

Q&A

“Restructuring 2010”

Date updated: February 15th, 2010

Introduction

The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist parents and the community in understanding the spring consultation processes that will consider:

1. Potential closure and consolidation of a limited number of elementary schools.
2. Potential consolidation of alternate programs through reconfiguration and possible relocation and closure.
3. Preliminary research into the potential restructuring of elementary French Immersion.

The February 3rd, 2010 public meeting provided many additional questions to be answered. We are committed to working through these questions, and those that continue to come in through the restructuring2010@nvsd44.bc.ca mailbox. The homepage of the NVSD website will post a link to the most up to date Q&A available. New questions in each update will be added at the *beginning* of each section.

Questions that appear here may have been edited for length and clarity, and condensed where repetition has occurred.

Q&A

General process

What weight will trustees give to the reports from the Working Groups?

The Board will consider all input received including that from the working groups, Restructuring 2010 correspondence, and the report from staff. There is no specific 'weighting' applied to the various sources of information that the Board will consider.

Why was the meeting on February 3rd not a consultation?

The intent, design and advertising of the February 3rd meeting was clearly stated in advance as a “Public Information Meeting”. It's important that the public have good quality information regarding the complex budget and restructuring decisions the Board is facing at this time. The opportunity for broad public consultation was facilitated through the "Budget Challenge 2010" series of meetings in the Fall of 2009. Further consultation will be facilitated through the representative Working Groups.



What is the construct of each Working Group? How will representatives be chosen? Do they have to attend all meetings?

Representatives will be identified by the executive of our partner groups (PACs, NVPAC, NVTA, CUPE) and by our municipal and local partners. Representatives may be assigned by their executive or selected from members who indicate their interest to their partner group executive. Representatives will represent their constituents, attend all consultation meetings, receive input, serve as contacts, liaisons and spokespersons, and report back to their constituents after each meeting of the Working Groups.

Working group members will be confirmed by February 19th and a contact list will be posted to the website to facilitate written submissions to the respective representatives.

What is the schedule of meetings for the Working Groups?

Working Groups will meet March 4, 18, and April 1st from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Their findings will be finalized on April 1st for submission to the Board of Education. The Board will follow with direction and decisions related to the findings on April 20th.

What is the process each Working Group will follow?

Working Groups will:

- receive written input through representatives;
- identify, consider, and respond to potential alternatives, including community use;
- analyze alternatives;
- consider the implications of closures and reconfigurations and
- consider transition processes that would best address identified concerns.

Observations and input: will be gathered and recorded at each workshop, culminating in the development of findings for consideration.

Q&A

Potential closure and consolidation of a limited number of elementary schools

Do you consider traffic surveys when changing or consolidating schools?

Assessments of walking distance, barriers, safety of crossing major arteries, availability of transit, and the availability of signalized pedestrian crossings and/or crossing guards are among the traffic criteria that are considered.

Why are the numbers of Special Education Assistants (SEAs) expected to decrease where schools are consolidated?

This is not necessarily the case. The number of SEAs and their assignments is reviewed annually by the School District. The composition of our students changes from year to year and as such, we work out staffing accordingly. SEA time is allocated to schools based on their student population and needs of designated students. The use of SEA time is affected by economies of scale. For example, in a small school of 120 students, SEA time may be needed for individual students in different grades. In larger



schools there are more students with special needs, the potential for 2 or 3 students being in the same class increases and effectively maximizes the use of SEA time.

Why will the Board not submit a deficit budget to the government that reflects the true costs of providing services?

Boards of Education are required by law to submit balanced budgets. This is a fundamental responsibility in governing the organization. Should a Board submit a deficit budget, the consequence entails that the government may dismiss the entire board, and assign an official to balance the budget, without public consultation or stakeholder consideration.

How do you arrive at your enrollment projections?

Enrollment projections are based on birth rates, migration rates, development (planned and potential) and grade progression of students through school.

Why is Lynnmour not presented as an option for Plymouth and Seymour Heights students to attend?

Lynnmour is available as an option for Plymouth and Seymour Heights students to attend. The presentation materials provided illustrative examples of how the student population could be readily accommodated, without every possibility being provided.

What year is being looked at for replacing Handsworth?

The first priority secondary school for replacement is Argyle Secondary. Seymour Heights Elementary is the second priority, after Argyle. Proposals have been submitted to the Ministry of Education for both schools, but funding by the Ministry of Education has not yet been provided. The replacement of Handsworth is identified as the third priority in the School District's Capital Plan.

Can we open the closure/consolidation review to include all elementary schools in the Argyle Family of Schools?

All elementary schools in the School District have been reviewed using the criteria developed for the purpose of considering schools for potential closure. These criteria include demographics, current utilization and space available, financial operating costs, age, condition and energy efficiency, location and proximity to potential receiving schools, role in the community and programs offered. The results from this process are the foundation rationale of the schools identified by the Board of Education for consideration for possible closure and consolidation under Policy 610.

Would teachers at Fromme be transferred to a school in Lynn Valley if Fromme closes?

We follow the provisions of the Collective Agreement for all posting and filling of teaching positions. When teaching positions are available, the position is posted district-wide. All interested and eligible applicants may then apply for the vacant position.

Will before and after school care be provided at Seymour Heights?

The School District does not provide before and after school care but does offer space to child care providers for the delivery of this service. It is anticipated that a larger school is likely to have an increased need for child care services and we will continue to work with the provincial government to incorporate Neighbourhoods of Learning space in the new school which would be able to accommodate the delivery of child care services.

What alternative means of raising funds has the School District put in place?

The School District has shown considerable initiative in revenue generation within legislated parameters for the administration of public education. Revenue initiatives include: fees from international students; curriculum sales; leasing buildings, partial building space and rooms; land sales, two charitable foundations (The Gordon and Marion Smith Foundation benefitting Artists for Kids and the Pacific Foundation for Environmental Learning). As well, the School District is a registered charity and accepts donations.

Has the School District considered partnering with the City or District of North Vancouver for grounds maintenance?

The School District and both municipalities currently partner on aspects of grounds maintenance at specific sites where we have Joint Use Agreements. This includes Handsworth, Carson, and Sutherland. The School District, and City, and the District continue to look for Joint Use opportunities, and are currently formulating a Joint Use Agreement regarding the Windsor field and track.

Why was Fromme listed for possible closure and not other schools in the catchment?

Housed in a 46-year-old building, Fromme is an older school with a relatively small student capacity. The cost of operating a small school is higher than that of a school with a larger capacity, and Fromme is well-situated to other schools nearby that can accommodate its students. The nearest available school to Fromme is Lynn Valley Elementary which is located only .8 km from Fromme, and is newly built to a higher seismic standard. Please refer to the list of criteria, posted on the Restructuring 2010 main page, for more information on criteria considered.

Could Lynn Valley Elementary become the new board office?

Schools are specifically designed to accommodate students and the activities of teaching and learning. To renovate a new school to accommodate administration is not economically feasible. The rebuilding of Lynn Valley Elementary (completed in 2005) is part of the continuum to replace our older schools, built in the 50s and 60s, with new, sustainable and seismically sound facilities for our students.

Does the Board plan to close all four schools listed for Policy 610 review?

No. The current project proposal before the Ministry of Education is to consolidate Plymouth and Blueridge Elementary into a rebuilt Seymour Heights. The new school would have capacity for 500 students. We also wish to consider possibilities to reduce enrolment to a more optimal capacity.

If Plymouth, Blueridge and Seymour Heights are consolidated, won't this create an elementary school for 700 students?

No. The capacity of the present Seymour Heights is for 320 students. The new school proposed would be for 500 students. Lynnmour is also a receiving school in this catchment, has a capacity of 295 and has space available to accommodate more students.

What are the potential overhead savings that can be accrued from closing an elementary school?

For the four schools under consideration, closure savings range from \$360,000 per year (Plymouth) to \$480,000 (Blueridge). The other two schools are in between this range.

Is it cost-effective to close a school and have it sit empty?

Yes, a closure saves overhead operating and administration costs and creates real revenue potential, in the case of an elementary school, in the range of \$250,000 annually for the School District.

What is the status of junior Kindergarten?



The Ministry of Education sets the direction for the provision or expansion of education programs province-wide. Please consult the February 9, 2010 Throne Speech for the government's most current statement of commitment to early learning.

Where can I find details on the Full Day Kindergarten program?

Please visit nvسد44.bc.ca Programs > Kindergarten Programs for more information.

How will parents be represented in the consultation process?

Parents will be represented in the consultation process through their respective Parent Advisory Council and by the North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council. Representatives will be selected from individuals who indicate their interest to the executive of these partner groups.

The Ministry of Education has indicated they are interested in providing pre-school programs as part of its mandate. If schools are closed and consolidated will you have space when you need it for Full Day Kindergarten and pre-school classes?

The Board of Education will continue to plan for the implementation of Ministry initiatives to ensure that adequate space remains available within the School District. The School District submits a Capital Plan on an annual basis to ensure that future enrolment needs are being addressed.

Why is a school that is nearly full, and well-established in the community, on the list of possible closures?

The School District needs to consider the space available within all schools and how to use this space most efficiently to preserve funds for instructional purposes. When reasonable space is available in neighbouring schools, the School District needs to consider how best to use this space to reduce operating costs to preserve funds for instructional purposes.

Q&A

Potential consolidation of alternate programs through reconfiguration and possible relocation or closure

Have you considered the social problems that may result in incorporating KLASS students into a mainstream school, given the difficulties these students have already had in mainstream schools?

The *Towards the Future for Schools* process and internal review identified the need for further consultation with the KLASS community to determine the potential location options *either* to integrate students within an existing school or as a distinct entity within a shared facility. In exploring the preferred option, the impacts of change upon students and challenges anticipated in their adaptability will be examined.

How was support to move KLASS to an existing, mainstream site arrived at?

Potential changes to the delivery model of district alternate programs have previously been examined through individual program reviews of Windsor House (2007, 2008), Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School (2008) and the Third Step Program (2008).

Additionally, the potential for the relocation of programs has also been discussed in the context of the *Towards the Future for Schools* consultation process of 2008. Reduced facility operating costs and a reduction in overlapping services and staff would help preserve funds for program delivery.

Many of the alternate programs have created unique, caring environments for the students that attend them. How is it possible to close, consolidate or move these programs and still preserve the culture and specialized attention these students need?

The consultation process will look closely at the cultural components that contribute to the success of our alternate programs. The representative Working Group will consider how the school community will be affected, and priorities for respecting and maintaining highly-valued components of the programs, even if locations and organizational structure are to change.

If programs were relocated to areas currently not served by public transit, what can be done to ensure students have transportation to school?

Any component of a relocation plan would consider transportation needs, and barriers to accessing the location. If transportation/transit is an issue, the consultation process will identify it as a priority for further consideration and potential solutions.

How will parents be represented in the consultation process?

Parents will be represented in the consultation process through their respective Parent Advisory Council and by the North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council. Representatives will be selected from individuals who indicate their interest to the Executive of these partner groups.

Q&A

Elementary French Immersion Consultation

Are there any studies on the pros/cons of beginning French Immersion in Kindergarten as compared to a Grade 1 start?

During the past 30 years of research on French Immersion, several Canadian studies have sought to compare the language proficiency levels of students enrolled in different types of French language programs (FSL vs. Immersion; Bilingual programs vs. Early Immersion; Early Immersion vs. Late Immersion). The results of these studies have not always been conclusive in determining a direct correlation between the intensity (total hours) of French instruction to increased language proficiency levels. We are not aware at this time of any specific studies on the pros/cons of beginning French Immersion in Kindergarten as compared to Grade 1. However, the Working Group will examine and discuss any available research from other districts, as well as the BC Ministry of Education French Policy, to ensure a full understanding of this option.

Is the review of French Immersion delivery province-wide, or unique to our school district?

Our review is not connected to similar reviews that may be happening in other school districts.

What are the impacts of creating a single-track French Immersion school from one that is currently dual track? Wouldn't this, in effect, create yet another English school closure?

The single-track school concept, and its impacts, is one of the possible options the French Immersion Working Group will consider during their three meetings. By the end of their three sessions, the Working Group should have findings to present regarding the impacts of any changes to the configuration of our District French Immersion program.

Can French Immersion schools that have no available classroom space taken in only one K French class?

In North Vancouver, French Immersion is a district-wide program with Kindergarten classes available in several elementary schools to ensure geographical accessibility to the program. Each year the School District determines the number of French Immersion Kindergarten classes in each FI school based on enrolment trends and available site capacity.

Is the Board of Education proposing to introduce a single stream French Immersion (all French) school next year as part of the budget process?

Contrary to what has been reported in the local media, there is no proposal by the Board at this time to create an all French school and no financial savings have been identified regarding elementary French Immersion and the budget development process. The purpose of the consultation for elementary French Immersion this year is to conduct preliminary research into program delivery.

How will parents be represented in the consultation/research process?

Parents will be represented in the consultation process through their respective Parent Advisory Council and by the North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council. Representatives will be selected from individuals who indicate their interest to the Executive of these partner groups.

Why is the Board having these discussions at this time? Why is this consultation necessary?

The implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program in all schools by September 2011 will present challenges for the School District in a number of our French Immersion schools due to the need for additional classroom space.

What are some of the considerations the Board must weigh when planning for the future accommodation of District-wide FDK and French Immersion?

Some of the questions that will be examined through research and consultation are:

Should our Early Immersion program start at Grade 1 (or later) so that all children can be accommodated in their neighbourhood school for Kindergarten?

Should we introduce French Immersion Kindergarten at other schools to address the space issues for FDK?

Should we add portable classrooms to our French Immersion schools?

Should we consider the introduction of a single stream French Immersion program?

There are various methods of program delivery that would also be discussed in the consultation process. Options for consideration include: a) dual track/early Immersion, b) single track/early immersion, c) dual track/late immersion, d) single track/early and late immersion, and e) dual track/ early and late immersion.

Each of these options would be given consideration, identifying the positives, minuses and interesting ideas associated with each of the delivery models. Observations and input provided through the representative Working Groups will help inform the preliminary research. The Board will take this research into consideration before making any decision regarding changes to the elementary Immersion program for September 2011.

What are the potential gains to the NVSD from single-track schools?

Potential benefits associated with single-track schools include an enhanced immersion language experience greater opportunities for the efficient organization of classes (i.e. fewer combined grade classes) for instructional purposes.

Which school/schools have been discussed as possibilities to offer French-only?

Between now and the end of the 2010 school year, research and consultation is focused on the feasibility of changes to the delivery model of the elementary French Immersion program. No school locations have been identified to offer French-only. Should the feasibility study determine interest in considering a single-stream school, the Board of Education would have to provide further direction for consideration in the 2010/2011 school year.

Should a school become French only school, would you be looking to phase out the English stream gradually over time?

Please note that there is no proposal at this stage to implement a French only school at any location. Should any school be considered for a French only school, a gradual 'phase out' would be one possible approach that would achieve the benefit of allowing students to continue at the school until they complete their elementary program.

During the preliminary research phase, could students graduating in 2010/11 be impacted?

No. The focus of the preliminary research is on the elementary level only.



How will the possible closure of a school affect the recent expansion of French Immersion at Windsor Secondary?

None of the schools named for consultation around possible closure offer French Immersion and decisions for these schools would not impact the program offered at Windsor.

Will the consultation address staffing shortages for French Immersion?

The purpose of the consultation is to consider the delivery model for providing elementary French Immersion—it is not a staffing review. Our School District attracts many teachers interested in teaching in the French Immersion Program. We also proactively recruit qualified French Immersion teachers from universities across Canada.