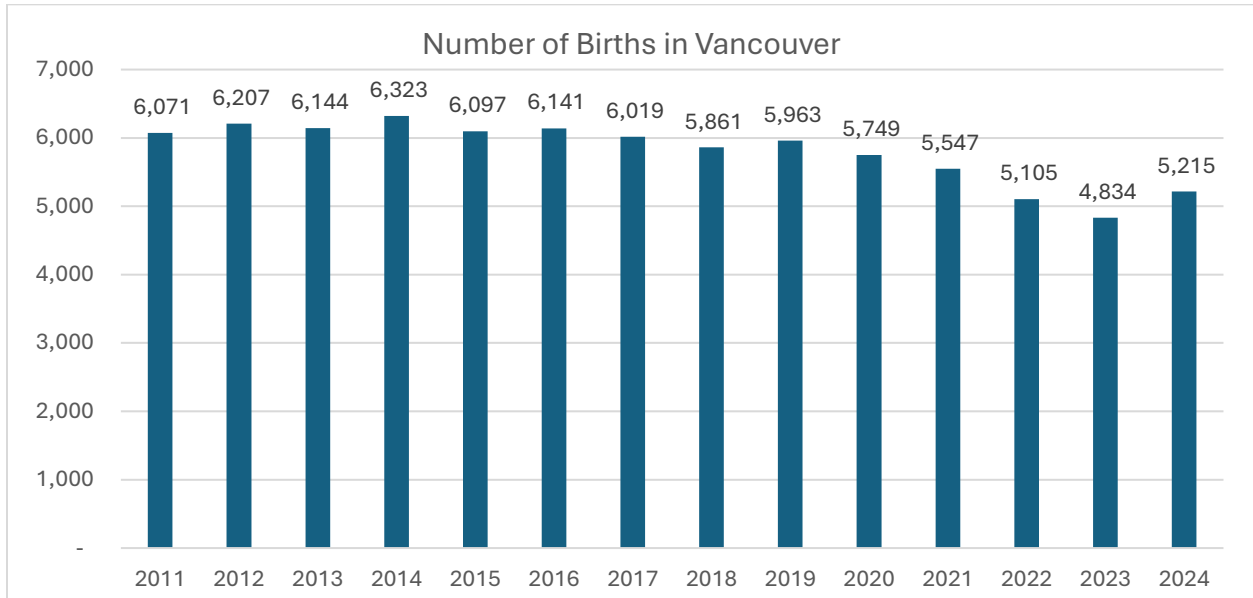
The three-year headcount enrolment projections for students enrolled in regular K-12 schools were prepared using the following data:

- population projections generated by Baragar Systems (enrolment projections software);
- grade to grade transition rates; and
- local knowledge of recent and historical enrolment trends.

Births

Historic changes in the number of births can be a major factor impacting past, present, and future enrolments. Since reaching a peak of 6,323 in 2014, the number of births to residents of Vancouver has generally been trending lower. In 2023, there were approximately 4,930 births in the District, a figure which has trended down over the past 10 years. In 2024, there were 5,215 births, an increase of 285, breaking the downward trend.

It is unclear whether this one-year increase reflects the start of a new upward trend, or if future births will stabilize or decrease further. For example, in 2019, births also increased, but the trend remained downward when considering a longer time horizon before and after that year. As smaller births cohorts enter school and progress through the grades, replacing larger cohorts, lower total enrolments could be expected in the future.



Kindergarten

As of January 28, 2026, there were approximately 3,231 verified Kindergarten applications. There will be fluctuations in this figure through September 2026. The number of actual kindergarten applications for 2026-2027 is trending in a similar way to the 3,235 estimated Kindergarten students in the Baragar modeling.

As births decreased from 2019 to 2023, there is a general decrease experienced in the resultant Kindergarten enrolment 5 years later. The recent decrease in births is generally expected to be seen in Kindergarten enrolment levels until 2028 when the 2024 births may indicate some stabilization or increase in incoming cohort size, which will be observed as the subsequent birth-cohort size is monitored. It is important to note that migration both in and out of the district can occur at any time, and although it is a strong indicator, the birth cohort is not exactly the same students that become the incoming Kindergarten cohort at age 5.

Migration

The net impact of youth moving in and out of the School District is a major factor impacting enrolment projections.

Between 2008 and 2022, there was a consistently negative migration rate, with an average of 860 fewer children residing within the District each year (-1.2%). However, over the last 3 years the Migration has been essentially neutral. Future assumptions around migration will be impacted by assumptions around immigration and the affordability of housing.

Impact of Changes to Immigration Policy

Through its [Levels Plan](#), the Federal Government has developed broad initiatives over 2026-2028 to recalibrate the immigration system to what it deems as sustainable levels. It represents significant policy shifts towards supporting the immigration of targeted skilled workers, their families, and refugees, as well as transitioning those who are already in Canada with needed skills and experience to permanent residence status.

The Plan sets a goal of reducing Canada’s temporary population to less than 5% of the total population by the end of 2027¹, after non-permanent residents (NPRs) peaked at 7.4% of the population in 2024.² The Federal targets for new temporary resident arrivals represent 37% fewer temporary workers and 49% fewer students compared with 2025 targets.³ This is expected to significantly affect the composition of Vancouver’s population over the upcoming years, since NPRs are disproportionately higher in B.C. compared to the share of the national population.⁴

In 2023, Metro Vancouver released its long-term Regional Growth Strategy, Metro 2050, which provides population projections to assist in managing future growth in the region. There have been significant revisions to these population projections – in 2024 they were increased due to the sharp rise in actual immigration numbers, and in 2025 they were adjusted downward to reflect the Federal government’s immigration policy changes. Metro Vancouver’s 2025 population projection revisions indicate an annual average of 42,500 net new residents to Metro Vancouver in 2025-2027, down from 50,000 in 2024.⁵ Metro Vancouver’s estimates assume the region captures 9.9% of the national NPRs; therefore, the annual net change in NPRs is expected to be negative in 2025-2026, at a rate consistent with the national targets in the Levels Plan.⁶

Year over year, there has been a 20% reduction in total newcomer registrations in the District compared to last year. Over the next two years (2026-2027 and 2027-2028), the total number of newcomer registrations is likely to decline even further. As the decline is mostly attributable to declining NPRs, the total number of refugee registrations is expected to be minimal.

Capture Rate

The capture rate is the proportion of VSB students compared to all children aged 5 to 17 residing in the VSB boundary. For the purpose of this study, the projections assume a capture rate similar to recent prior years.

MECC FUNDED STUDENT ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

For standard school age and adult enrolment, both MECC and VSB projections are anticipating a decrease in the 3-year projections, although MECC is estimating the magnitude of the decrease may be about 400 students more than the VSB estimates by 2028-2029. Estimates for continuing education, alternate programs, summer learning, and online learning are estimated to remain stable over the next few years, in both MECC and VSB modeling.

Inclusive Education estimates from VSB show a decrease in Level 1 and Level 3 funded students based on a combination of the existing cohorts and the average growth rate of cohorts, where applicable. Both estimations project a continued increase in Level 2 funded students, although MECC projections show a substantially higher amount of Level 2 funded students, particularly by 2028-2029.

¹ [Canada’s immigration levels - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/news/2024/04/canada-immigration-levels-2024.html)

² [The Daily — Canada’s population estimates, first quarter 2025](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canada-population-estimates-2025-1.7048488)

³ [Canada’s immigration levels - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/news/2024/04/canada-immigration-levels-2024.html)

⁴ [quarterly population highlights.pdf](#)

⁵ [Regional Planning Bulletin - October 2025](#)

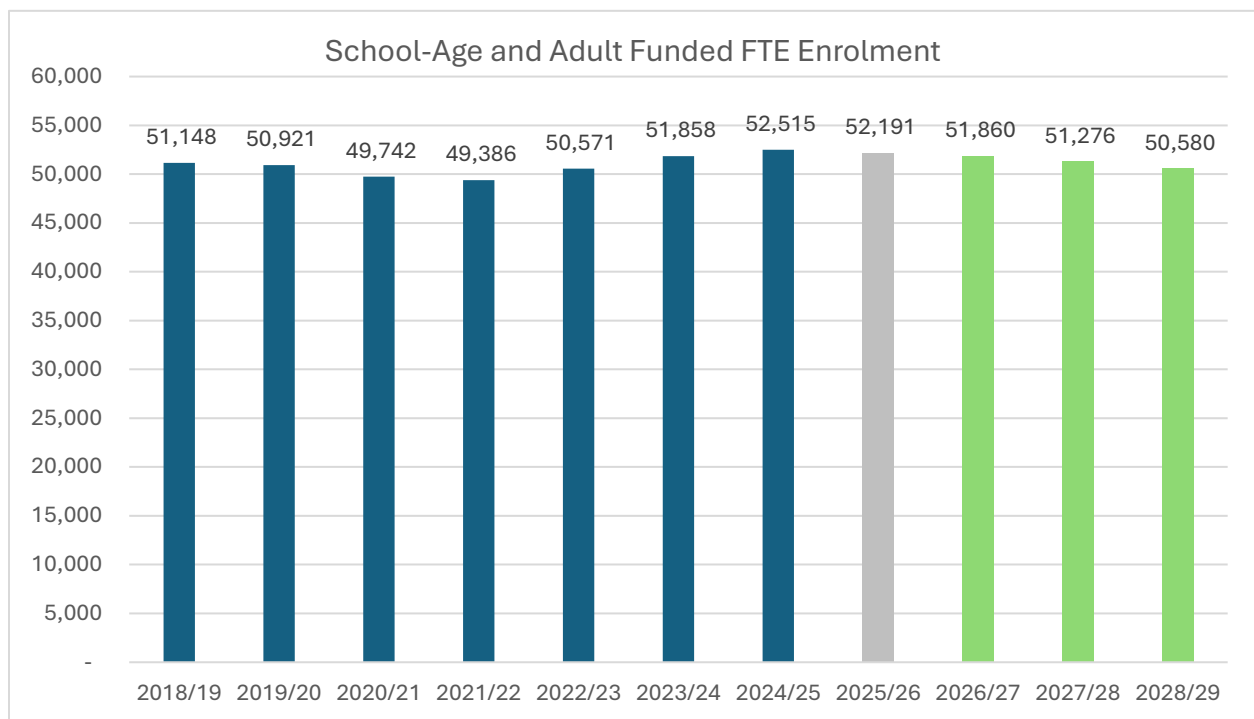
⁶ Data and Assumptions Provided by Sinisa Vukicevic, Program Manager, Metro Vancouver Regional Planning and Housing Services

Major categories of student enrolment are detailed below. The enrolment information presented in this section is based on actual full-year enrolment for 2018/19 to 2024/25, actual enrolment for September 2025 and projected enrolment for February 2026, May 2026, 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29.

School Age and Adult Enrolment

The enrolment history for regular, alternate, online learning, continuing education, summer learning, and non-graduate adult learners is presented in the following chart. From 2018-2019 to 2025-2026, funded enrolment has increased by 1,053 full time equivalent (FTE) with a decrease observed between those periods.

From the 2025-2026 enrolment of 52,191, the total school age and adult funded FTE is initially estimated to decrease by 331 to 51,860 in 2026-2027, then further decrease to 51,276 in 2027-2028 and 50,580 in 2028-2029. Overall, school age and adult funded FTE are projected to decrease approximately 1,611 FTE over the next 3 years.



K-12 standard school (school age) + Continuing Education + Alternate Schools + Online Learning + Summer School.

Adult Education

VSB’s Adult Education Program enrolls both Non-Graduated and Graduated Adults, as well as students over the age of 16. School-age students in the Adult Program are working toward their BC Dogwood Diploma. Non-Graduated Adults are typically working toward their Adult Dogwood Diploma. Some Graduated Adults may be upgrading courses to support post-secondary applications or job requirements; however, the majority are English Language Learners enrolled in Literacy Foundations courses to support language acquisition.

Trends over the last several years indicate stable total enrolment, based on current program size and capacity. The program continues to have ongoing demand for classes and maintains waitlists for many courses. A key enrolment shift has been the increase in Graduated Adult enrolment and the decrease in

Non-Graduated Adults, however, over the next three years, total enrolment for all Adult learners is anticipated to remain consistent.

Online Learning

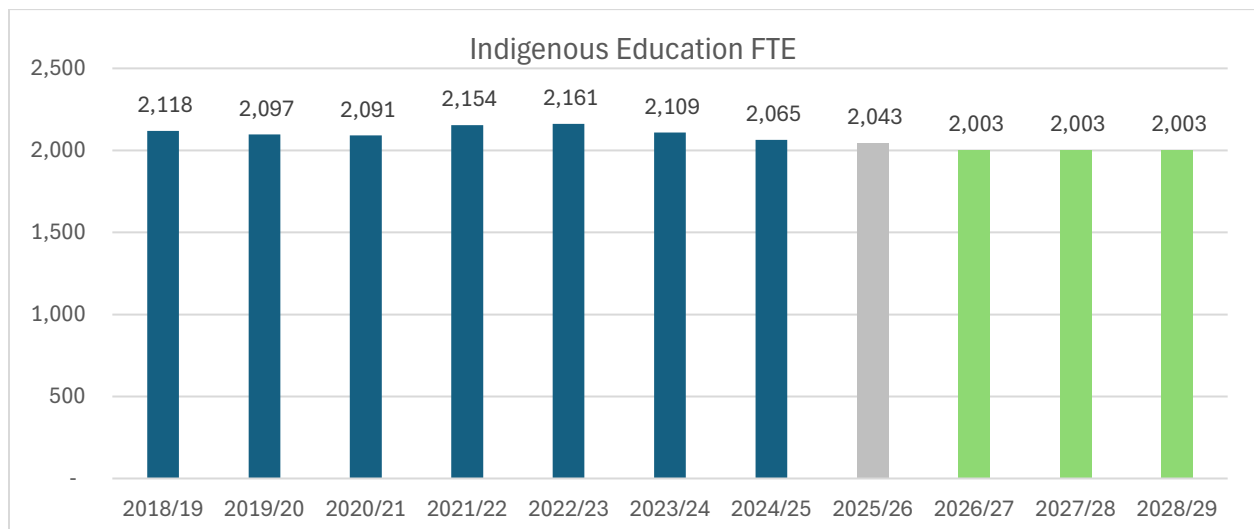
VSB offers online learning opportunities for K-12 students, Non-Graduated Adults, and Graduated Adults. Most online enrolments are from grades 10-12 students who are cross-enrolled between the Vancouver Learning Network (VLN) and their home schools, taking additional or upgrading courses to support graduation. Adult learners also enrol to complete graduation requirements, upgrade, or fulfill prerequisites for post-secondary opportunities. VLN enrolment has seen an increase in course enrolments for Grades 10-12 learners over the last several years and this trend is conservatively reflected in the three-year projections. VLN enrolment is closely tied to trends in secondary enrolment.

Summer Learning

VSB’s Elementary Summer Learning Program enrolls students from grades 1-7 in Ministry-funded, curriculum-based courses, including Rec & Read Literacy support for Grade 1 learners, and fee-paying activity courses during the first three weeks of July. The Secondary Summer Learning Program provides grade 8-12 students with review, remediation, and full credit course completion opportunities, as well as specialized courses for English Language Learners. Summer Learning Program size impacts enrolment and is determined based on student learning needs, the ability to recruit administrators, support staff and teachers (particularly in specialized secondary courses), and site capacity and location. Summer Learning enrolment is projected to remain consistent as we continue to maintain an appropriate program size based on previous summer learning enrolment numbers and course requests.

Indigenous Education

In order to project enrolment for future years, a cohort model, taking into account historical grade-to-grade transition rates, was applied to determine the projected enrolment in Indigenous Education. After higher than anticipated enrolment of Kindergarten students with Indigenous ancestry entered the District last year, overall enrolment is anticipated to decline by 40 students in 2026/27 and remain unchanged for the following couple of years. This stabilization includes the potential for future increases in enrolment from the completion and occupancy of the Señákw project commencing later this year.



English Language Learners (ELL)

School-age students are eligible for English Language Learners (ELL) funding for up to five years, provided they continue to meet provincial funding criteria. To support enrolment forecasting, historical ELL enrolment data categorized by years of service has been used to estimate future enrolment levels.

Prior to the 2021/22 school year, the District experienced a gradual decline in the number of students requiring ELL support. This trend was stable due to consistent federal immigration policies. This trend, however, reversed between 2021/22 and 2024/25, when the District saw a sharp increase in ELL enrolment driven largely by new registrations, particularly among families holding temporary resident status who entered Canada on study or work permits. A high proportion of these students qualified for ELL services upon arrival.

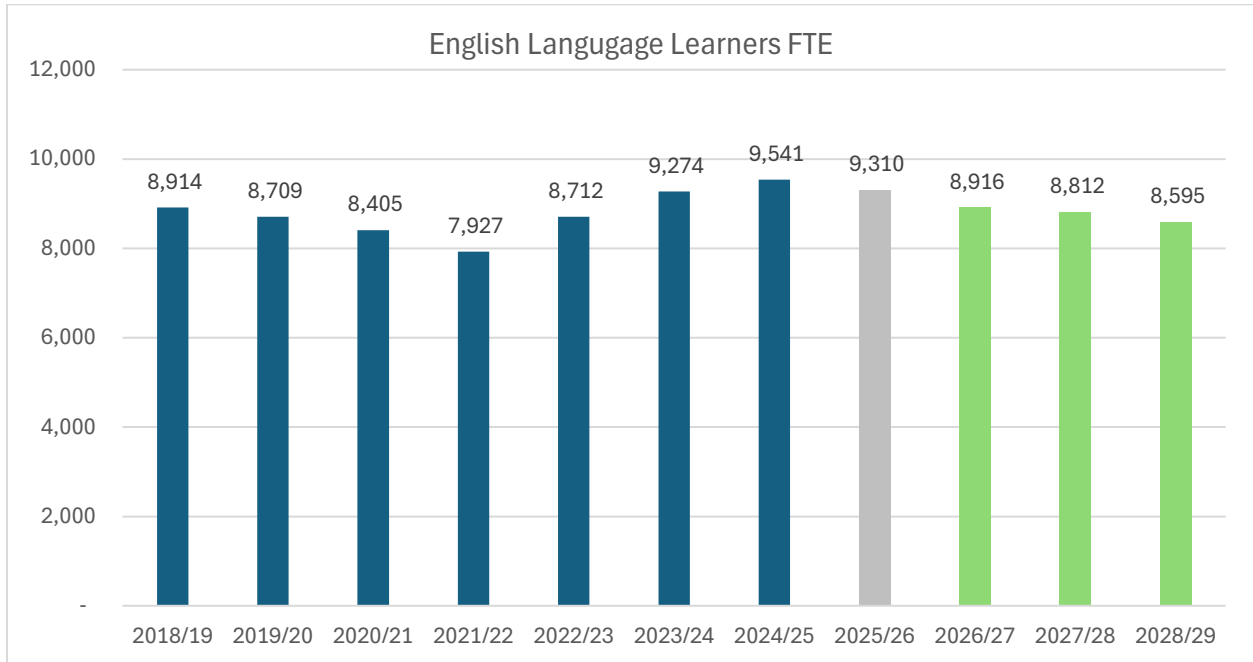
Beginning in the 2025 calendar year, new registrations to the District have declined as a result of tighter federal immigration policies, particularly restrictions on international study permits for post-secondary institutions. New registrations received and processed through the Newcomer Welcome Center since October 2025 to January 2026 have been 20% lower than the same period in 2024-2025 and is lower than a 3-year average of this time period. This projected lower registration is anticipated to be similar for the 2026 calendar year.

Funding eligible student registrations linked to parents' study permits have dropped sharply, and as many temporary resident students require ELL services, this decline has directly contributed to a reduction in overall ELL headcount. While the current decline in newcomers is largely attributable to the decrease in study permits, future decline is anticipated due to lower federal government work permit targets, which will decrease nationally from over 367,000 in 2025 to 230,000 in 2026.

Within the District, we have over 1,400 students from families with temporary status whose permits are expiring before September 30, 2026, many of whom require ELL services. It is uncertain how many will renew their status and remain in the VSB next year and beyond.

ELL projections are further influenced by student and family mobility. In the most recent year, nearly 1,000 ELL students moved out of the District. In previous years, this level of out-migration was largely offset by comparable inflows of new ELL students; however, with fewer incoming ELL registrants expected and out-migration anticipated to remain relatively stable, outgoing students are not expected to be replaced at the same rate.

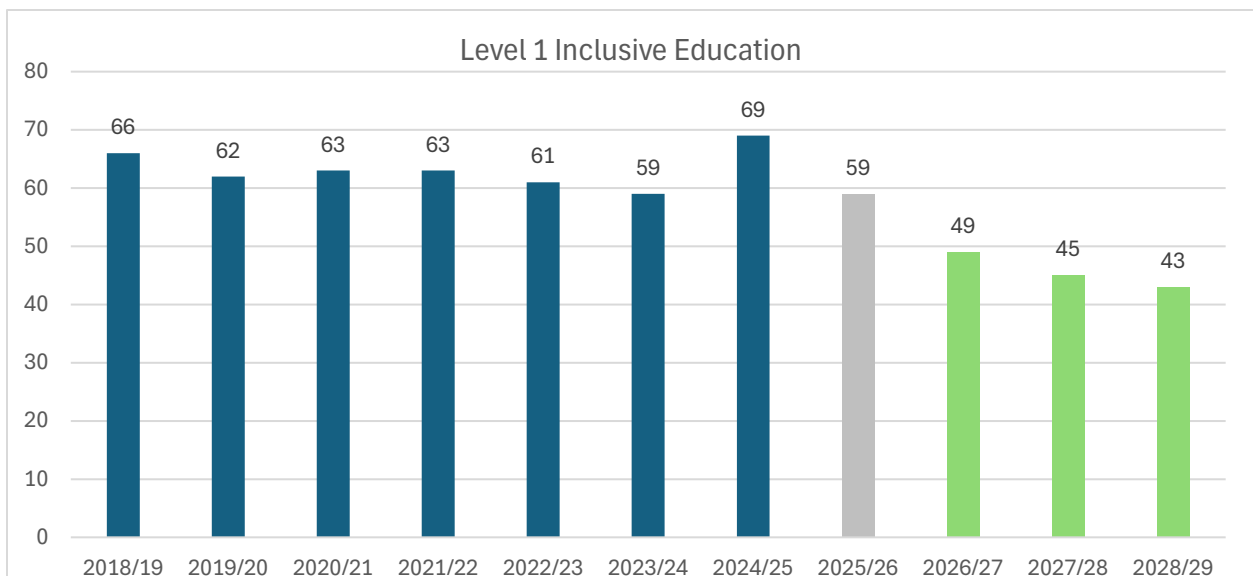
In addition, while the proportion of the total VSB student population qualifying for ELL support has historically remained relatively stable and increased the last three years, recent registration data indicates that a smaller proportion of new students are qualifying for ELL funding. Taken together with pending changes to immigration policies affecting work permit applicants beginning in 2026, these factors suggest that the proportion of ELL funded student enrolment relative to the total school aged population is expected to gradually decline over the projection period.



Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities

Supplemental funding is provided for three categories of students with disabilities or diverse abilities.

Students with disabilities or diverse abilities enrolment is estimated to decrease by seven students for Level 1 funded students in 2026/27, decrease by five students in 2027/28, and increase by three students in 2028/29. Typically, the number of students with Level 1 designations remains stable throughout the year; however, there is not a consistent pattern as it varies year to year on how many Level 1 funded students return for an additional year of high school.



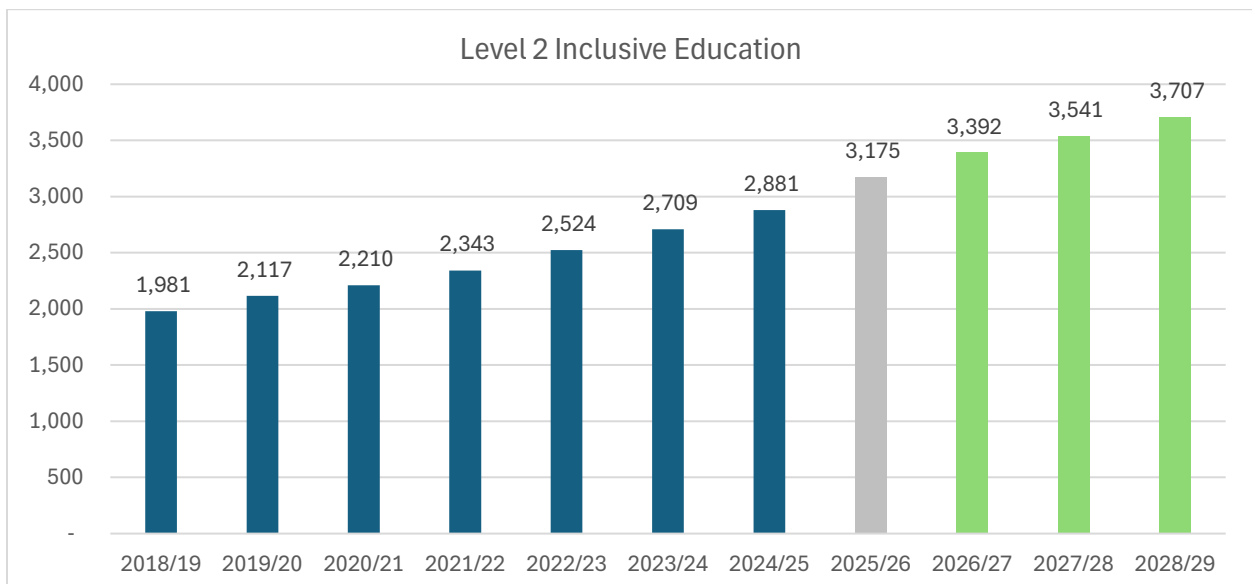
Level 2 funded students include designations for Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability, Physical Disability or Chronic Health Impairment, Visual Impairment, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Generally, a cohort retention model has been included to estimate 2026-2028 figures. The significant increase in Level 2 funded students from 2017 through 2025 will continue to be monitored closely.

The recent increases in Level 2 funded students are mainly driven by the increase in students with G designations (Autism Spectrum Disorder). There is a general understanding that there could be a stabilizing trend for this category in future years, but it is not clear from the historical data when levelling off may begin to occur.

A range of possible projections for Level 2 – G designation students was considered.

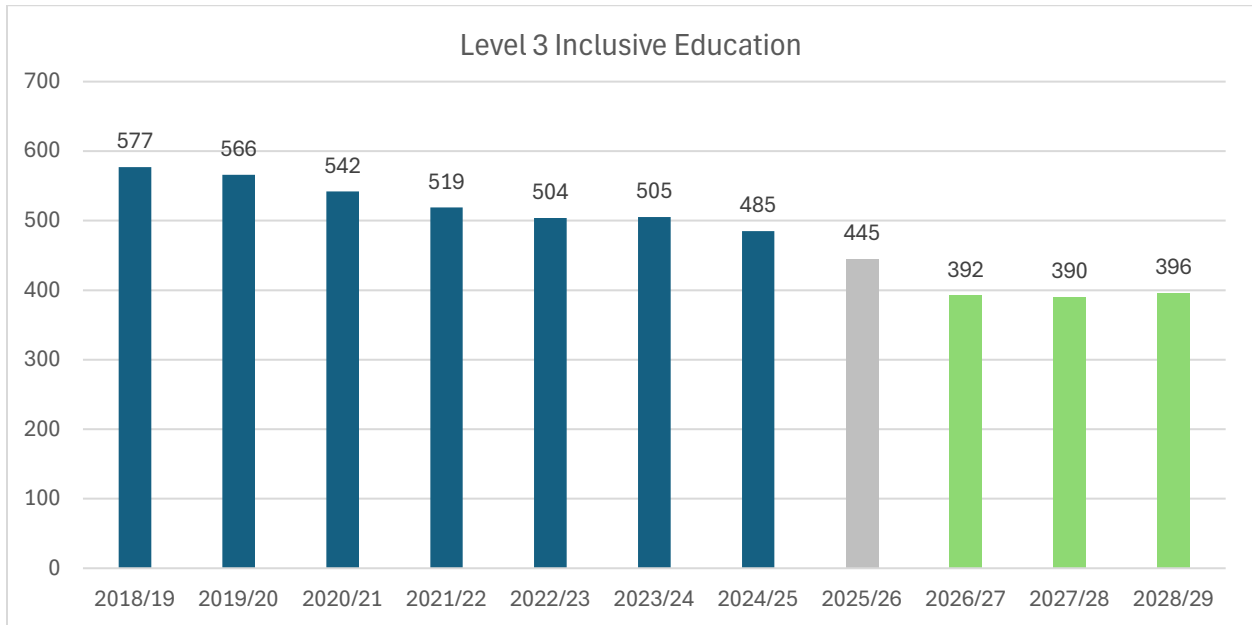
- Consider a conservative estimate that the stabilization of rates of G designations may occur around the rate of G designations in the broader population of around 3.3%.⁷ If this were the case, the total Level 2 funded students with G designations would decrease to around 1,700. However, there is generally not evidence at this point to suggest such a decrease is imminent.
- A moderate estimation for Level 2 funded students could see a stabilization of the level of G designations at the most recent 3-year average rate. If this were the case, the total Level 2 funded students with G designations would be around 1,950.
- As the future Level 2 funded students is monitored, there is a possibility that the trending increase continues. If this were the case, the total Level 2 funded students with G designations could increase to around 4,033 by 2028-2029.

The estimates used include a moderate projection for the future Kindergarten cohorts, which assumes that the large 2025 Kindergarten cohort of G designations will not persist in future years, and instead includes an average from 2018 to 2024 as the estimated Kindergarten cohort for G designations from 2026-2028. This adjustment was included in addition to the average grade to grade transition rates for the other cohorts with G designations.



⁷Autism BC <https://www.autismbc.ca/about/faqs/#:~:text=About%20Autism,Medical%20history>

Level 3 funded students saw a decrease of 30 students from 2024 to 2025. Some further decrease is expected in 2026-27 as a large grade 12 cohort is replaced by a smaller grade 11 cohort. In addition, the delays in access to psychologists and pediatricians able to support a designation for students to be eligible for Level 2 or Level 3 funding could impact projection numbers in upcoming years.



RISKS TO ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

Impacts of Immigration Policy Initiatives

In addition to the changes to NPRs, the Levels Plan aims to stabilize permanent resident admissions to less than 1% of the total population, with overall permanent resident admissions set at 380,000 from 2026 to 2028, 4% less than 2025 targets.⁸ This includes two one-time initiatives in 2026 and 2027 to transition eligible protected persons (115,000) and skilled temporary workers (33,000) to permanent residents.⁹ The extent to which permanent residency in those categories will affect student enrolment in the District is unknown at this time.

VSB Capture Rate

The capture rate is the proportion of all children aged 5 to 17 residing within the District boundary and enrolled at any District school. The capture rate during the period of 2023 to 2025 has been notably higher than the longer-term average, and baseline projections have assumed that there may be slight increases in the next few years. While longer-term projections may include data that relates to an average capture rate, in the short-term the capture rate resulting from available information is expected to be around 86%. The capture rate and the total youth population data will continue to be monitored.

⁸ [Canada's immigration levels - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/news/2023/08/canadas-immigration-levels-2023-2028.html)

⁹ [Canada's immigration levels - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/news/2023/08/canadas-immigration-levels-2023-2028.html)

New Housing Development

The City of Vancouver is expected to revise its Official Development Plan (ODP) by summer 2026 and has consulted with the public on the [DRAFT ODP](#) throughout 2025. This ODP embeds all stand-alone community plans and aligns with new housing legislation and targets from senior governments.

Initiatives such as the Broadway Plan, Cambie Corridor Plan, and Joyce-Collingwood Station Precinct Plan are long-term community plans to enable higher density housing development near SkyTrain stations and along key portions of rapid transit routes. There are also several large-scale, multi-year residential development projects planned in the City of Vancouver, including the Jericho Lands, Heather Lands, Pearson-Dogwood Lands, Oakridge Park, and Señákw.

Despite greater planned densities, there are recent indications of slowing residential development in the City of Vancouver due to a variety of factors, such as the combination of a weakening economy and rising costs of materials, labour, and financing costs. The softening development market could impact the pace of construction, as well as the phasing and build-out of large development projects. Of note - Oakridge Park and Señákw projects are under construction and scheduled to begin occupancy this year.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.

Attachment A: VSB Enrolment Projection Form

Estimated Enrolment

	2025/26 Interim	2026/27		2027/28		2028/29	
	Base	District	Ministry*	District	Ministry*	District	Ministry*
July Enrolment Count							
Summer Learning: Grades 1-7 Headcount Enrolment	5,546	5,546	5,546	5,546	5,546	5,546	5,546
Summer Learning: Grades 8-9 Course Enrolment	1,635	1,635	1,635	1,635	1,635	1,635	1,635
Summer Learning: Grades 10-12 Course Enrolment	2,686	2,686	2,686	2,686	2,686	2,686	2,686
Grade 8 & 9 Cross-Enrolment Courses	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
September Enrolment Count - School-Age Basic Allocation							
K-12 Standard (Regular) Schools FTE (School-Age)	49,577.5000	49,243.5000	49,090.7459	48,660.0000	48,381.2877	47,964.0000	47,570.3441
Continuing Education FTE (School-Age)	27.4375	27.4375	27.4375	27.4375	27.4375	27.4375	27.4375
Alternate Schools FTE (School-Age)	339.0000	339.0000	339.0000	339.0000	339.0000	339.0000	339.0000
Online Learning FTE (School-Age)	424.6875	424.6875	424.6875	424.6875	424.6875	424.6875	424.6875
Total Estimated School-Age Enrolment	50,368.6250	50,034.6250	49,881.8709	49,451.1250	49,172.4127	48,755.1250	48,361.4691
Change from Previous Year		-334.0000	-486.7541	-583.5000	-709.4582	-696.0000	-810.9436
September Enrolment Count - Unique Student Needs							
Level 1 Inclusive Education Headcount	59	49	59	45	59	43	59
Level 2 Inclusive Education Headcount	3,175	3,392	3,469	3,541	3,790	3,707	4,141
Level 3 Inclusive Education Headcount	445	392	445	390	445	396	445
English Language Learning Headcount	9,306	8,916	9,506	8,812	9,710	8,595	9,918
Indigenous Education Headcount	2,043	2,003	2,043	2,003	2,043	2,003	2,043
Adult Education FTE (Non-Graduates only)	54.3750	54.3750	54.3750	54.3750	54.3750	54.3750	54.3750
February Enrolment Count - Continuing Education, Online Learning, Special Needs Growth and Newcomer Refugees							
Continuing Education FTE - School-Age	28.0000	28.0000	28.0000	28.0000	28.0000	28.0000	28.0000
Continuing Education FTE - Non-Graduate Adults	60.0000	43.0000	60.0000	43.0000	60.0000	43.0000	60.0000
Online Learning FTE K-Grade 9 (School-Age)	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000
Online Learning FTE Grades 10-12 (School-Age)	200.0000	200.0000	200.0000	200.0000	200.0000	200.0000	200.0000
Online Learning FTE - Non-Graduate Adults	8.0000	8.0000	8.0000	8.0000	8.0000	8.0000	8.0000
Level 1 Inclusive Education Headcount Growth (All Schools)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level 2 Inclusive Education Headcount Growth (All Schools)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Level 3 Inclusive Education Headcount Growth (All Schools)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newcomer Refugees FTE (Standard & Alternate only)	25.0000	25.0000	25.0000	25.0000	25.0000	25.0000	25.0000
ELL Headcount (applies to Newcomer Refugees only)	20	21	20	21	20	21	20
May Enrolment Count - Continuing Education and Online Learning							
Continuing Education FTE - School-Age	20.0000	20.0000	20.0000	20.0000	20.0000	20.0000	20.0000
Continuing Education FTE - Non-Graduate Adults	40.0000	34.0000	40.0000	34.0000	40.0000	34.0000	40.0000
Online Learning FTE K-Grade 9 (School-Age)	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000
Online Learning FTE Grades 10-12 (School-Age)	125.0000	150.0000	125.0000	150.0000	125.0000	150.0000	125.0000
Online Learning FTE - Non-Graduate Adults	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000