



**Media Release
For Immediate Release**

Monday, June 25, 2018

Board of Education to Apply to Ministry of Education for Seismic Upgrading and Expansion of Victoria High, including a new Neighbourhood Learning Centre

VICTORIA, BC – The Board of Education has determined a preferred option for seismically upgrading Victoria High School. Trustees directed the Superintendent to submit seismic plans to the Ministry of Education that preserves the building’s heritage, adds capacity for 200 students, and includes a Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC).

The *‘Seismic Plus Enhancements (1000) Plus NLC’* Option includes upgrading the 1914 building to meet current seismic safety standards. The option will retain the exterior of the current building while enhancing the interior. The biggest change will be the modernization of learning spaces for staff and students. Other upgrades will include new concrete stairwells, upgrades to the mechanical systems, and the installation of a new fire sprinkler system. The option also involves building a two-storey addition on the east side of the school that will accommodate 200 more seats, increasing the school’s capacity to 1,000 students. The District will also apply for funding to include a Neighbourhood Learning Centre; Neighbourhood Learning Centres provide space for community-based programs and services and are funded from a different Ministry of Education program than seismic upgrading.

Community input was sought to help inform the decision-making by the Board of Education. During April, an extensive public consultation process was undertaken that included open houses, staff and student sessions, and an online survey.

“We heard from more than 1,700 members of the community who strongly expressed the importance of school amenities and preserving this building due to its long-history and landmark role in the community,” shared Board Chair, Edith Loring-Kuhanga. “Our staff have worked hard over the recent months to find a way to retain the original characteristics of the school while creating an improved learning environment for generations to come.”

The Board of Education was provided with an [Engagement Summary Report](#) at the Board Meeting in May that compiled all of the information collected. After considering the input from the public and stakeholders, the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to further explore the costing of specific options. These options included Seismic with Enhancements, Seismic Plus with Enhancements and additional capacity, and a new build.

“The Board had to take into consideration the need for more space due to growing student enrolment,” expressed Loring-Kuhanga. “Victoria High School has reached capacity and we’re seeing a continuous

upward trajectory in student projections for this and neighbouring catchments. The school addition will improve functionality and create the space for more students.”

The estimated cost of the ‘*Seismic Plus Enhancements (1000) Plus NLC*’ Option is approximately \$73.3 million. This includes the addition of a Neighbourhood Learning Centre, which would cost approximately \$6 million.

For additional information on the costs associated with the seismic options please review the Superintendent’s Report (p.36): www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2018/06/June-25-2018-Regular-Agenda-and-Attachments.pdf

Proceeding with this option will be contingent upon receiving funding from the Ministry of Education. Once a decision is made, planning will take approximately one year and then construction will occur over two school years. Victoria High students will be accommodated at S.J. Willis during construction.

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