

PUBLIC DELEGATION BOARD MEETING

AGENDA

Tuesday, May 21 2024, at 5:00 pm
Teams Live Broadcast

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səliiwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

1.2 OPENING REMARKS

2. DELEGATIONS

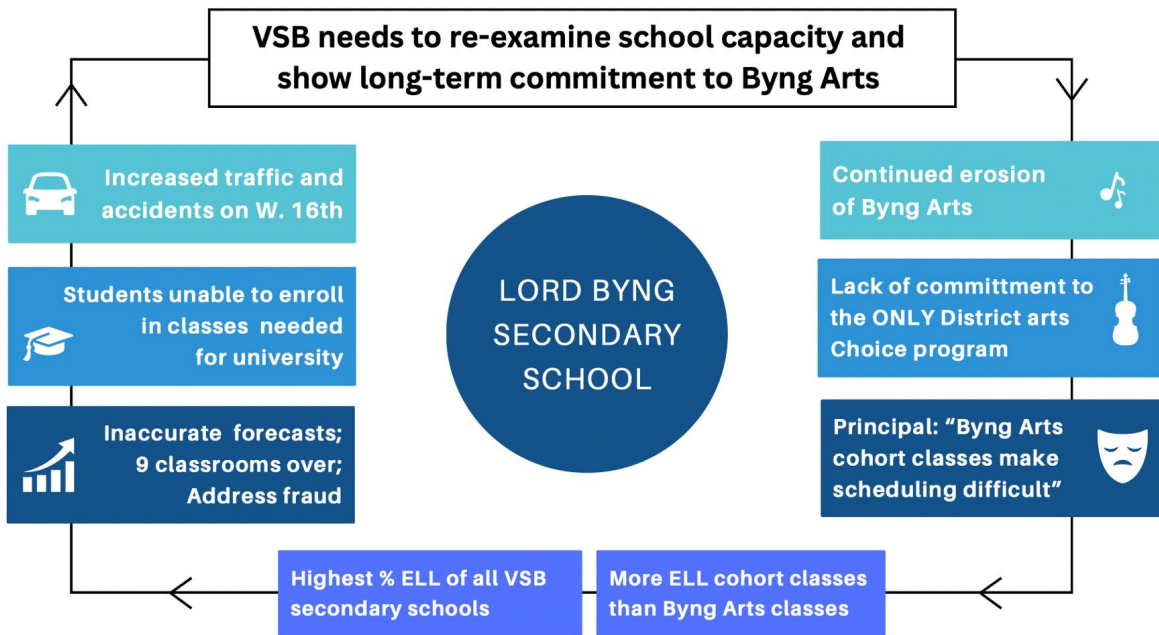
Delegations are estimated to begin approximately at 5:00 PM.

2.1 Delegations

2.1.1 Quynh Duffy re: Students and Digital Tech Use in Schools

2.1.2 Michelle Tseng, Lord Byng PAC re: Overcapacity at Lord Byng Secondary School and Byng Arts District Choice Program

3. ADJOURNMENT



May 21, 2024

Dear VSB Trustees and Staff,

My name is Michelle Tseng and I am the PAC co-chair at Lord Byng. Thank you for this opportunity to present before you today.

I am here to share several parent concerns that have been bubbling up throughout the school year. All of these issues are related to school capacity and enrollment.

All of the numbers you will hear in this presentation are available either on the VSB or Ministry of Education websites. As someone who works with data for a living, I'm grateful that these data are publicly available.

The slide I have here summarizes parent concerns and I will start at the top right corner and work clockwise.

In February 2024 all senior cohort classes of the Byng Arts Mini Program were removed from the curriculum without consultation. Byng Arts is now a 2.5-year program with some additional electives instead of a 5-year program like most other mini-schools.

Parents were told that senior Byng Arts courses were being removed so that Byng Arts students could have more choices in their course offerings. When pushed harder, the principal also said that the school is overcapacity and the Byng Arts Cohort Classes make scheduling for all other

students very difficult. He said the easiest way to fix scheduling issues at Byng was to remove Byng Arts Cohort Classes. Parents were told that no other solutions were considered.

The Byng Arts mini program is an award-winning mini-school, it is the only arts District Choice Program, and it has, over the last 24 years, turned Lord Byng Secondary into a highly sought-after school. Its reputation in academics, arts, and athletics has made it the number-one choice for non-English-speaking new Canadians. Byng now has the highest percentage of ELL students of all secondary schools in the VSB and Byng now offers more ELL cohort classes than Byng Arts classes.

I am also an educator and I come from an immigrant family. I fully understand that ELL students need and deserve additional support. However, as you are aware, what happens when the school is overcapacity is that programs within the school compete with each other for very limited resources. Case in point - Byng Arts students were unfairly blamed for scheduling issues that were not caused by Byng Arts. Byng Arts enrollment has not increased over time. Byng Arts students feel like they are the only ones giving up anything to help alleviate overcapacity at Byng.

I've mentioned overcapacity several times and I will give you some data to back this up. Byng has a capacity of 1200 students. According to VSB projections, Byng's enrollment will be 1384 in fall 2024: that's 6 classrooms, overcapacity. Parents have been told by admin that enrollment will be closer to 1460. That's 80 students more than the projected and brings the total to 260 students overcapacity, which is 9+ classrooms over.

We are already moving teaching spaces outdoors into the rain, and we are using risers to stack students vertically in classrooms. My daughter, who is grade 9, has never gotten a table in the cafeteria because it's always full. She doesn't complain about eating on the filthy floor because that's what she's always done at Byng.

Most VSB enrollment projections are fairly accurate. For Byng, Churchill, and King George, they are completely wrong. For Byng, I'm guessing that you are not accounting for new Canadians, and you are also not accounting for the rampant address fraud. A grade 12 teacher told his whole class that they know of 60 students who share the same address. When the principal was pressed on this issue, his response was "We're not Interpol".

In the final minute, I wanted to raise more serious issues related to overcapacity at Byng. One of them is that students have not been able to enrol in the classes they need for university applications. However, the number one most important parental concern is school safety. We have 200 extra families who are often frantically dropping off and picking up their kids, in combination with traffic from the ever-growing UBC. I think you all are aware of this by now but in January a grade 10 Byng student was hit by a car trying to cross W. 16th and she has not yet woken up from her coma.

I'm here today, not to throw the principal under the bus. I know that he's doing everything he can. I'm here today because parents at Byng need you to do your job. It is the job of the VSB to make sure that their district Choice programs are properly resourced and able to support the talented and highly motivated kids who attend these programs. As staff and elected officials, it is your job to ensure that all students are provided with a safe, clean, and supportive learning environment. This is not happening right now at Byng.

Thank you for your time.

Michelle Tseng
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