

# Considerations to close QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX

Staff at the Vancouver School District have recommended the closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) school site by June 2023. Should the Board decide to close QEA, staff propose students could be relocated, as a group, to either Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ) or Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE).

A final decision has not yet been made by the Board. In January, the Board approved moving ahead with a public engagement process, which is occurring February to April 2022.

A recommendation to close a school is not taken lightly. The District has recommended this closure to ensure

responsible use of resources to benefit all students, while prioritizing education opportunities for QEA students.

The Annex offers French immersion, a District choice program, and as such does not have a neighbourhood catchment. There are 71 students from K-3 attending QEA and it is the feeder school to JQ.

**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. Over the past 10 years, the District has seen an approximately 8.4% 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 % higher (\$11,288 per student in 2019) than the provincial per student allocation of \$7,885. Closing QEA would result in significant operational savings of between \$150K to \$300K annually, which could be re-allocated into programs and services supporting students across the District.

**PRIORITIZING STUDENT LEARNING** | The proposed closure would continue to guarantee QEA students ongoing placement in the French immersion program. Bringing QEA students together with students at JQ or QE creates a larger learning community that will increase their access to shared school resources and school-wide activities, as well as enhance opportunities for teacher collaboration. Moving QEA to JQ allows for more robust French programming and reduces one transition for QEA students who currently continue their French immersion program at JQ from grades 4-7.

## **OTHER FACTORS**

**STUDENT SAFETY:** QEA is not a seismically safe facility. The proposed closure could advance the goal of having more students in seismically safe schools.

**POTENTIAL REVENUE:** There is interest from the Francophone public school board, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique to acquire the QEA site. Although land disposal is a separate process governed by a different Board policy, any revenue generated from a long-term lease of the site could be used to build new schools, expand existing schools, and/or enhance seismic projects.

**LEGAL PROCEEDINGS:** The District is currently involved in a mediation and a civil claim with CSF about the QEA site. Closing the school could resolve these extensive and costly legal proceedings.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- 1 While engagement about the QEA closure proposal has been underway with the potentially impacted school communities since February, broader community engagement is occurring throughout April 2022, according to a clear process outlined in Board policy.
- 2 On May 30, 2022, present the engagement summary report at a public Board meeting.
- 3 A special Board meeting will take place on June 2, 2022 to hear feedback about the engagement summary report.
- 4 Based on engagement feedback and staff recommendations, the Board will make its decision at a public meeting on June 6, 2022.
- 5 If approved, the proposed closure would take place June 30, 2023. All current students would be supported in continuing in the French immersion program, moving as a group to either JQ or QE.

## **YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT AND WILL HELP INFORM THE BOARD'S DECISION**

There are three ways to provide feedback about the proposed QEA closure.



Complete an anonymous 10-minute **SURVEY** at [engagevsb.ca](https://engagevsb.ca) available April 11 - 29



Register for a **VIRTUAL COMMUNITY DIALOGUE SESSION:**

**Public session 1:** Thursday, April 21 | 6:00 – 7:30 pm

**Public session 2:** Wednesday, April 27 | 3:30 – 5:00 pm

**Public session 3:** Thursday, April 28 | 7:00 – 8:30 pm

*Please sign-up for one session per family as we want to make space for as many community members as possible. The same content will be presented in all sessions.*



**EMAIL** your feedback to [engage@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:engage@vsb.bc.ca). All emails received will be shared with the Board as part of the final report summarizing What We Heard