

OUR VSB

QEA SURPLUS CONSIDERATIONS Discussion Guide

February 2023



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QEA LAND SURPLUS CONSIDERATION

Following the June 2022 decision to [close Queen Elizabeth Annex](#) (QEA), the Board is now considering declaring the QEA site and its buildings surplus to the educational needs of the District. No decision has been made. The Board must first decide whether to surplus the land, before exploring alternative land use possibilities.

Policy requirements

Selling or leasing VSB property is governed by the *School Act* through the [Disposal of Land or Improvements Order](#) and Board [Policy 20 – Disposal of Land or Improvements](#) “The Board has the responsibility for the disposal of its Real Property and may, after considering future educational needs and school space requirements for the school district, deem a property no longer required for further educational purposes or other Board purposes and determine to proceed to dispose of such property.”

As part of the surplus consideration, and as per [Policy 20](#), the Board has directed the District to engage with stakeholders, local governments, community organizations and/or the public, prior to determining future land use. The engagement process must include:

- Consideration of [future enrolment growth](#) in the school District, including K-12, adult programs, and early learning
- Consideration of [alternative community use](#) of surplus space in school buildings and other facilities
- Fair consideration of community input, and adequate opportunity for the community to respond to the Board’s plan for the Real Property

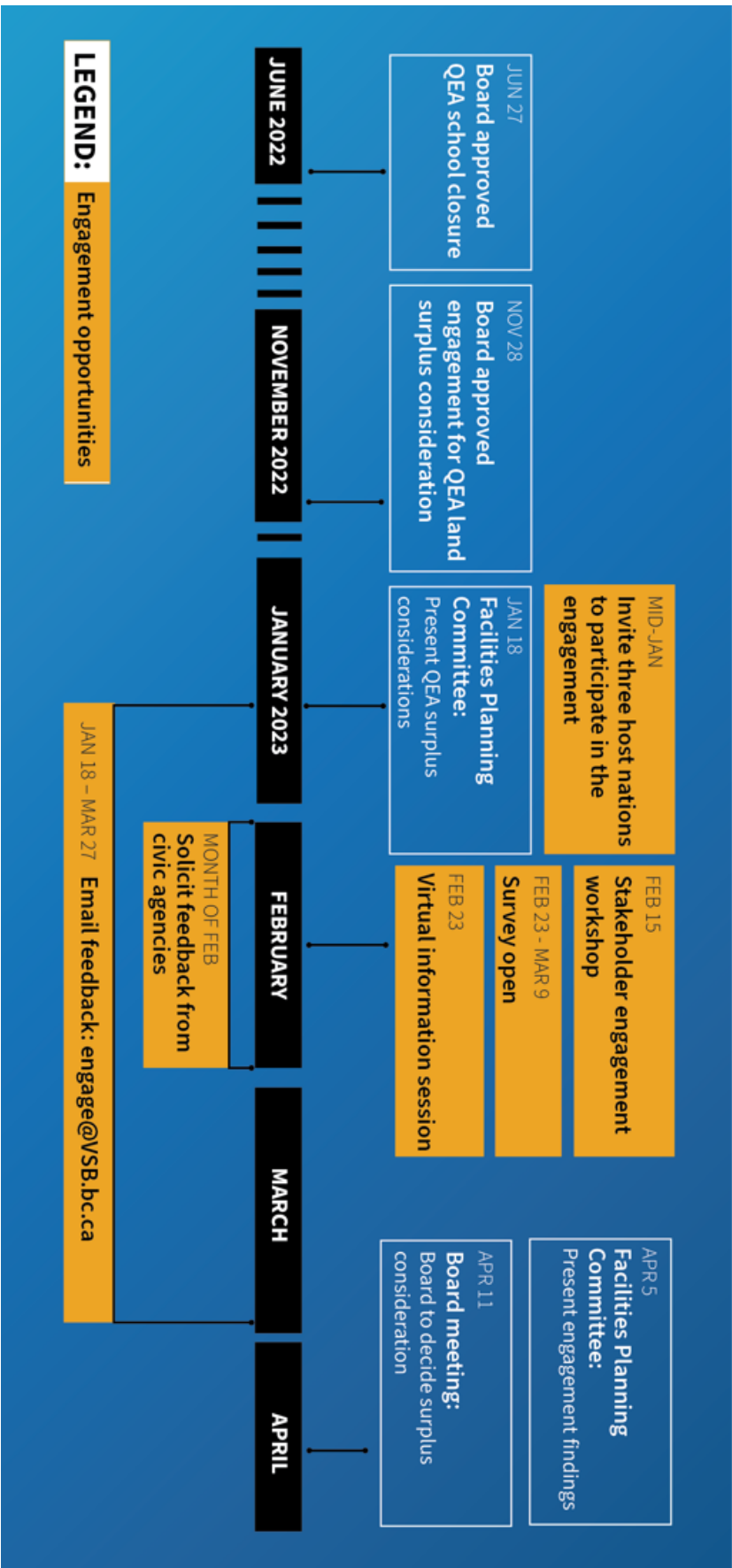
District recommendation

As discussed during the [consideration to close QEA](#) and detailed in [future development considerations](#), the site is not needed for educational purposes now, or into the future.

In addition, the Francophone public school board, [Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique](#) (CSF), is interested in acquiring the QEA site. Given this, future development considerations, and that CSF is another public education Board, the District recommends the Board declare QEA as surplus to District needs and proceed with disposition of the site and its buildings to CSF.

Potential funds generated from a sale or long-term lease of the land would provide capital revenue for the Board, that can then be directed for priority capital investment such as building a new school in an area with enrolment demand, as well as expanding or seismically upgrading an existing school.

QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX LAND SURPLUS PROCESS



QEA SCHOOL INFORMATION

QEA Educational Programming

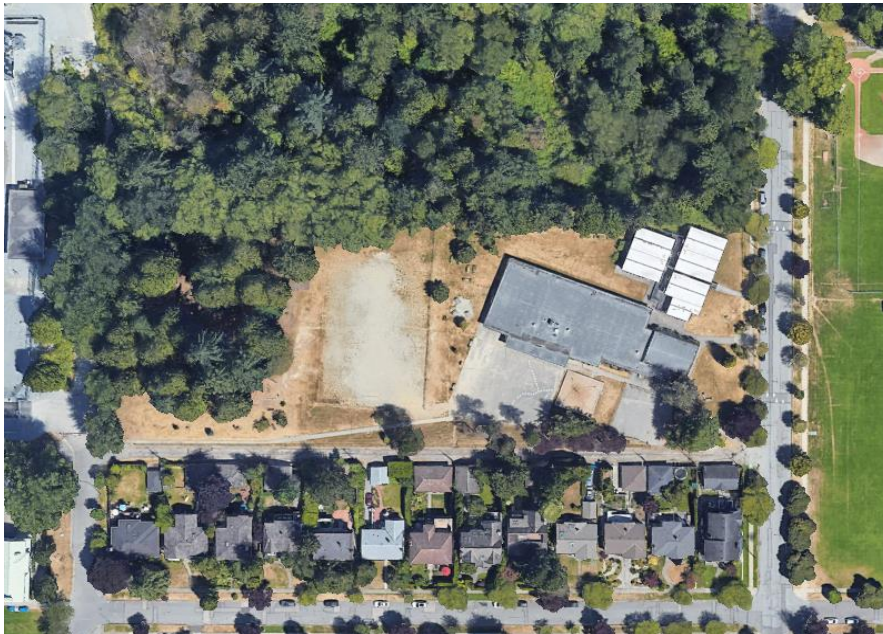
Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) accommodates students in the District Choice Early French Immersion (EFI) Program. QEA is the annex to Ecole Jules Quesnel (JQ). After completing Grade 3, students from QEA move to JQ to complete their EFI program.

Over the past several years, QEA has accommodated about 70 kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

As a District choice program, QEA is not a catchment school and is not needed to accommodate catchment enrolment. Instead, students in the area are accommodated at other nearby schools.

On June 6, 2022, at a special Board meeting, the Vancouver School Board approved the closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) effective June 30, 2023.

QEA Site Information



Address: 4755 Crown Street, Vancouver

Site Area: 1.54ha

Building age: 59 years (built in 1964)

Number of classrooms: 5 classrooms, 1 resource room, 1 library and 1 activity room

Number of portables: 7 (including 2 coded as washroom portables)

Operating capacity: 98

Seismic rating: High seismic risk (category 3)

2023 BC property assessed value: \$46,359,000

FUTURE ENROLMENT GROWTH

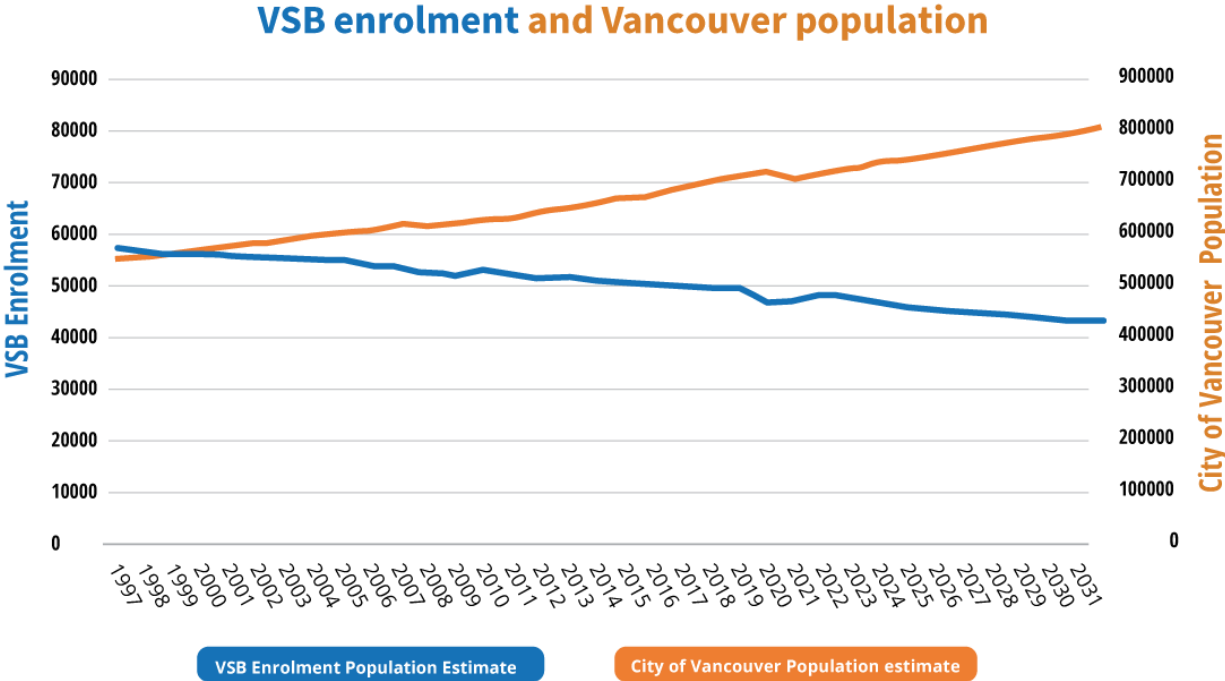
This section considers future enrolment growth from a [District perspective](#), and a [localized \(QEA\) perspective](#).

DISTRICT ENROLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Despite an overall increase in Vancouver’s population, both the [birth rate](#) and the number of school-aged children continue to decline in the city, resulting in a 26-year history of generally declining enrolment at the VSB. Although there is growth of school-aged children in certain high-density areas such as Olympic Village, the North Cambie Corridor, and Downtown core, this is offset by the declining number of school aged children in other areas in Vancouver. Several factors contribute to the enrolment decline including an ageing population, reduced birth rate, and housing unaffordability resulting in more families with school aged children moving out of the city.

Enrolment History

The chart below illustrates the trend of declining enrolment in relation to overall population growth in the District. Since 1997, the population in the City of Vancouver and UBC/UEL areas has increased by about 160,000 whereas in the same period VSB enrolment has declined by close to 9,000 students. In 10 years, by 2032, the area is expected to have an increase of around 84,000 residents whereas VSB is forecast to have approximately 43,000 students, a decrease of nearly 5,000 students from 2022 numbers.



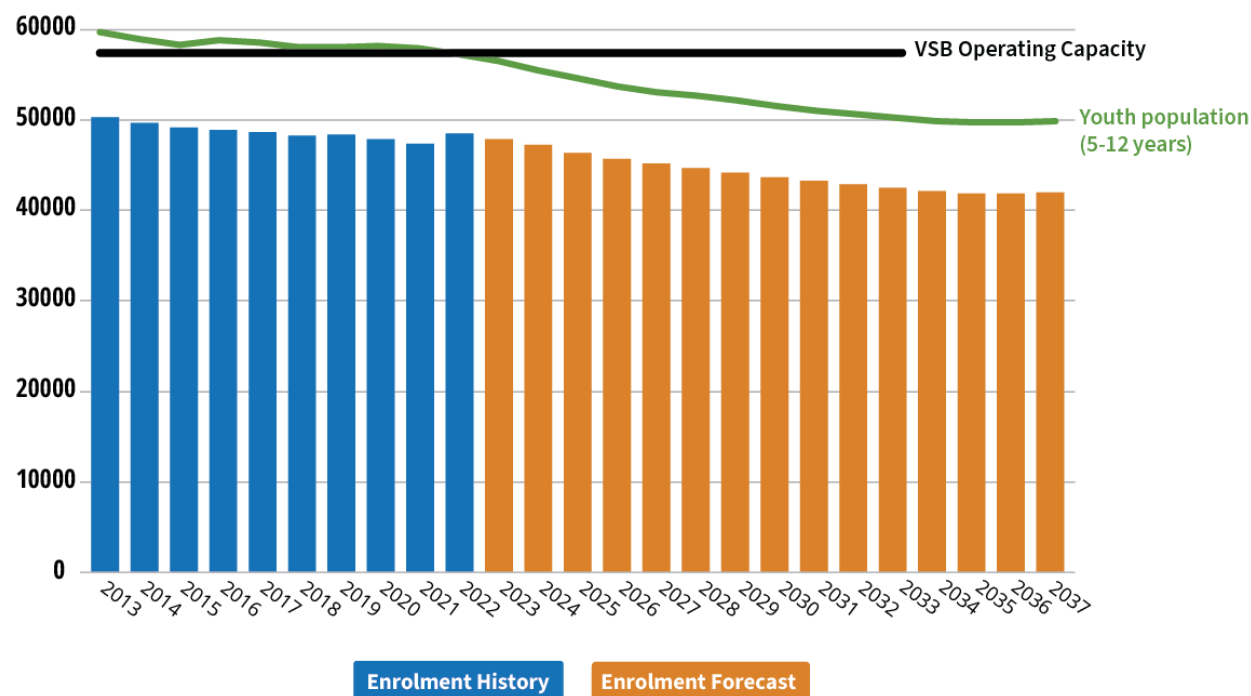
Enrolment Forecast

The total District operating capacity for K-12 schools is 57,398* spaces. The District’s enrolment peaked in 1997 with close to 57,000 kindergarten to Grade 12 students. As of September 30, 2022, enrolment for the 2022-23 school year was 48,580 students, meaning that today, there are about 9,800 surplus spaces available to accommodate future unanticipated enrolment growth. Additionally, a new school at Coal Harbour is expected to open in 2024, increasing the District’s operating capacity

further. As the graph illustrates below, the impact of development and increasing population has not offset the decline in school aged children (5-17 years old), and hence the decline in enrolment.

*Excludes Carleton Elementary and Garibaldi Annex, neither of which accommodate students.

District Enrolment vs. Youth Population vs. Operating Capacity



Forecast considerations

When forecasting future enrolment trends, the District looks at the birth rate and youth population (5-17 years old) in Vancouver, as well as how many families with school aged children move out of the city, also known as a migration rate. The birth rate and migration rates are strongly correlated to youth population, which in turn forecasts school enrolment trends. Additionally, another factor that impacts enrolment is the capture rate, which is the portion of school aged children residing in Vancouver and attending a VSB school instead of an independent school. The District’s capture rate has remained stable for many years averaging at about 82 per cent.

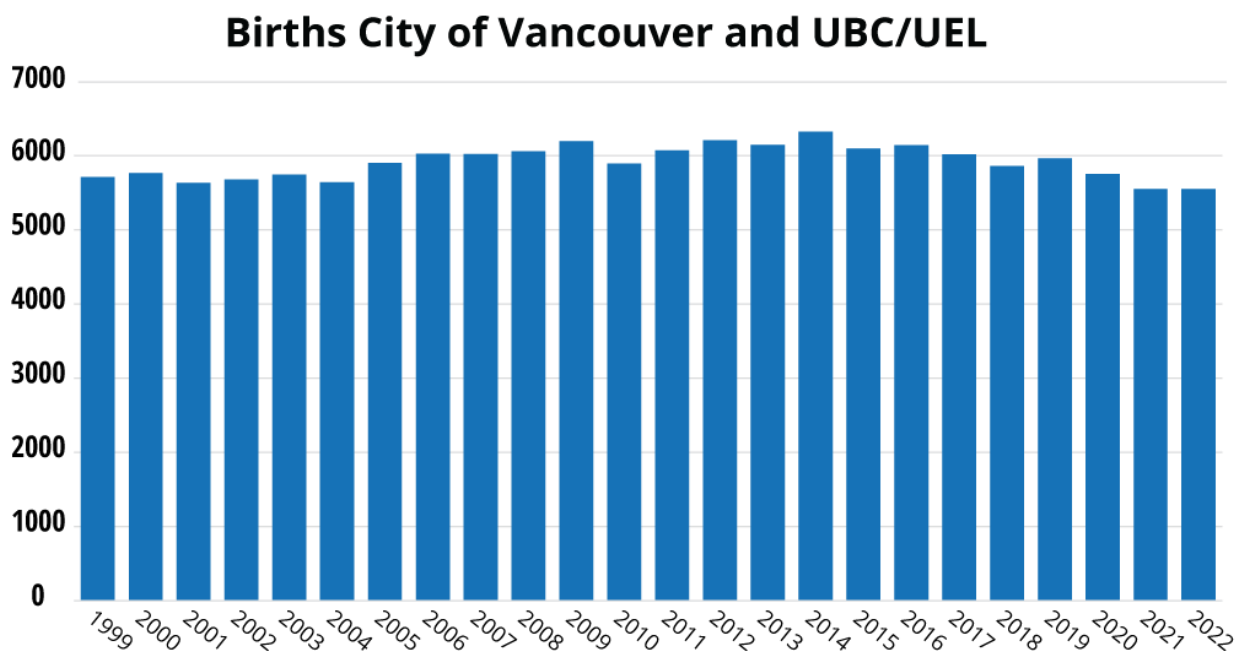
When considering future enrolment growth, a 15-year forecast is used to analyze District enrolment trends and a 10-year forecast is used for localized catchment enrolment trends. The potential impact of local development, that may take place in the longer term - the next 25 to 50 years - can be assessed; however, detailed and localized enrolment forecasting of more than 10 years typically lacks accuracy and reliability.

Birth Rate

Birth rate, the number of births per year, is a statistic gathered by Vital Statistics BC. Historic changes in the number of births are an important factor impacting past, present, and future enrolments. The number of births per year in Vancouver has not kept pace with overall population growth within the District. Since reaching the peak in 2014, the number of births has been trending lower at an average of 111 fewer births per year. The number of births recorded in 2021 was the lowest in two decades. Births

are a leading demographic indicator for future enrolment as kindergarten enrolment is correlated with the number of births five years earlier.

VSB students currently enrolled in kindergarten to Grade 12 were born between 2005 and 2017, during which time the number of births per year averaged 6,083. Over the past 4 years, births have averaged 5,780 per year, a decrease of 303.



Note: Birth rates are annually published near the year end of the following year. The 2022 birth rates will be published in November 2023.

Migration Rate

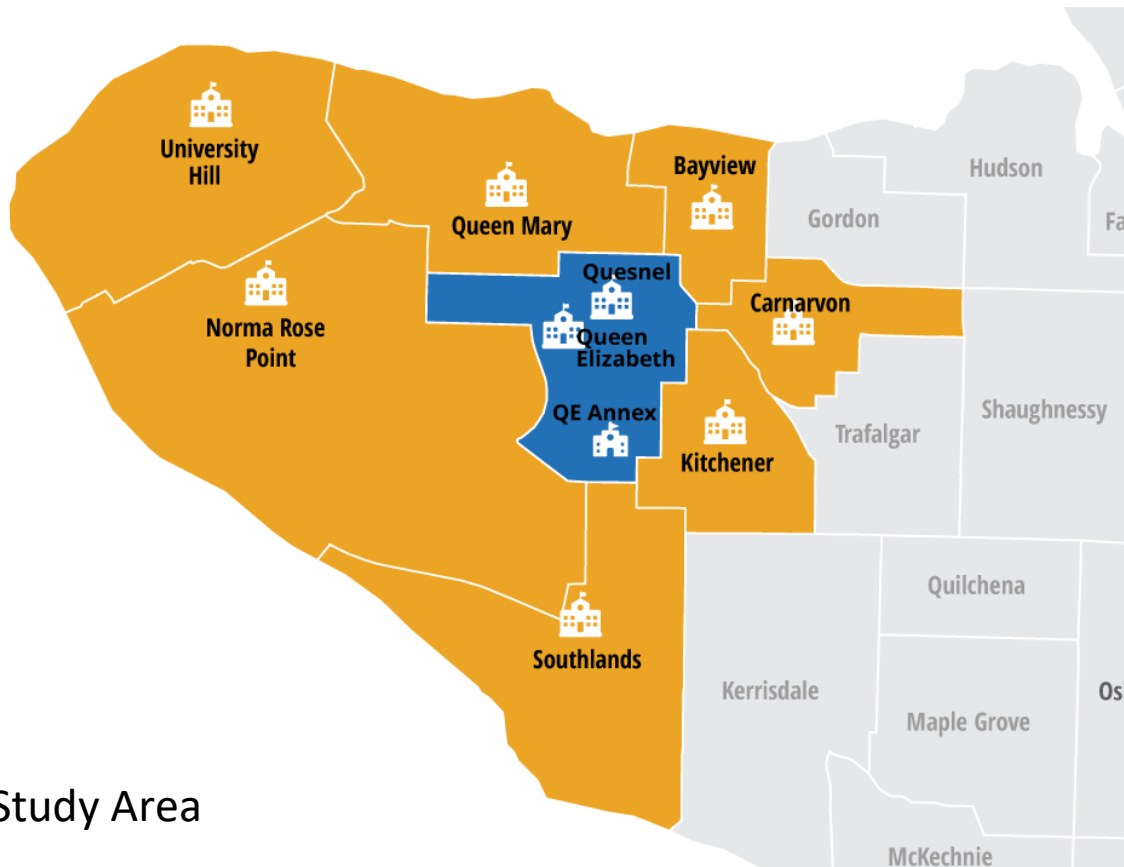
Migration rate is the number of residents moving in and out of the city. Over the last decade, the District has seen a negative migration rate for families with children. The highest negative rates are experienced by families with 0–5-year-old children. This means families with school aged children are moving out of Vancouver, with many doing so when their child(ren) is between 0-5 years old. Migration rates are updated annually and available on the District’s [open data source](#).

QEA ENROLMENT CONSIDERATIONS

To assess the potential future impacts and District needs for the QEA site, a thorough study of the enrolment and demographic trends near QEA was analyzed. The study area included elementary schools at QEA, JQ, Bayview, Carnarvon, Lord Kitchener, Norma Rose Point, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mary, Southlands and University Hill elementary.

With the exception of Norma Rose Point*, enrolment in these areas has been declining for many years mirroring the decline in birth rate and youth population.

*Further explanation about this enrolment trend is [explained here](#).



QEA Study Area

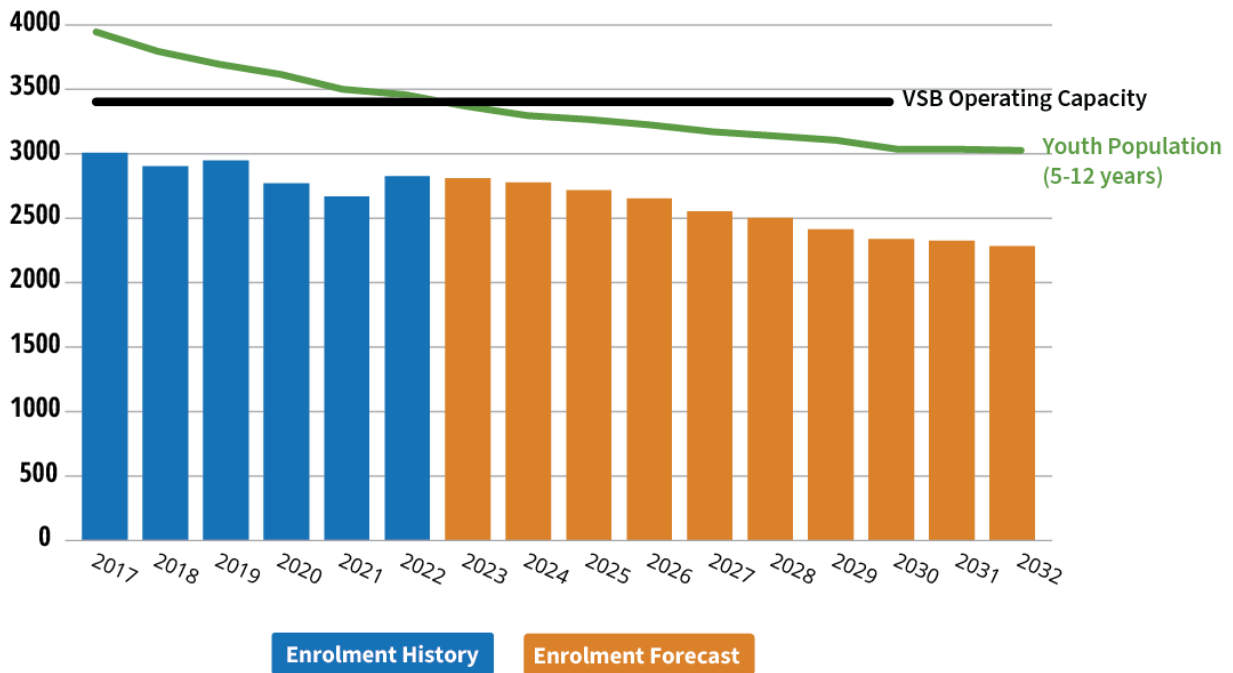
Enrolment History

The QEA study area is comprised of the two elementary schools at UBC/UEL and six elementary schools on the west side of Vancouver. Over the last decade, the overall number of students enrolled within the study area increased by 95 students or three per cent; however, the increase was almost entirely due to enrolment growth at Norma Rose Point Elementary which opened in 2014. Enrolment at the schools in the study area located in Vancouver declined by 20 per cent and enrolment at University Hill Elementary declined by 19 per cent. During the same period, the number of children in that area aged 1 to 4 years declined by 32 per cent and the number of children in the 5 to 12 age group decreased by 17 per cent.

It is important to acknowledge that between 2020-2021, enrolment numbers were lower than expected as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions to enter the country. As a result, when restrictions were completely lifted in 2022, the District saw a higher than expected number of new or returning Canadian families registering for VSB. That said, even with the influx of new students in 2022, enrolment in schools near QEA is still below the 2019 levels, prior to the pandemic. The current 2022 enrolment levels still align with pre-pandemic trends for this group of schools, which is on the decline.

The chart below illustrates the trend of declining enrolment in relation to overall youth population decline in the study area.

QEA Study Area Enrolment vs. Youth Population vs. Operating Capacity



Enrolment forecast

As illustrated by the graph above, at present there is no indication that there will be sustained or substantial enrolment growth in the vicinity of the QEA site. In fact, the area has experienced overall enrolment decline since 2016. There is surplus capacity at many surrounding schools, a total of 583 spaces currently available. Forecasts indicate there could be more than 900 surplus spaces 10 years from now.

If enrolment growth does materialize, the annex building on the QEA site does not have the minimal capacity to accommodate the increase with a small operating capacity of only 98 spaces. That means, the District would likely not use the annex building to accommodate students, as it would be limited by its capacity. If there was an unexpected increase in school-age children in the area, there is sufficient overall school capacity in the existing nearby elementary schools to accommodate any potential future enrolment growth.

Additionally, the current QEA building is not seismically safe, meaning it does not advance the District’s long range planning objectives of accommodating students in modern, safe, healthy schools located in their catchment. As such, the District would not consider building, nor would the government consider funding, a new school on the QEA site as there are several other options to accommodate enrolment growth more effectively and cost efficiently available at UBC and on the west side of Vancouver.

QEA forecast considerations

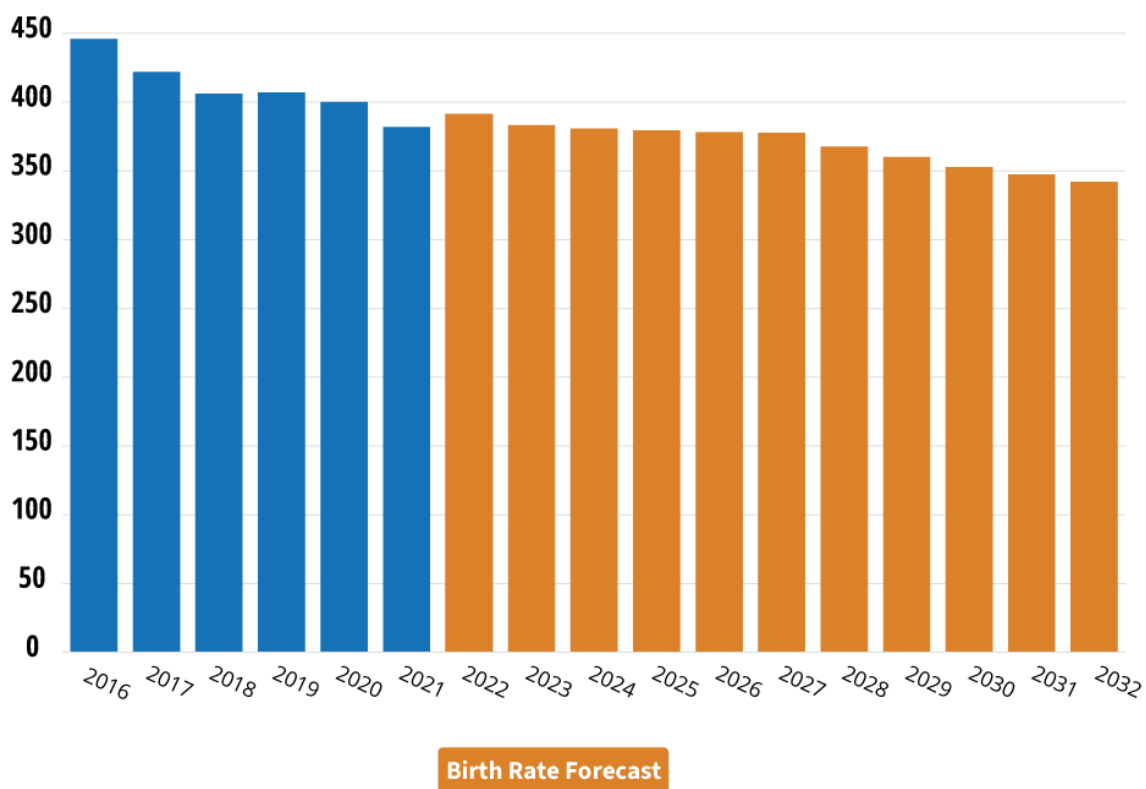
When forecasting future enrolment trends, the District looks at the birth rate and youth population (5-17 years old) in Vancouver, as well as how many families with school aged children move out of the city, also known as migration rate. The birth rate and migration rates are strongly correlated youth population, which in turn forecasts school enrolment trends. Additionally, another factor that impacts

enrolment is the capture rate, which is the portion of school aged children residing in Vancouver and attending a VSB school instead of an independent school. The District's capture rate in the study area has remained stable for many years averaging at about 89%. The capture rate at schools in UBC/UEL is higher than the remainder of the schools in the study area.

Birth rate in the study area

Birth rate – the number of births per year - is a statistic gathered by Vital Statistics BC. Historic changes in the number of births are an important factor impacting past, present, and future enrolments. The number of births have continued to decline, aligning with the enrolment trend in the QEA area. Between 2012 and 2022 the number of births per year in the study area declined by 27 per cent.

QEA Study Area - Aggregate Birth Rate



Migration rate in the study area

Migration trends vary between catchments and age groups in the study area. The combined net result of migration in the eight school catchments in the study area from 2018-2022 was an average increase of 69 children aged 1-17 per year.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The VSB plans for the long-term use of facilities through the capital planning process. Similar to the City of Vancouver UBC/UEL's capital planning process, the District's capital plan considers future long-term needs much longer than the 10-15 year forecasts for enrolment trends. The capital planning process emphasizes flexibility and adaptability in facilities to ensure District buildings will be in use for decades to come.

Developments in the District

The District works with the City of Vancouver and UBC/UEL to ensure there are sites available to build new schools in areas of potential enrolment growth due to new development. New or expanded schools are typically funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. As a result of this long-term planning, the District is well positioned to foresee, adapt and respond to increases in the youth population from any development in future decades.

Current schools

- **University Hill Secondary, Elsie Roy Elementary and Crosstown Elementary** are examples of schools that had land previously set aside or acquired by the VSB years in advance to accommodate potential enrolment growth as part of the capital planning process.
- A new school at **Coal Harbour** is in construction. The school will address enrolment pressure in the downtown area. The school is being fully funded by the VSB using proceeds from the sale of subterranean land rights to BC Hydro to build a new Westend substation.

Future schools

The sites below have been identified for future schools when government funding becomes available.

- **Olympic Village:** the District has finalized a long term lease agreement with the City of Vancouver for the school site at Olympic Village. The school is in the planning phase.
- **Wesbrook:** the site at UBC is available to accommodate a new elementary school.
- **East Fraser Lands** - the site in the River District is available to address potential enrolment pressures in nearby catchments. It is important to note recent developments in the River District have not yet translated into large increases in the number of school-aged students enrolling in the District.

Developments near QEA

The District works collaboratively and in partnership with the City of Vancouver on many planning projects to closely monitor the city's major developments. Future areas of development, such as University of British Columbia (UBC)/University Endowment Lands (UEL) and Jericho Lands, were also studied by staff in making the recommendation to surplus the QEA site. The District is well positioned to foresee, adapt and respond to increases in the youth population from any development in future decades.

Accommodating Enrolment Growth at UBC/UEL

Both elementary schools (Norma Rose Point and University Hill Elementary) in the University of British Columbia (UBC)/ University Endowment Lands (UEL) area are full, with some students being placed at nearby schools in the District. Enrolment is increasing due to ongoing development of new residential units in area. To date enrolment forecasts have adequately captured the impact of continuing

development. These forecasts indicate that there will be additional enrolment pressure in the area in coming years; however rapid enrolment growth is not anticipated.

There is significant available space at schools near UBC/UEL (Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Southlands, Kitchener and Bayview) to accommodate elementary students who are not able to be enrolled in their catchment school (Norma Rose Point Elementary and University Hill Elementary).

In addition, the Wesbrook site near University Hill Secondary school has been set aside for the construction of a new elementary school as required when capital funding becomes available. A new elementary school at UBC is prioritized in Year 5 of the [Capital Plan](#).

Accommodating Enrolment Growth from the Jericho Lands Development

Led by the City of Vancouver, the [Jericho Lands Planning Program](#) is still in the early phases of planning and information about how many additional residents the development will yield in the area is still being determined. The project is expected to be developed over the next 30 years. That said, District staff is planning collaboratively with CoV staff with the objective that the development plan for the Jericho Lands will include land zoned for elementary school use – this is the optimal solution to ensure the development of a complete low carbon family-oriented community with co-located amenities. Prior to the construction of a school on the Jericho lands, the District has existing options to accommodate students, that require no capital investment, such as using surplus capacity at nearby schools including Queen Mary, Bayview, Queen Elizabeth and Kitchener. In addition, if necessary, there is also temporary accommodation available at the Queen Elizabeth site to accommodate potential students from the future Jericho lands development.

The District does not foresee any circumstance where the QEA site (with an operating capacity of 98 maximum students) would be used or needed to accommodate students from the Jericho Lands development. As funding becomes available from the government, the District will pursue seismic upgrades and, if necessary, expansions at Southlands, Queen Elizabeth Elementary and Carnarvon. Each of these school sites is larger and more suitably located for a catchment school than the QEA site.

ALTERNATE COMMUNITY USE

As per the *School Act*, through the [Disposal of Land or Improvements Order](#), all school boards can only dispose of land through a sale or long-term lease to a community agency or organization for alternative community use, pending ministerial approval. School boards do not need additional ministerial approval if the land is sold or leased long-term to another school board or independent school.

As discussed during [the QEA closure](#), if the Board decides to surplus the QEA site, District staff is recommending the Board dispose of the site to the Francophone public school board, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF), either through sale or long-term lease.

Why CSF?

Disposing the land, either through sale or long-term lease to CSF would provide capital revenue for the Board, that can then be directed to Board priorities for capital investments such as building a new school in an area with enrolment demand, expanding or seismically upgrading an existing school.

There is serious interest from CSF to acquire the QEA site. CSF has filed a civil claim which names the District, the Province of B.C. and the Ministry of Education. The claim mentions a 2016 B.C. Supreme court ruling requiring the Province to supply a school site in Vancouver west of Granville Street, to CSF. In addition, there is a separate, confidential education mediation underway involving the CSF, the District and Ministry of Education to resolve a land dispute. These two separate proceedings are requiring extensive and costly District resources.

Furthermore, in April 2022 [legislative amendments](#) made to the *School Act* give the Province the ability to transfer land held by a board to CSF. This power will only be used when all other avenues to fulfil the Province's obligations to minority language education rights-holders have been exhausted. Given the forementioned legal proceedings, CSF's interest in the site and that CSF is another public education Board, the Superintendent recommends the Board declare QEA as surplus to District needs and proceed with disposition of the site to CSF.

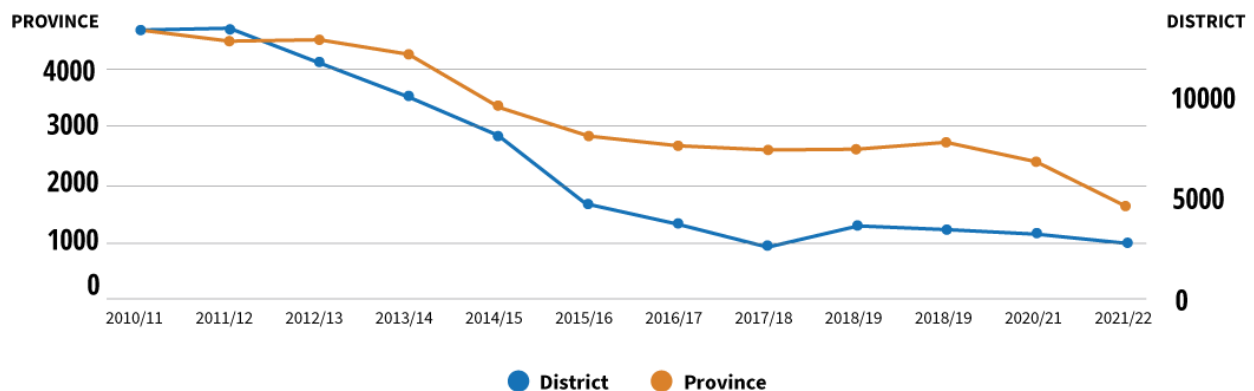
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As per [Policy 20](#), the District also analyzed the surplus impacts to adult education and early learning.

Adult Education

Enrolment in VSB Adult Educational Programming has declined during the past decade in alignment with the overall provincial trend. The VSB has two adult learning centers that are centrally located to provide convenient access to adult learners. In consideration of its location, the QEA site will not be required to accommodate adult programs in the future.

Adult Educational Enrolment



Early Learning

VSB offers early learning through its StrongStart program. Funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, StrongStart is a free drop-in program for preschool children, ages zero to five years old. StrongStart provides a rich learning environment, designed for early learning development. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities where children find opportunities to make friends and interact with others of similar ages. The overall learning experience is shared as parents and caregivers attend with their children and are encouraged to get involved in activities like telling stories, playing games and serving healthy snacks.

There are 19 StrongStart programs operating in elementary schools across Vancouver. Currently the Ministry of Education and Child Care is not funding new Strong Start programs. If funding becomes available, the program will not be offered at QEA as the District would place the program in a school with a larger community hub.