

Capacity crunch at New Westminister Schools

New Westminister Schools is experiencing capacity challenges. With the fastest growth in young families in the region, we have an urgent need to create more space.

- Our priorities are to construct a new elementary school (Fraser River Zone – Simcoe Elementary) and secure a site for another middle school.
- **Simcoe Elementary's** project submission was made in summer of 2024 and is awaiting funding approval. The project proposes using a district site which houses Fraser River Middle School, to build an adjacent elementary school.

Once complete, **Simcoe Campus** will serve 1,300 K-8 students on 2.8 acres of district land.

Did You Know...



SD40 uses **53** portables for a student population of over **7,800?**

1 in 4 K-8 students are taught in a portable.

Did You Know...



District schools are under green space standards by **31 acres**, which is the equivalent of 70 NHL-sized hockey rinks.

- There is an urgent need to acquire land to build a new **middle school**. Subsequent funding for the school is also required. The district has investigated several sites and put forward two options – one within catchment area, which is optimal, and a less optimal location for which it has executed a purchase and sales agreement that will expire by June 2025.

Government must make a decision before this date to avoid losing both sites if our preferred site is not approved.

- As we build these schools, a 16-classroom modular expansion planned for at Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary is needed to provide relief for current students learning in overcrowded conditions. This will also prepare us for students from the transit-oriented development expected at 22nd Street Station, which is expected to bring in approximately 30,000 new residents.

Budget that leaves BC kids behind

- Operating grants coming into districts do not cover inflation and other cost pressures.
- Rising costs – especially in portable placement and purchasing expenses – come out of classrooms.
- Benefits costs rose by \$1.2 million in the last two years without funding to cover these and districts have not received funding that reflects these increases.

Budget that leaves BC kids behind – cont.

- Costs to deliver education to students with diverse needs, including those without designations or with designations that do not provide additional funding.
- Available funds do not reflect what is required to address increasingly complex classrooms.
- By any measure, students in B.C. are receiving less funding for public education – and despite hard work from educators, falling evaluation scores suggest that we are paying the price with our children's futures.

Did You Know...



In the past year, the district spent **\$850,000** on portables out of the operating budget?

- Long wait lists for publicly-funded learning assessments mean that children waste critical years before important interventions can be funded. These assessments are required by the Province to deliver funding and services, but there is inadequate access to the assessments themselves – creating two-tiers within public education.

Mental and physical health support

Did You Know...



33% of SD40 students surveyed by the 2023 Youth Development Index reported an **unmet** mental health need?

- Ministries need to co-ordinate the provision of seamless services that support mental health in our communities.
 - Schools are well-positioned to provide Tier 1 and, to a certain extent, Tier 2 supports. Too many children and youth live in perpetual crisis, as they are unable to secure therapeutic intervention.
 - There is a significant need in our district for tier three (therapeutic) mental health support for children, youth, and their families.
- New Westminister lacks youth mental health services, and we call on the Province to establish an Integrated Child and Youth team.
 - Students and families lack access to primary health care. A nurse practitioner at the New Westminister Secondary's Wellness Centre was well-used, particularly by newcomer families without access to a family doctor. Recent drastic cuts to this service are hurting our families and students. A Community Health Clinic is urgently needed to serve New Westminister families and address a range of unmet health needs.