

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. Standing Up for Vancouver's Neighbourhood Schools

MOVER: Councillor Reimer

SECONDER: Mayor Robertson

WHEREAS

1. The Vancouver School Board (VSB) is considering closing 12 schools, displacing 3,265 students of which 97% are on Vancouver's east side;
2. Neighbourhood schools provide critical community space in non-school hours for services such as childcare and recreation and are essential to City policies including Healthy City, Engaged City, City of Reconciliation and Transportation 2040;
3. The impetus for the proposed school closures is a provincial "capacity requirement" that Vancouver schools must have a 95% capacity on instructional spaces or badly needed, life-saving seismic upgrades won't be funded;
4. The capacity requirement is not based on any generally accepted principle of an appropriate educational size for a school but rather financial needs created by chronic provincial underfunding of public education;
5. The capacity requirement is not large enough to allow any flexibility for school enrollment changes, even those these can vary widely year to year due to the provincial "cross-boundary" policy;
6. The capacity requirement does not allow the VSB to consider vulnerable learners, such as inner city and Aboriginal children and youth, separately even though research shows that a strong connection to place, and the people in that place, is a key factor in supporting success for these students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City write to the Provincial Minister of Education, with a copy to the Chair of the Vancouver School Board, to request that the Provincial capacity requirements be amended to:

- Allow for a lower capacity requirement where mitigating factors exist, such as significant enrollment fluctuation;
- Decouple the requirement for school boards to close schools in order to get funding for life-saving seismic upgrades;
- Support right-sizing of neighbourhood schools where there is a clear, consistent trend of lower enrollment; and
- Change the formula for calculating capacity to reflect that place-based learning is critical for the success of inner city and Aboriginal learners.