

June 7, 2023

ITEM 1.3

**TO:** Facilities Planning Committee

**FROM:** Shehzad Somji – Acting Secretary Treasurer  
John Dawson – Director of Educational Planning

**RE:** **Consideration of Closure of Sir Guy Carleton Elementary School**

*Reference to Education Plan*

**GOAL:** The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by ...

**OBJECTIVE(S):** *Improving stewardship of the district’s resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.*

## INTRODUCTION

Sir Guy Carleton Elementary School (Carleton) was damaged by fire in August 2016, and no Vancouver School Board students have been accommodated there since June 2016. Staff is recommending that the Board consider the permanent closure of Carleton Elementary School effective January 1, 2024.

On January 30, 2023, the Board approved adjusting the Carleton Elementary school catchment by increasing the size of the Cunningham, Weir, and MacCorkindale Elementary school catchments and reducing the size of the Carleton catchment. There are no residences within the remaining Carleton catchment.

This report sets out the rationale for consideration of closure for Carleton Elementary and details the factors considered by senior staff in making the consideration of closure recommendation to the Board. The report also reviews the Board decision-making framework defined in Board Policy 14 School Closure.

At the May 29, 2023, Board meeting the following recommendation was approved:

*It is recommended that...*

*The Board of Education consider the closure of Sir Guy Carleton Elementary school, effective January 1, 2024, by forwarding this report to the Facilities Planning Committee for review and recommendation.*

This report contains a recommendation.

## BACKGROUND

The fire at Carleton occurred on Friday August 19, 2016. At the time of the fire, planned enrolment for September 2016 stood at 308 students. In response to the fire, the District offered Carleton families enrolment options that included the option to attend neighboring G.T. Cunningham Elementary School as a separate school 'Carleton at Cunningham' or attend other nearby schools. Although Cunningham school had sufficient capacity to accommodate all Carleton students, many families opted to enroll their children at other nearby schools, principally Dr. George M. Weir and Dr. H.N. MacCorkindale elementary schools. When 'Carleton at Cunningham' opened in September 2016, there were 116 students in attendance. Since September 2016, Carleton has operated at Cunningham with 62 students from the former Carleton catchment attending at Cunningham in September 2022.

At the June 15, 2022 Facilities Planning Committee the ['Proposed Catchment Boundary Adjustments – Carleton Elementary Catchment'](#) was presented which initiated the process to reduce the size of the existing Carleton catchment and increase the size of the existing catchments of Cunningham, Weir, and MacCorkindale elementary schools. On January 30, 2023, the Board approved the proposed catchment boundary adjustments. If Carleton is permanently closed, the remaining catchment, in which there are no residences, will be dissolved and consolidated with the Cunningham elementary catchment.

## RATIONALE FOR CONSIDERATION OF CLOSURE

### Effective Stewardship of District Resources

Allocating the necessary district resources to return Carleton to a condition that would be suitable to accommodate students would be an ineffective use for district resources as the school would remain at high seismic risk while retaining a significant deferred maintenance liability. No students reside in the current Carleton catchment area. Students from the former Carleton catchment are accommodated at nearby schools.

### Minimal Impact on Carleton School Community

With the changes to catchment boundary approved by the Board on January 30, 2023, families residing in the former Carleton catchment now have catchment priority access to a nearby school. The Carleton site was last used in the 2015-2016 school year. By June 2023, the end of this school year, there will be no students who attended school at the Carleton site remaining in the K-7 system as all kindergarten students enrolled in September 2015 will be entering grade 8 in September 2023.

### Optimize Use of Safe Capacity

The District should optimize use of seismically safe capacity to accommodate student enrolment. The seismic upgrade project at Weir is complete and the school is in use. The expansion of the Weir catchment approved on January 30, 2023, aligns with the long-range facilities planning strategic priority to provide

access to a seismically safe catchment school for all VSB students. As Carleton is not seismically safe, the permanent closure of Carleton will have no impact on access for VSB students to seismically safe schools.

### **Land Asset Management**

The Carleton site presents potential opportunities for alternate community use and capital revenue generation for the Board. Some of these opportunities can only be realized through a long-term lease of the site or fee simple sale of a portion of the site which require a site surplus declaration by the Board. Permanent school closure is a necessary precursor to consideration of site surplus declaration by the Board.

## **POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

[Board Policy 14 School Closure](#) - contains the decision-making framework that the Board of Education follows when considering school closure. The policy also outlines the factors that Senior Team may assess in making a recommendation for a school closure. As stated in the policy, such a recommendation must be made at a public Board meeting.

### **Decision-Making Framework for the Board**

#### **Step 1 - Board Receives Senior Team Report and Recommendation**

- Senior Team can make a recommendation for consideration of closure to the Board at a public meeting.
- After considering the information provided at the public meeting the Board will:
  - Conclude that no action or further study is required, **or**
  - Forward the information to the Facilities Planning Committee

#### **Step 2 - Facilities Planning Committee Provides its Recommendation to Board**

- Review the information provided by the Board and provide its recommendation to the Board.

#### **Step 3 – Board Decides to Either Initiate Public Consultation or Take No Further Action**

- The Board reviews the recommendation from the Facilities Planning Committee and will:
  - Conclude that no action or further study is required, **or**
  - Initiate a public consultation process by passing a motion at a public meeting of the Board.

#### **Step 4 – Public Consultation**

- If the Board initiates a public consultation process, a period of at least sixty (60) days will be allocated to allow for consultation to occur.
- As part of the consultation the Board will make available, in writing, the rationale being considered by the Board for the proposed closure, as outlined in section 7 of Policy 14. As per section 8 of the policy, at least one public consultation meeting will be held to discuss the proposed closure.

**Step 5 – Board Makes Decision on School Closure**

- After consultation, the final decision about the school closure will be made by the Board through the first, second, and final reading of a School Closure Bylaw at a public Board meeting.

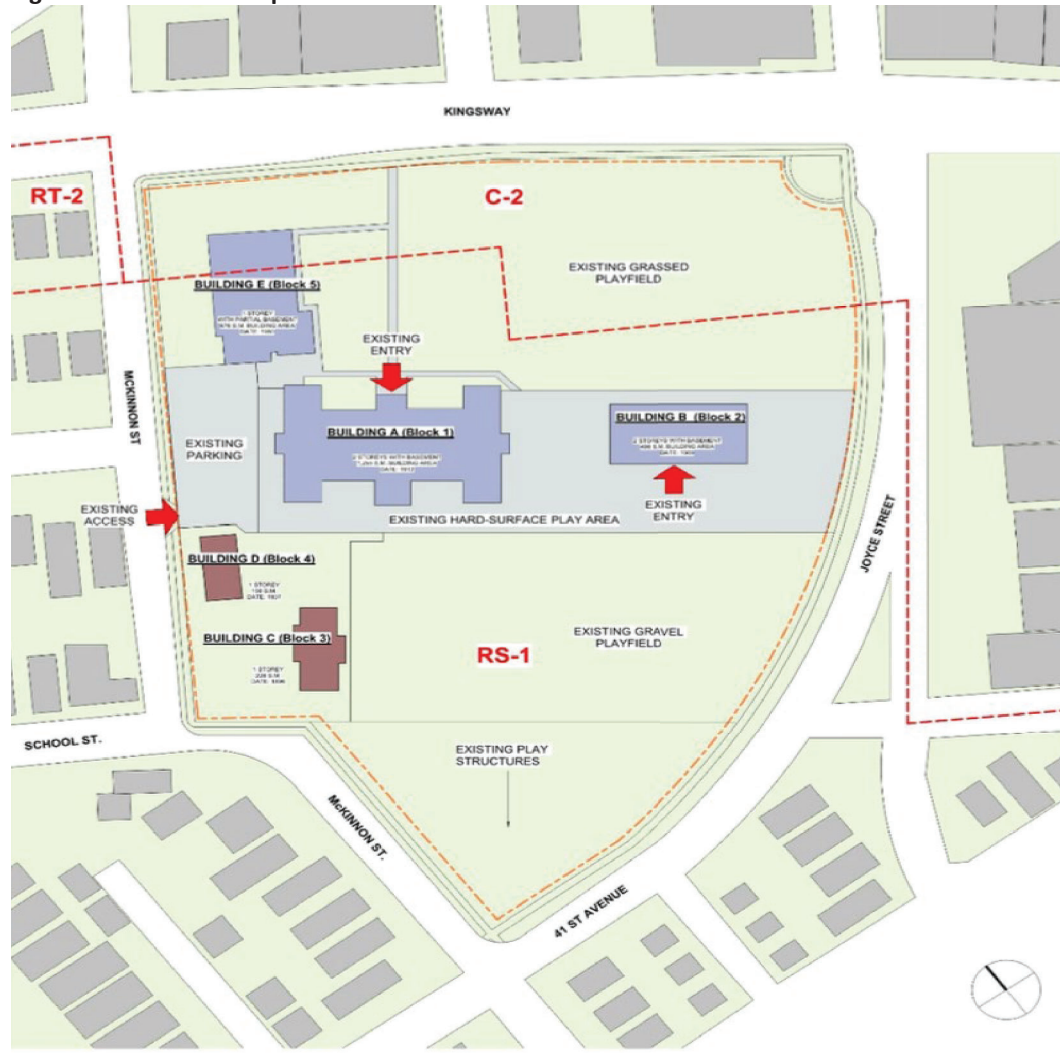
**Step 6 – Decision Regarding Alternate Use of a Closed Facility**

- Alternate use of a closed facility will be determined by the Board after receiving a recommendation from the Superintendent.

**SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Carleton site is a 2.45 ha site with five buildings, three of which were used to deliver educational programming prior to the building closures necessitated by the 2016 fire in which building 1 sustained extensive damage.

Figure 1 – Carleton site plan



**Figure 2 - Buildings on the Carleton site**

Building Number	Year Built	Function
1	1912	Main School Building
2	1910	Classroom Building
3	1896	Leased
4	1896	Leased
5	1950	Gymnasium

## FACTORS CONSIDERED BY SENIOR TEAM

### **Factors Considered by Senior Team (ST)**

This report outlines the factors assessed and considered by the senior team in making the recommendation to consider the permanent closure of Carleton Elementary school. Policy 14 lists the following factors that may be assessed in making a recommendation to consider closure:

- Program offerings
- Space available in nearby schools
- Distance between schools
- Traffic patterns and safety of access for students being relocated
- Current and projected enrolment
- Class size
- Funding formula considerations
- Age of the building, maintenance, and seismic needs of buildings
- Potential re-uses of facilities and sites
- Other factors that may be applicable in the circumstances

**Figure 3 – Summary of ST Assessment of Specific School Closure Factors**

Factor	SMT Assessment
<b>Program Offerings</b>	The regular K-7 educational programming available at Carleton in 2016 is available at all nearby schools. All nearby schools including Cunningham, Weir and MacCorkindale offer the regular K-7 program. No District Choice or Learning Services programs were located at Carleton in 2016.
<b>Space in nearby schools</b>	Since September 2016 students originating from the Carleton catchment have been readily accommodated at nearby schools. Enrolment from Carleton catchment students has declined since 2016 in alignment with the decline in youth population in the catchment. A further enrolment decline is forecast. Weir, MacCorkindale, and Cunningham all have surplus capacity.
<b>Distance between schools</b>	Most students residing in the former Carleton catchment attend Cunningham, Weir, or MacCorkindale, that are 1.8km, 1.1 km and 1.0 km from Carleton, respectively.
<b>Traffic Patterns and Safety of Access for Students being Relocated</b>	In Attachment A, of the June 15, 2022 Facilities Planning Committee report ' <a href="#">Proposed Catchment Boundary Adjustments – Carleton Elementary Catchment</a> ' safe pedestrian travel infrastructure in the former Carleton catchment is detailed.
<b>Current and Forecast Enrolment</b>	As of January 30, 2023, there are no students from the current existing Carleton catchment attending VSB programs. As of September 2022, 62 from the former Carleton catchment attend Cunningham, total enrolment from the former Carleton catchment in all VSB regular elementary programs was 176, and total Carleton catchment enrolment in all VSB elementary programs was 193. As of January 30, 2023, there are no students residing in the Carleton catchment.
<b>Class Size</b>	Class size will not be impacted.
<b>Funding Formula Considerations</b>	Enrolment and program funding will not be impacted.
<b>Age, maintenance, and seismic needs of buildings</b>	<p><b>Facility Condition</b></p> <p>The overall facility condition of Carleton buildings is poor. The estimated cost to repair fire damage and subsequent damage due to vandalism to school buildings is \$8M-\$10M. If these repairs and required upgrades were undertaken, the seismic safety of the school would remain unchanged at H1. Provincial funding is not available for these capital requirements.</p> <p><b>Seismic Safety</b></p> <p>The overall seismic risk rating for buildings on the Carleton site is H1 - the highest seismic risk category. A seismic upgrade project at Carleton is not supported through the Seismic Mitigation Program. The business case for prioritizing provincial government investment to fund a seismic upgrade project at the Carleton site is weak, therefore Carleton is not prioritized in the Board Capital Plan.</p>
<b>Potential re-uses of facilities</b>	The District is working with the Ministry of Education, the CSF, BC Housing, and the City of Vancouver to develop options for alternative uses for the site and its facilities. As per section 13 of Board Policy 14, If the Board decides to close Carleton, alternate use of a closed facility will be determined by the Board after receiving a recommendation from the superintendent.

## PROPOSED PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The proposed process and timeline for the consideration of closure process are set out below in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 – Proposed process and timeline**

Event	Date	Process
Board Meeting	May 29, 2023	Closure consideration report presented to the Board with a recommendation to refer to the Facilities Planning Committee.
Facilities Planning Committee	June 7, 2023	If referred by the Board, closure consideration report to Facilities Planning Committee. Facilities Planning committee provides recommendation to the Board.
Board Meeting	June 26, 2023	The Board reviews the recommendation from the Facilities Planning Committee and has the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclude that no action or further study is required</li> <li>• Initiate a public consultation process by passing a motion at a public meeting of the Board</li> </ul>
Consultation Period	July – October 2023	Community consultation as per Policy 14
Board Meeting	November 2023 Date TBC	Board to receive consultation findings and consider closure of Carleton.
Closure Process Concludes	January 1, 2024	Permanent closure of Carleton to be effective January 1, 2024.

## NEXT STEPS

As per Policy 14 (School Closure) the Facilities Planning Committee shall provide a recommendation to the Board as to whether the Board should:

- Conclude that no action or further study is required, **or**
- Initiate a public consultation process by passing a motion at a public meeting of the Board.

## RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that:**

*The Board initiate a public consultation process as set out Board Policy 14 – School Closure.*