

Vancouver School Board
Proposed Closure: Queen Elizabeth Annex
What We Heard - Engagement Findings Report

May 27, 2022

DEL Δ NEY
the engagement people

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Survey	5
Public Meetings - Community Dialogue Sessions	6
Context & Background	8
Summary: Proposed closure - Queen Elizabeth Annex school	8
Vancouver School Board Policy 14	8
Rationale for change presented by District staff (2022)	9
Engagement Goals & Objectives	10
Engagement objectives	10
Proposed QEA closure: Process timeline and key dates	10
Communications Goal & Objectives	14
Early Engagement	15
Early Engagement: What we heard	15
Online Survey - Findings	18
Survey format and summary of questions	18
Process design	19
Who participated	19
Online Survey: What we heard	21
Community Dialogue Sessions - Findings	35
Background	35
Key Dates	35
Format	36

Process Design	36
Community Dialogue Sessions: What We Heard	37
Next Steps	44
Appendix A: Community Dialogue Sessions – Presentation	45
Appendix B: Online Survey	57
QEA Proposed School Closure Survey	57
Appendix C: IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	65
Appendix D: VSB – Social media communications (QEA)	66

Executive Summary

The Vancouver School Board (VSB) is considering a proposal by District staff to close Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) school on June 30, 2023. Located at 4275 Crown Street, QEA is the annex to École Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ) and currently offers early French Immersion to 71 students in kindergarten (K) to Grade 3.

In January 2022, Vancouver School District (District) staff recommended the Board consider the closure of QEA to provide more equitable distribution of resources for all VSB students, while guaranteeing current QEA students ongoing placement in French Immersion, a District choice program. In accordance with [Board Policy #14 – School Closures](#), the District is required to “allow a period of at least (60) days for public consultation process to take place” before the Board of Education (Board) makes a decision on the proposal. The Board approved proceeding to public consultation at its public meeting on January 31, 2022, and engagement occurred between February and May 2022.

A publicly available [project information page](#) was published on the VSB website on April 11 which contains information about the proposed closure and outlines engagement opportunities.

The primary goal of the engagement was **to provide opportunities to members of the public to share feedback on the proposed QEA closure** for the Board’s review and consideration. Supplementary (optional) questions asked for feedback on the preferred school for students should the closure be approved; both JQ and Queen Elizabeth (QE) schools were identified, each with their own associated benefits and drawbacks.

The engagement process was developed based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) planning methodology and best practices. This report was prepared by Delaney, *the engagement people*, a nationally recognized and respected firm with over 25 years experience leading public engagement. For this process, Delaney took the role of neutral third party who supported the District in its engagement planning and implementation, as well as with the analysis of engagement findings.

This consultation process began on February 10, 2022 (targeted stakeholder engagement) and continued through April 29, 2022 (public engagement), with email submissions being accepted until the end of May 2022. The primary methods used were a public online survey (1,031 completed surveys received) and community dialogue sessions (61 participants).

In addition, the District also invited direct written feedback by email from February 10 to May 26, 2022. All emails received on the proposed QEA closure have been provided to the Board by District staff. They have not been included in this analysis as Delaney’s scope was to implement and report on the survey and public meetings, referred to as community dialogue sessions in communication and promotional materials.

Survey

A survey made up of nine questions was publicly available online and open to participation from April 11 to April 29. The survey was promoted publicly through a [news release](#), earned media, the [project website](#), social media and direct outreach by email to stakeholder groups, including all families in the District. The survey contained six questions and three optional questions. The sixth question was an open-ended question inviting participants to provide open-text comments and feedback. No character limits were put on the open text question.

In total, 1,031 surveys were completed. Of those, 60% were completed by individuals who indicated they are family members of students at VSB schools other than QEA, QE or JQ. Eight per cent of surveys were completed by respondents who indicated they are parents of current students at QEA.

Respondents of the survey were divided on whether they **support (51%)** or **oppose (46%)** the closure, with the remaining number indicating *don't know/no preference (3%)*.

Key themes identified in the survey included:

- **Seismically safe schools, fiscal responsibility, and strong sense of community** were identified by a majority of respondents as high/moderate priorities that should be considered by the Board as it makes a decision on the proposed closure of QEA.
- **Losing access to the small learning environment at QEA, physical school space, proximity to school (safety, walkability) and health and wellbeing of my family** were ranked to be serious concerns and somewhat a concern.

In response to the sixth question, the open-text comments were reviewed and themed according to the subject of the comments. In total, 480 respondents provided written comments in answer to this question. There were 180 comments entered in support of the proposed closure, and 286 opposed to the proposed closure or voiced concerns about the closure. A further 14 comments were from those who indicated neither support nor opposition to the closure. The most common themes in the comments are as follows:

- **Financial reasons** (59% of comments in support; approx. 106 comments) - Respondents indicated the following considerations: funding equity and a need to take a District-wide approach; low enrollment and high capital costs; high costs overall.
- **Demographic considerations** (30% of comments in opposition; approx. 86 comments) - Respondents indicated the following concerns: that the population will grow overall and increase demand for school capacity; that specific population growth related to Jericho Lands/UBC would increase demand for school capacity; other concerns including increased density, long-range planning.
- **Sale of land** - Among both supporters and those opposed to the closure, there were comments that the land where QEA is located should not be sold but should remain owned by the VSB. This was the only area of commonality and consistency across respondents.

A final question in the survey asked for feedback on the ease of survey participation and of the decision-making process overall. The majority of respondents agreed that they appreciated being able to provide input into the decision (71% *strongly agree*, 20% *somewhat agree*.)

Public Meetings - Community Dialogue Sessions

Five facilitated, 90-minute public meetings, referred to in communication and promotional materials as community dialogue sessions, were held virtually on Zoom between April 19 – 28. Initially, three sessions were planned; however, following early consultation with JQ and QEA PAC executives, two additional sessions were added to the schedule at their request, to provide sessions specific to each of the JQ and QEA communities.

The dialogue sessions were promoted publicly through a news release issued on April 11, earned media, [the District's website](#), social media and direct outreach by email to stakeholder groups, including all families in the District.

In total, for the community dialogue sessions there were 100 registrations (93 unique registrants) across five sessions, with 61 actual participants attending. A small number of people registered and attended more than one session and were therefore counted more than once. Of those who participated, 27 voluntarily self-identified as a family member of a student or future student at QE/JQ/QEA. However, some participants chose not to answer the poll question at the beginning of the session.

The first 40 minutes of the sessions included an overview of the workshop agenda from the facilitator, a presentation by District staff outlining the rationale for the proposed school closure, as required by Board Policy 14, and questions for clarification. A version of the [staff presentation](#) is posted on the project website. The [presentation](#) was consistent (the same) at all five community dialogue sessions. The second half of the community dialogue sessions were held in smaller breakout groups, where each participant was provided opportunities to speak and respond to three discussion questions.

The purpose of the dialogue sessions was to provide a safe space for participants to share their input verbally, and have their feedback captured by a note-taker. For some people, this is a preferred option over writing feedback or completing a survey. In sessions where there were higher numbers of registrants, Delaney made more facilitators available so that breakout groups would remain under 10 participants and ensure each attendee had the opportunity to speak and provide input.

Consistent themes raised at the community dialogue sessions were:

- **Lack of trust:** Participants spoke about an overall lack of trust toward the District, including its decision-making and consultation processes. They referenced past experiences and the three past times when the District proposed closing QEA, and several people said they did not agree with information presented as rationale for the closure.
- **Long-range planning:** Participants voiced their belief that the QEA school site will be needed in future years as more families are already moving into the area, and as development projects (e.g., Jericho Lands) are completed. There was strong belief amongst participants that the anticipated operational cost savings if QEA closes are less than what the District has estimated, particularly when weighed against the possibility that population growth in the area will increase demand for elementary school capacity.

- **Impacts on JQ:** Participants shared several concerns associated with a potential relocation of QEA students to JQ. Some people shared their belief that JQ is at capacity and QE is an older facility and not safer (seismically), making both schools unsuited to receive QEA students. Concerns were shared about students moving to JQ would result in overcrowding as well as a loss of existing indoor/outdoor space for students overall.
- **Broader neighbourhood impacts:** Concerns were expressed about the impact of a school closure on the broader community, traffic, climate change and walkability.

No participants at the community dialogue sessions voiced support for the QEA closure, although there were some comments made recognizing the Board's role to consider the needs of all the students in the District.

Context & Background

Summary: Proposed closure - Queen Elizabeth Annex school

Queen Elizabeth Annex elementary school (4275 Crown Street, Vancouver) currently offers French immersion to Vancouver students in kindergarten to Grade 3. There are 71 students currently attending QEA. QEA is the feeder school to Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ), which offers kindergarten to Grade 7 French immersion programming. As a District program, the Annex does not have a neighbourhood catchment, rather it enrolls students from across the District.

In 2016, District staff submitted a school closure list that included QEA and 10 other VSB schools, in response to declining enrollment District wide. At that time, the Board elected not to proceed with a public consultation process on the closures.

In 2019, District staff again proposed closing QEA; however, the Board voted to suspend the closure process at the October 28, 2019, Board meeting. One of the comments expressed by some Board members was that the District did not have an approved Long Range Facility Plan. Since that time, the Board has approved the 2020 Long Range Facilities plan (approved Jan. 25, 2021). The 2020 plan is the District's mechanism to demonstrate that facility planning is taking place in support of the District's educational plans over a 10-year window, using 2019 as the base year.

Vancouver School Board Policy 14

[Board Policy 14](#) – School Closure outlines specific steps and requirements related to a proposed closure of a school. The policy requires a “public consultation process” be held prior to the Board making its final decision. District senior management is required to make available, in writing, the rationale for the proposed closure, which includes the number of students who would be affected, enrolment trends, availability of space at receiving schools, proximity to possible receiving schools, financial considerations including anticipated cost savings, facility age and condition, District choice and special education programs offered at the school, impacts on surrounding schools and impacts on community users operating in the school.

As per Policy 14, once a school closure public consultation process has been approved and initiated, at least one public consultation meeting is required. The details of the meeting must be communicated to the community a minimum of 14 days in advance of the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting District staff must present the rationale for the closure, the timing of the closure and possible alternative community use for all or part of the school. The District is also required to accept written responses to the Board. All input received through the consultation period will be considered prior to the Board making its final decision.

Rationale for change presented by District staff (2022)

In alignment with Policy 14, a publicly available [project information page](#) was posted on the VSB website on Apr. 11, 2022. The page includes a summary of rationale supporting the proposed closure of QEA, including the following:

- **Responsible use of resources to benefit all students:** QEA has high operating costs. Closing QEA would result in significant operational savings of between \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually, which could be re-allocated to programs and services supporting students across the District.
- **Prioritizing student learning:** Current QEA students will be guaranteed placement in the French immersion program at either JQ or QE. Students in a language program who are part of a larger community have access to more robust French programming, increased cultural experiences and more opportunities for teacher and student collaboration. Moving the French immersion program at QEA to JQ would also allow students to stay in one school from kindergarten to Grade 7, making one less transition for QEA students, who currently continue their French immersion program at JQ from grades 4 to 7.
- **Student safety:** QEA is not a seismically safe facility. The proposed closure could advance the goal of having more students in seismically safe schools.
- **Potential revenue:** There is interest from the Francophone public school board, [Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique](#) (CSF), to acquire the QEA site. Although land disposal is a different and separate process, any revenue generated from a long-term lease of the site could be used to build new schools, expand existing schools, and/or enhance seismic projects.
- **Legal proceedings:** The District is currently involved in a mediation and a civil claim with CSF about the QEA site. Closing the school could resolve these extensive and costly legal proceedings.

See Appendix A ([PowerPoint](#)) for the District presentation at the community dialogue sessions.

Engagement Goals & Objectives

The following engagement goals and objectives were developed based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement (see Appendix D). The Delaney team includes two IAP2 licensed trainers and certified professional facilitators, accredited through the International Association of Facilitators.

For this process, the **engagement goal** was to provide opportunities for those interested and impacted by the proposed QEA school closure to share feedback for consideration by the Board, as it considers and votes on the proposal by District staff.

Engagement objectives

1. **Consult** | By late April 2022, receive feedback on the proposed school closure, including the pros and cons.
2. **Consult** | By late April 2022, receive OPTIONAL feedback on each of the proposed new schools (JQ or QE) and the pros and cons of each.
3. **Involve** | By late April 2022, solicit input to better understand the impacts (positive and negative) of the proposed school closure.

Proposed QEA closure: Process timeline and key dates

On January 14, 2022, District staff notified the Chairs of the QEA, JQ and QE PACs of a Special Board Meeting planned for January 17, 2022, where staff would be introducing a proposal to close the QEA site, effective June 2023. Families and parents at each of the three schools were also notified January 14, through a [letter](#) from Deputy Superintendent David Nelson.

At the [January 17 Special Board Meeting](#), senior District staff outlined key factors in making the closure recommendation. Following the presentation and discussion, the Board passed a motion to forward the report to its Facilities Planning Committee for review, as per Board process. The [Facilities Planning Committee](#) met on January 19 and following a presentation by District staff, the Trustees on the committee made the decision to recommend the Board initiate a public consultation process.

A [second letter](#) (January 20) from Deputy Superintendent Nelson was sent to QEA, JQ and QE school communities (families, PACs, staff); the letter summarized the meetings and recommendations to date and note the next step in the process was the Board's regular meeting at the end of January.

On [January 31, 2022](#), the Board passed a motion approving District staff to initiate a public consultation period to seek feedback on the proposed closure of the QEA site. A [third letter](#) (February 2) from Deputy Superintendent Nelson was sent to QEA, JQ and QE school communities indicating a public consultation process would be launched.

At meetings with the QE, JQ and QEA PACs in February, the District invited written submissions related to the proposed closure through emailing engage@vsb.bc.ca. In meetings with other stakeholder groups, and in communications to all VSB parents/guardians and the broader public, the engage@vsb.bc.ca email was consistently promoted as one of several ways for people to provide input into the QEA engagement process.

All emails received on the topic of the proposed QEA closure from February 10 – May 26, 2022, are being provided in full to the Board at the May 30, 2022, public Board meeting.

Additional engagement opportunities, led by Delaney, are detailed within this report and align to the following timeline:

Proposed QEA closure – Engagement & process timeline

Event	Dates
District notification and meetings with directly impacted stakeholder groups, advising of Board’s decision to move forward with public consultation on the proposed QEA closure	Feb. 2 – letter from District to families of QEA, JQ and QE Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m. – QEA PAC executives Feb. 10, 7 p.m. – JQ PAC executives Feb. 17, 7 p.m. – QE PAC executives *VSB engage@vsb.bc.ca email provided for written submissions
Invite to xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations to initiate early engagement conversations	Feb 17 – letter sent Tsleil-Waututh Nation indicated they did not require a meeting. No response was received from the Musqueam and Squamish Nations.
Early engagement: Delaney meetings with PAC executives and stakeholder groups *See <i>Early Engagement</i> – p. 9 for further details	Mar. 7, 7 – 8 p.m. – JQ PAC Mar. 8, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. – QEA PAC Mar. 9 – QEA stakeholders (impacted bargaining units, professional associations, District PAC) *Note: QE PAC declined a session and provided input to Delaney by email
News Release : “District seeks feedback about the recommendation to close QEA”	Apr. 5 *included dates/times and registration information for community dialogue sessions and survey launch, as well as engage@vsb.bc.ca email for written submissions

<p>Letter to all VSB District families</p>	<p>Apr. 5</p> <p>*included dates/times and registration information for community dialogue sessions and survey launch, as well as engage@vsb.bc.ca email for written submissions</p>
<p>Project website launch</p>	<p>Apr. 5</p>
<p>Invite to three Nations to participate in engagement activities</p>	<p>Apr. 5 – letter sent</p> <p>Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations declined the invitation. Musqueam Nation did not respond.</p>
<p>Online survey</p>	<p>Apr. 11 – 29</p> <p>*Apr. 11 - Reminder email sent to all VSB District families that the survey is open</p> <p>*Apr. 25 – Reminder email sent to all VSB District families of survey, and the remaining community dialogue sessions Apr. 27 and 28</p>
<p>Special Board Meeting (Delegations)</p>	<p>Apr. 19</p> <p>Presenters included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunbar Resident Association, Bruce Gilmour re: closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) • Crown Preschool, Nina Monahan re: Impacts of the proposed Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) closure on Dunbar businesses including current preschool children with older siblings already attending QEA • Kevin Gourlay re: closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) and the need for funding of the Olympic Village School • Michael Hooper re: the process for Vancouver School Board (VSB) school disposal • École Jules Quesnel Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), Lauren Kate Hood re: space concerns and planning for the future at École Jules Quesnel • Robert Ford and Emily Clarke re: French Immersion in the district in the context of the Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) proposed closure • Lia Anele Gudaitis re: Future school needs for Vancouver's West Side • Queen Elizabeth Annex Parent (QEA) Advisory Committee (PAC), Ken Su re: QEA PAC and Parent concerns around process, information presented, and implications of potential decision to close
<p>Community Dialogue Sessions (x5)</p>	<p>Apr. 19 @7-8:30 p.m.: QEA session</p>

	<p>Apr. 20 @7-8:30 p.m.: JQ session</p> <p>Apr. 21 @6-7:30 p.m.: public session 1</p> <p>Apr. 27 @3:30 – 5 p.m.: public session 2</p> <p>Apr. 28 @7-8:30 p.m.: public session 3</p>
Regular Board Meeting	<p>May 30</p> <p>*Present What We Heard report</p>
Special Board Meeting (Delegations)	<p>June 2</p> <p>Presenters to be announced on the District's website</p> <p>*To receive public feedback on What We Heard report</p>
Special Board Meeting	<p>June 6</p> <p>*Board to vote on proposed QEA closure</p>

Communications Goal & Objectives

The **communications goal** for this public consultation process was to provide community members, interested and affected parties, and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations the information they need to meaningfully participate in the engagement process. The **communications objectives** were as follows:

1. To **share information** with interested and affected parties about the engagement process, opportunities and how their input will be considered in the decision.
2. To **build common understanding** about the reasons why District staff proposed closing QEA, as well as the decision-making process by the Board.
3. To **promote engagement opportunities** and an understanding of what is in-scope for the engagement, and what information or questions may be relevant to other decisions in the future, but not this specific proposal.

To fulfil the above objectives, the following materials were developed and distributed/published:

- [Project information website](#) (Apr. 5) – project resources, background (vsb.bc.ca), including:
 - [Project Backgrounder](#)
 - [Project Fact Sheet](#)
 - [Project FAQs](#)
 - [Project timeline graphic](#)
 - [Documents & Data page](#), including links to: French immersion data, VSB enrolment, space use, educational impacts, building information, travel considerations, financial considerations, future developments and public meetings and reports
- [Project engagement website](#) – link to community dialogue sessions, survey and email
- [News Release](#) (Apr. 5) – Vancouver School District seeks feedback about recommendation to close QEA
- [Letter to VSB families](#) – About engagement opportunities (Apr. 5)
- [Reminder to VSB families](#) – Survey live (Apr. 11)
- [Presentation slides](#) for community dialogue sessions (Apr. 19 – 28)
- [Recording of the staff presentation](#) for the community dialogue sessions

In addition, VSB communications led social media promotions about the QEA engagement process (see Appendix E) and managed media inquiries by providing interviews and written responses.

Early Engagement

Following up on initial meetings between stakeholders and District staff in February, Delaney met with QEA and JQ PACs and stakeholders to understand their interests and preferences in relation to the engagement process.

The groups invited to participate in early engagement were:

Early engagement – Stakeholders	Engagement Date
QEA Parent Advisory Council	Mar. 8
JQ Parent Advisory Council	Mar. 8
QE Parent Advisory Council	<i>Declined session</i>
(Led by District staff) Leadership of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations	<i>Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations declined session Musqueam Nation did not respond.</i>
CUPE 15, CUPE 407, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Vancouver Elementary Principals and Vice-Principals (VEPFPA) Vancouver Elementary School Teachers’ Association (VESTA) Vancouver Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) VSB Bargaining Council of the VSB Construction & Maintenance Trade Unions Vancouver District Parents’ Advisory Council (DPAC) Vancouver Association of Secondary School Administrators (VASSA) Professional and Administrative Staff Association (PASA)	Mar. 9

Early Engagement: What we heard

Early engagement activities provided the ability for Delaney and the District to address initial questions from potentially impacted stakeholders, and to seek their feedback into the broader engagement approach.

- Transparency and information sharing is critical:** Groups referenced QEA’s history of being proposed for closure and said that it was felt that a challenge in those instances was access to the District’s data and information. The JQ and QEA PACs articulated a desire to be able to review the background information (e.g., enrollment trends, population planning data, background on potential future land uses, etc.) and the rationale for the District’s proposal to close QEA.

As a result of this request, VSB published a [project information page](#) with resources and related reports and distributed information directly to the PACs, as well as other stakeholders including an email to all parents/guardians of students in the District. Additionally, in response to PAC requests, VSB shared information about the engagement directly with area neighbourhood associations and childcare centres, and all identified stakeholders. JQ PAC executives asked that engagement information be provided in hard copy to students to take home; the fact sheet and April 5 letter were printed and distributed at JQ, QE and QEA. Finally, PACs also requested the community dialogue sessions be held at different times of day to provide flexibility to parents; this was arranged.

- **Decision on closure comes *before* a decision on transitioning to a new school:** The QEA PAC raised concerns both in email and in their early engagement virtual session that the VSB was “overstepping” and making assumptions by asking for feedback on a transition plan before the Board had voted on the proposed closure. They verbalized a concern that the Board had already made its decision and was now focusing on where to move QEA students once their school closed.

As a direct result of this feedback, Delaney recommended the VSB de-emphasize questions related to whether QEA students should be transitioned to JQ or QE, should the Board vote to close the school. In the survey, the questions were made optional and positioned at the end; in the community dialogue sessions, the questions were not included.

- **All feedback and input should be considered:** There was some concern that voices opposed to the QEA closure would not be included in the final engagement report. That this school had been proposed for closure in prior years has led some in the community to feel it is “targeted” and there is a clear lack of trust in VSB as a result.

In response to this feedback, the District has submitted to the Board the emails and written submissions received since February 10, 2022, sent to the engage email (engage@vsb.bc.ca).

Additionally, the QEA and JQ PACs requested dedicated community dialogue sessions for their members, to ensure their feedback was heard in the process. Originally, three public sessions were planned as part of the process; as a result of the feedback received, Delaney added two sessions (one for QEA parents/stakeholders and one for JQ parents/stakeholders) in April.

- **Compressed timelines / Robust engagement:** Participants in the early engagement emphasized the importance that a sufficient amount of time was provided for the required public consultation process. Board Policy #14 requires a (minimum) 60-day consultation period, which for this project began on Feb. 10, 2022, when the VSB first met with PAC executives of impacted schools and invited them to share input with the Board directly through written submissions. Early stakeholder consultation continued in March as noted above, and more broad

engagement continued through April. Written submissions continued to be received by email (engage@vsb.bc.ca) until end of May and have been provided in full to the Board by District staff.

In response to concerns from the DPAC and QEA PAC that stakeholders and Trustees have time to review results of the public consultation (this report) before a decision is made on the proposed closure, the Board made a change to its meeting schedule in May/June.

Originally, the *What We Heard* report was to be posted publicly on the District's website on May 27, and the Board vote was scheduled for its meeting on May 30. However, under the updated schedule, the report was made public May 27 for presentation at the May 30 Board meeting; a Special Board Meeting for delegations was added for June 2, to provide stakeholders/public an opportunity to share feedback directly to the Board about this report; and, a Special Board Meeting was scheduled for June 6, for the Board to vote on the proposed closure.

Finally, in response to concerns from PAC and DPAC executives, Delaney formatted the *What We Heard* report (this report) according to their request, separating feedback received in the survey from that received at Community Dialogue Sessions. This was in effort to make the results of the feedback as clear and easy to understand as possible.

Online Survey - Findings

An online survey was drafted by Delaney based on information and requirements provided by District staff and was hosted on the District's engagement website (engagevsb.ca/qea). The purpose of the survey was to provide an opportunity for broad participation by people living throughout the District to share their perspectives and feedback on the proposed closure by answering specific questions.

The survey was launched on April 11 and ran through April 29, 2022. It was promoted publicly by the District through a news release and earned media, website and social media and direct outreach by email to stakeholder groups, including all parents/guardians. A reminder was distributed on Apr. 25 to all families in the District, along with links to the project information webpage.

The survey itself contained a written summary of the project background and the rationale provided by District staff to the Board and the public in support of the proposed closure. The background information contained within the survey was consistent with information published on District's project website.

Survey format and summary of questions

Most of the questions in the survey were mandatory or "required." This meant that respondents were required to make a selection and/or indicate their answer for the survey to advance. The only optional questions were the open-text fields and questions related to which school would be the preferred receiving school for students of QEA, should the closure be approved. For mandatory questions (questions 1-5, 9), there were 1,031 responses, equal to the total number of completed surveys submitted.

The first question of the survey asked participants to select from a provided list of options one or more descriptions that best reflect their connection and/or interest to the proposed QEA closure. For example: "I am a family member of a student at Queen Elizabeth Annex" or "I am a family member of a student at another school in VSB." For those who selected "I am a community member with another connection to this process" there was an open text field to specify their connection.

The next question asked respondents the degree to which they understood the information and "reasons behind the recommendation to close QEA." Following that, the survey asked for respondents to rank pre-identified priorities and concerns related to the closure. Response to this question provide an insight into what factors are viewed as more/less important by those providing feedback.

The fifth question asked, "Given the information provided, to what extent do you support or oppose closing QEA?" This question gave participants an opportunity to register their perspective clearly (support or oppose).

The sixth and following question of the survey offered respondents an open text field, for them to give written feedback about the proposed closure. It was an open-ended question with no maximum character limit.

Questions seven and eight were marked as *optional* and could be skipped or left blank. The questions asked for input on concerns and/or preferences related to student transitions if the Board proceeds to approve to close QEA. It was understood that some stakeholders felt these questions assumed Board a decision on the closure before one has been made. To be clear that no decision was made while the survey was open, these optional questions were positioned at the end of the survey.

The final question, which was required (respondents could not submit their survey until it was completed), asked participants to rate how easy/difficult it was for them to participate in the survey and understand the decision-making process, and whether they did/did not appreciate being able to provide input into the decision in this way.

See Appendix C for the full text of the survey.

Process design

This survey was conducted via an open link accessible to the public. While the first question asked respondents to indicate their connection to the survey topic, respondents were not required to provide identification or proof of address, etc. It is also not possible through the platform to track IP addresses to be able to say with certainty that each completed survey was submitted by a different person.

Survey respondents self-selected their participation and as such respondents are not from a random sample. This means the results were not weighted to be reflective of a larger group (i.e., the public or community) and, therefore, the results should not be extrapolated to a larger community or group, nor can they be deemed representative of the broader public in Vancouver.

This report summarizes input provided by the voluntary survey respondents. These findings provide a window of insights into perceptions of respondents, and suggests which factors or themes resonated with larger groups of people and which did not.

Who participated

In total, there were 1,031 completed surveys submitted during the engagement period.

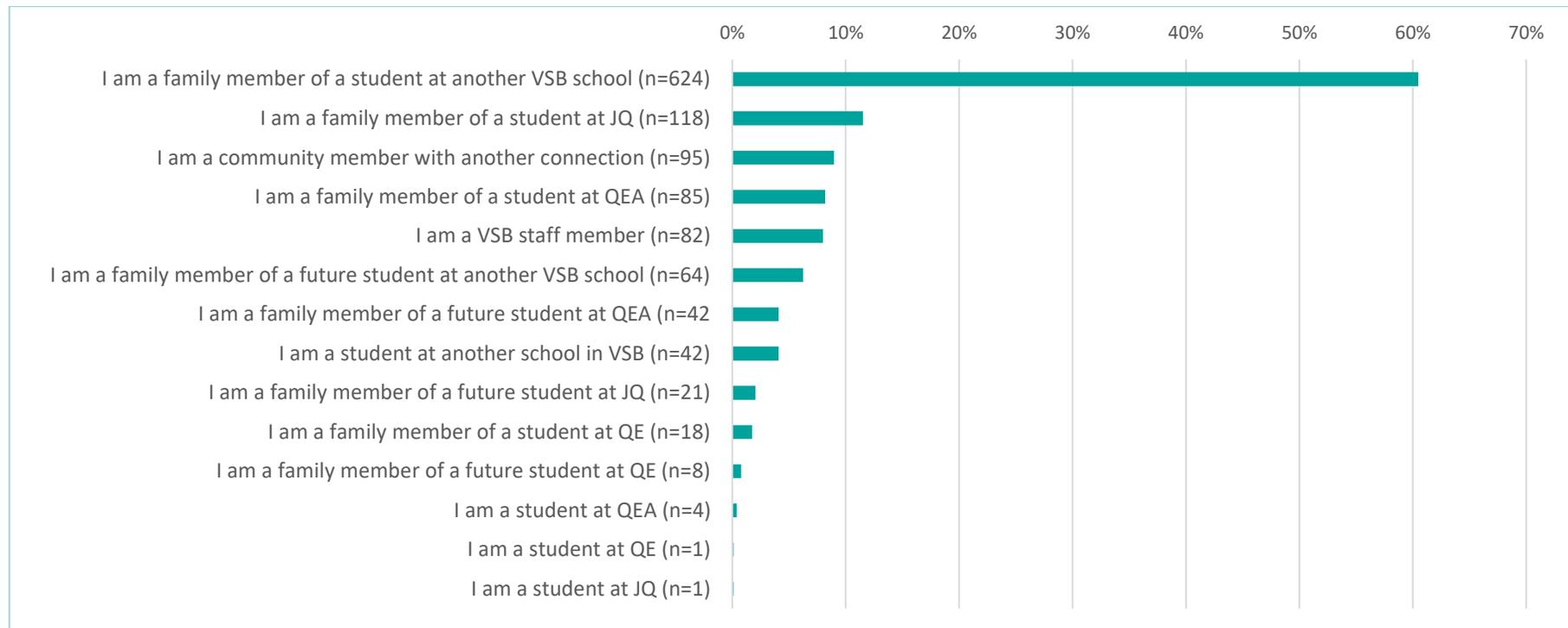
Respondents identified the nature of their interest in the proposed QEA closure in the first question, by selecting the response that best describes their connection to the VSB and its schools.

The majority of respondents (624 respondents) were family members of students at schools other than Queen Elizabeth Annex, Queen Elizabeth Elementary or Jules Quesnel Elementary. Another 64 respondents identified themselves as family members of future students at another VSB school.

There was also representation from family members of current QEA students (85 respondents) and future QEA students (42); family members of current JQ students (118) and future JQ students (21); and family members of current (18) and future (8) QE students.

Close to one in 10 respondents (95) were community members with different connections to the school closure. Of the total number of completed surveys, 82 of those submitted came from individuals who self-identified as VSB staff.

Some current students participated in the survey as well. Respondents included four QEA students, one JQ student and one QE student, as well as 42 students from other VSB schools.



Online Survey: What we heard

The following is a summary of responses to the survey questions, grouped by question theme.

Guidance for the Board: What do respondents view as most important when considering the proposed closure

Respondents were asked:

Please tell us to what extent each of the following should be a priority for the Board in making their decision regarding the possible closure of QEA:

- To have more students in seismically safe schools
- To be fiscally responsible and prioritize funding for student programs and services
- To be fiscally responsible and ensure funding is balanced among all students
- To ensure a strong sense of school community is maintained in making any decisions about school facilities
- To support student learning by maintaining the French immersion program
- To potentially generate capital funds for the District that would be used to support building new schools where they are needed and/or enhancing seismic upgrades to existing schools

Five of the six factors tested were seen as a high priority by a majority of respondents. *Seismic considerations* and *fiscal responsibility* were seen as the highest-ranked priorities, followed by *ensuring a sense of school community* and *maintaining the French immersion program*. The lowest-ranked priority was related to *potentially generating capital funds for the District*.

Six in 10 respondents (61%) said that *to have more students in seismically safe schools* should be a priority for the Board in making their decision regarding the possible closure of QEA, with another quarter (25%) saying this should be a moderate priority. A small percentage of survey responses said seismically safe schools should either be a low priority (5%) or not a priority at all (2%), while the remaining 6% indicated they didn't know or preferred not to comment.

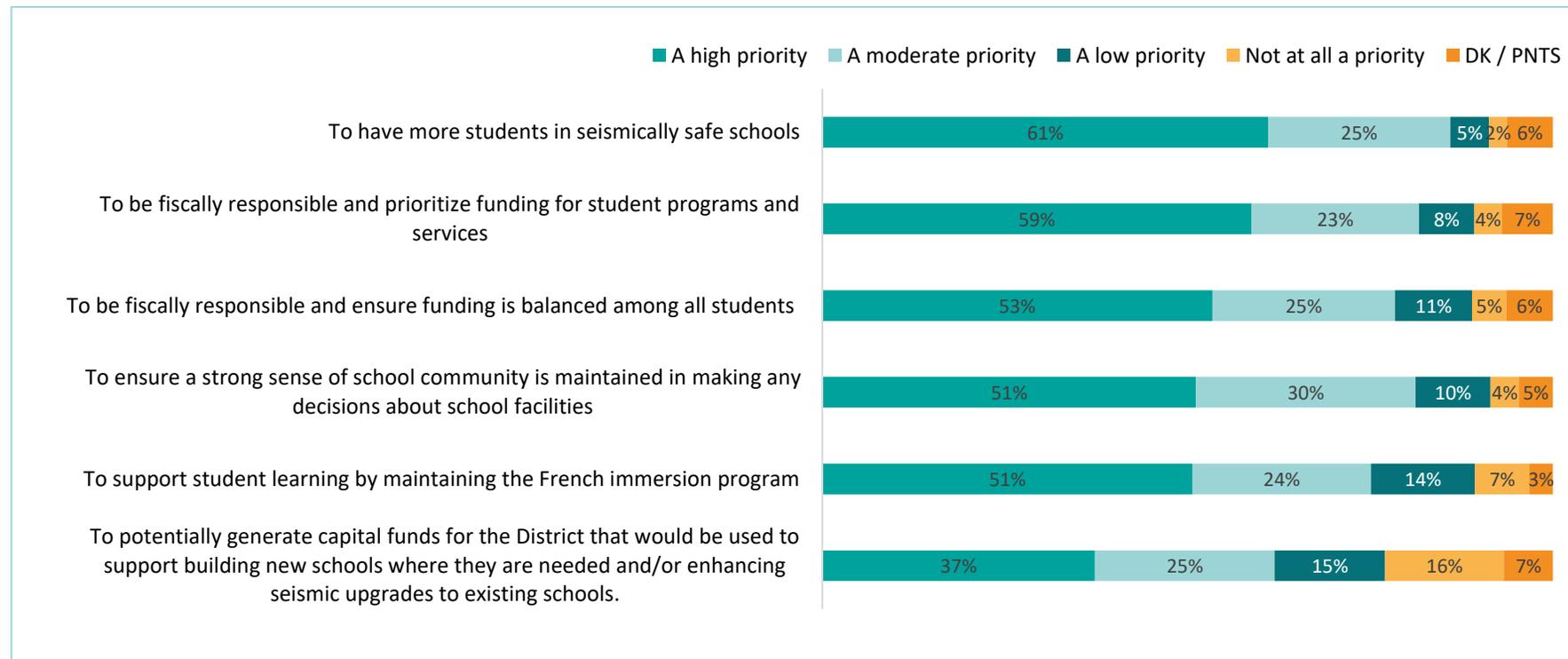
Similarly, nearly six in 10 (59%) said that *to be fiscally responsible and prioritize funding for student programs and services* should be a high priority, with close to a quarter (23%) giving this a moderate priority rating. Eight per cent said this should be either a low priority (8%) or not at all a priority (4%). Seven per cent of respondents selected "not sure."

Just over half of respondents (53%) said that *to be fiscally responsible and ensure funding is balanced among all students* should be a high priority, with another quarter (25%) rating this a moderate priority. The remainder either said this should be a low priority (11%), not at all a priority (5%) or they were not sure (6%).

Half of respondents (51%) indicated that *to ensure a strong sense of school community is maintained in making any decisions about school facilities* should be a high priority for the Board to consider; three in ten (30%) said this should be a moderate priority, while the remaining one in five said this should either be a low priority (10%), not at all a priority (4%) or they were not sure (5%).

Half of respondents (51%) also indicated that *supporting student learning by maintaining the French immersion program* should be a priority consideration and a quarter (24%) said this should be considered a moderate priority. The remaining quarter either rated this a low priority (14%), not at all a priority (7%) or they were not sure (3%).

And lastly, *the potential to generate capital funds for the District that would be used to support building new schools where there are needed and/or to enhance seismic upgrades to existing schools* was seen as a high priority consideration by 37% of respondents and as a moderate one by another quarter (25%). In this case, three in ten said this should either be a low priority (15%) or not a priority at all (16%), with another 7% saying they were not sure.



Guidance for the Board: What do respondents view as most concerning when considering the proposed closure

Respondents were asked:

In assessing the proposed closure, please indicate the levels of concern you have for the following:

- Losing access to the small learning environment at QEA
- Health and wellbeing of my child/family
- Physical school space (capacity)
- Proximity to school (including safety, walkability)
- Loss of community connection
- Learning outcomes for my child
- Future population growth in QEA area
- More students being accommodated at JQ or QE
- Change for my child/family

Results indicate a relatively high level of concern about all but one of the factors that tested. More specifically, the proportion of respondents who rated a listed factor as a *serious concern* or *somewhat of a concern* was higher than the proportion rating it as a *low concern* or *not at all a concern* for almost all factors. More than three in 10 respondents (between 31% and 37%) rated eight of the nine factors as a serious concern, while the lowest-ranking point, *change for my child/my family* was seen as a serious concern for one in five respondents (20%).

When it came to *losing access to the small learning environment* at QEA, 37% have serious concerns, with another 16% indicating this was somewhat of a concern to them. On the other hand, this was of low concern to 19% and of no concern to a quarter of respondents (25%).

Child and family health and wellbeing was seen as seriously concerning to 36% of respondents and was somewhat of a concern for an additional 14%, while to 8% this was of low concern and to 19% this was not at all a concern. Almost a quarter (23%) indicated they didn't know, or this was not applicable to them.

Many are also quite concerned about *school capacity* or the physical school space. Six in ten respondents said this was either a serious concern (34%) or somewhat of a concern (27%). On the other hand, a third rated this as either a low concern (19%) or not at all a concern (14%).

Very similar feedback was received about *school proximity, including safety and walkability*, with a third (34%) indicating this was a serious concern, a quarter (26%) saying this was somewhat of a concern to them, 14% rating this a low-level concern and 16% indicating this was not a concern. One in ten (11%) said they weren't sure, or this did not apply to them.

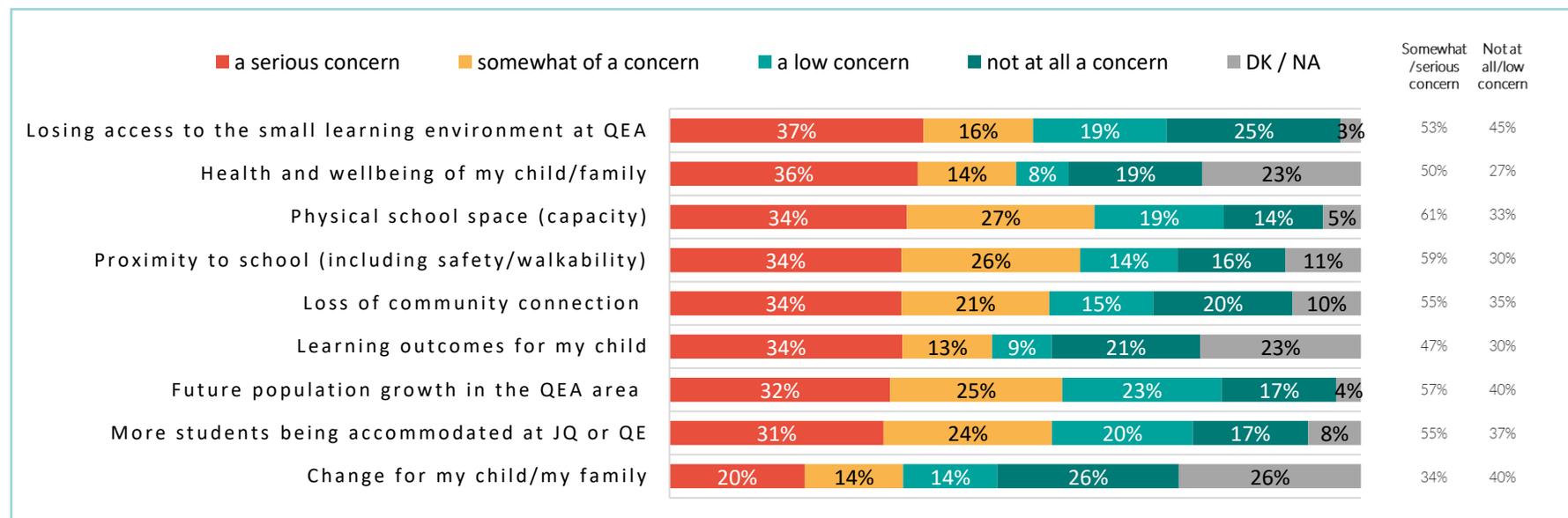
Loss of community connection was also a serious concern for a third of respondents (34%) and somewhat of a concern for another one in five (21%). On the other hand, 15% said this was of low concern to them and one in five (20%) said they were not at all concerned about this. One in ten (10%) were not sure or said this did not apply to them.

Just under half of respondents indicated that they either had serious concerns (34%) or some concerns (13%) regarding *their child's learning outcomes*. Nine per cent said this was of low concern and one in five (20%) rated this of no concern at all; almost a quarter (23%) said they *don't know* or this was *not applicable* to them.

Future population growth in the QEA area was a serious concern for 32% and another quarter (25%) said they were somewhat concerned about this issue. Meanwhile, four in 10 either said this was of low (23%) or no concern (17%) to them.

Three in 10 (31%) had serious concerns about *students being accommodated at JQ or QE* and 24% said this was somewhat of a concern to them. One in five (20%) rated this of low concern and 17% of no concern to them at all, with the remaining 8% saying they *don't know* or this was *not applicable* to them.

And lastly, the lowest level of concern was measured for *change for my child/family*, with 20% expressing this was of serious concern to them, 14% saying this was somewhat of a concern, 14% saying of low concern and 26% saying this was not at all a concern. Fully a quarter (26%) *don't know* or said this was *not applicable* to them.



Support or Oppose the proposed closure of QEA

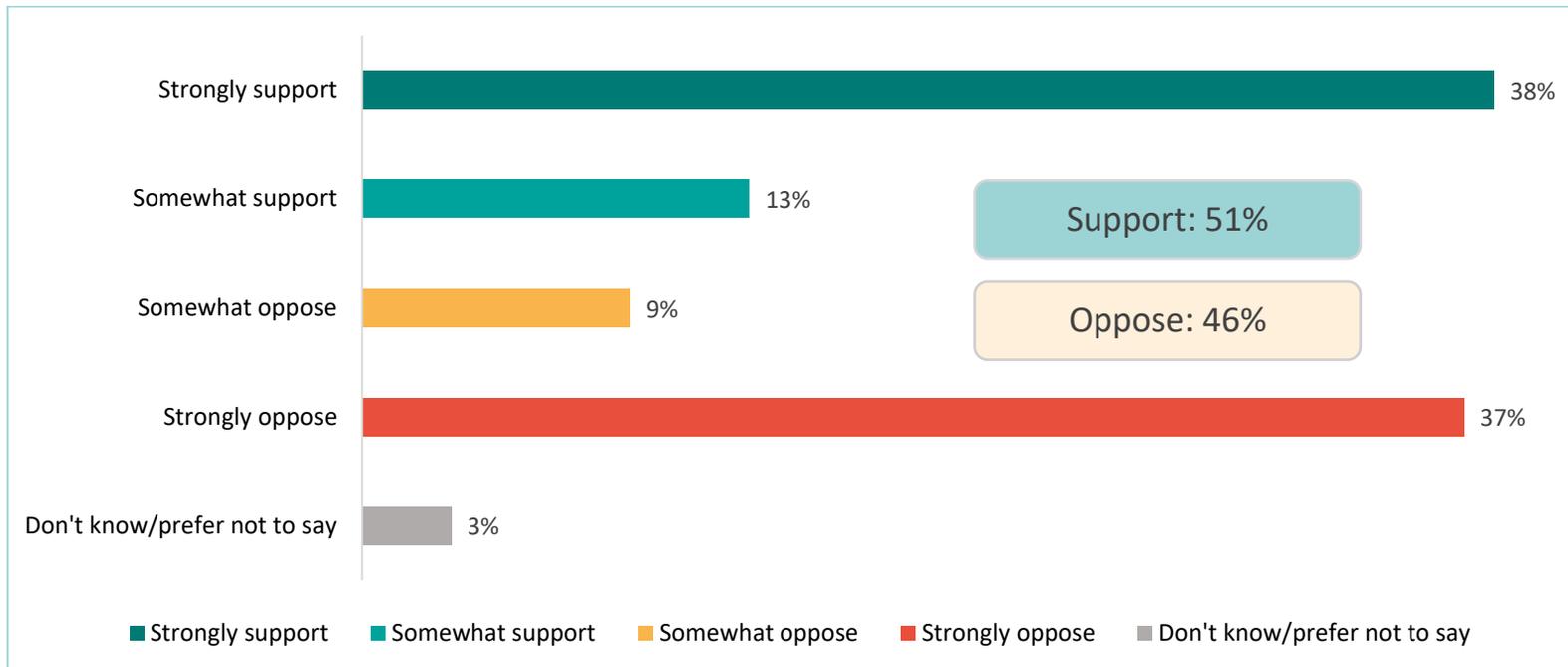
Respondents were asked:

Given the information provided, to what extent do you support or oppose closing QEA?

Responses to this question were closely split. Together, over half indicated support for the recommendation, with respondents selecting either *Strongly support* (38%) or *Somewhat support* (13%).

Almost half of the surveys were marked in opposition to the proposed closure, with 37% saying they *Strongly oppose* it and 9% saying they *Somewhat oppose*.

The remaining 3% were not sure or preferred not to give an opinion on this question.



Comments and concerns – Open text responses

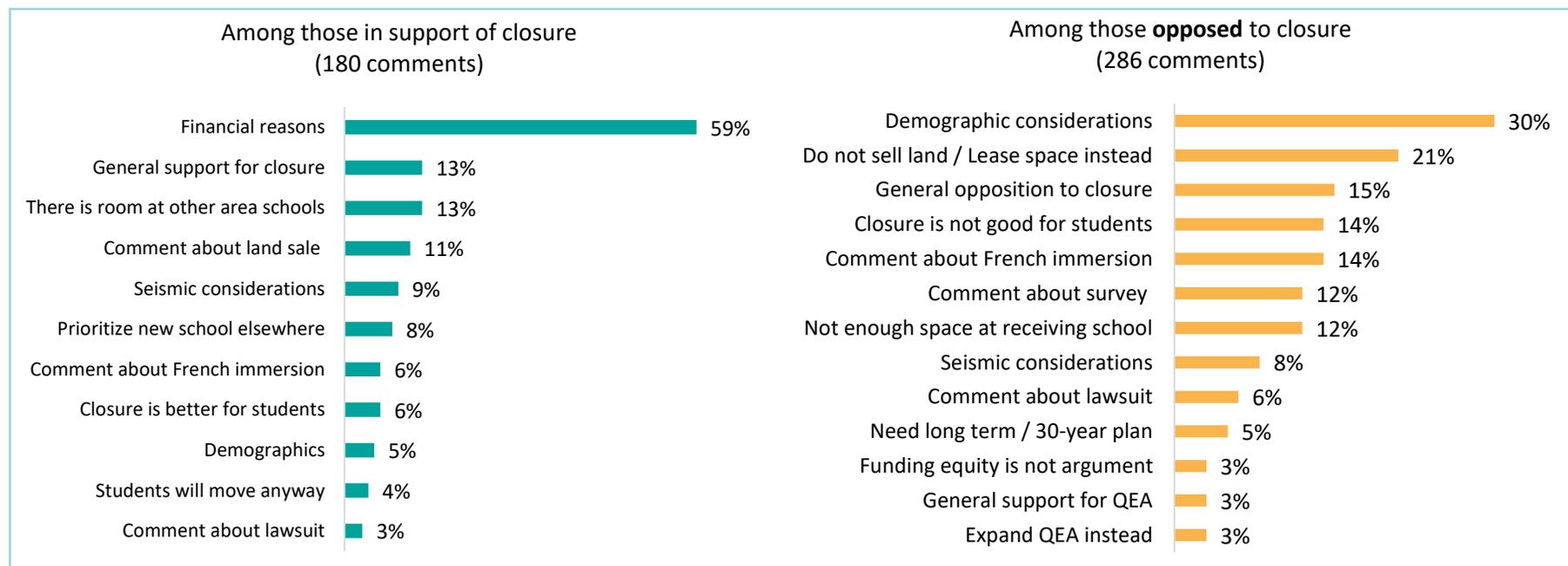
Respondents were asked:

Do you have any other comments or concerns about the proposed QEA school closure that you would like to share?

Providing written comments in the open-text fields was optional. Respondents could skip this question and still submit the survey. Overall, 480 respondents provided written comments:

- 180 comments were received from those who said they supported the closure or QEA;
- 286 from those who oppose closure; and
- 14 from those who were neither supportive nor opposed.

The open-ended responses were reviewed and coded (assigned to categories) and reveal the following high-level themes, which are described in more detail below.



Below are examples of comments received, aligned by theme and sub-theme.

Supportive of closure – 180 total comments		
Theme / % of 180 total comments	Sub-themes (where applicable)	“In their words”: Selection of comments from submitted surveys
Financial reasons (59%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding equity / need to take a district-wide approach • Low enrollment / high per capital costs • General comment about finances • Other specific financial comment about high costs 	<p><i>“Financial prudence dictates the closing of many schools in the VSB. I hope the board actually follows through instead of having the negative financial impacts spread out through all schools.”</i></p> <p><i>“District resources need to be considered from the perspective [of] the whole system and the needs of the entire VSB community, not just the QEA community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Fiscal responsibility is important. It is not fair to be providing funding to a school with low enrollment, at the expense of students at other schools especially when those students can be accommodated at local schools.”</i></p> <p><i>“It makes zero financial sense to support the operating costs of the school to benefit less than 100 students - unbelievably entitled.”</i></p>
General support for closure (13%)	N/A	<p><i>“Just do the right thing - close small, old schools and modernize /build new schools to serve our kids in the future.”</i></p> <p><i>“The school should have been closed years ago.”</i></p>
There is room at other area schools (13%)	N/A	<p><i>“Closure of the annex makes sense. The two proposed schools where the students can go are very good and can accommodate them. “</i></p> <p><i>“QE Annex is on the very edge of the city and there is sufficient excess capacity at QE.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is the responsibility of Trustees to close schools with trending enrolment decline, when numbers can easily be absorbed in other neighbouring schools.”</i></p>
Comment about land sale (11%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not sell the land / lease the space out instead • Support for sale / CFS needs the space 	<p><i>“Public schools should not be sold, should be for community use”</i></p> <p><i>“This valuable land could be used for a larger school in the future, when the demographics have changed.”</i></p> <p><i>“Land is difficult to obtain in Vancouver [...]. It would be highly irresponsible of the VSB to sell school lands.”</i></p> <p><i>“You should sell this facility to the French School Board - Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF).”</i></p>

Seismic considerations (9%)	N/A	<p>"I would not want to put lives in danger in case the big one hits. The students and staff do deserve to be in a safe environment."</p> <p>"I still support the closure of QEA--for fiscal reasons and seismic ones, this seems like the appropriate choice."</p>
Prioritize new school elsewhere (8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should build new school in Olympic Village /downtown instead • Prioritize areas with higher density (general) 	<p>"I think it's important to make these hard decisions and allocate resources fairly. There are areas like Olympic Village desperate for school space."</p> <p>"Building a school in Olympic Village should be expedited."</p> <p>"Priority should be to build space in downtown core"</p> <p>"I would fully support the sale of this site if it allowed for schools to be provided more quickly in Downtown / Metro Core, including SEFC."</p>
Comment about French Immersion (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure there are enough / more FI spaces • Other comment about FI program 	<p>"The VSB can fill more spots for French immersion if they accept the students applying."</p> <p>"The competition for french immersion/specialty choice programs is so high that the VSB needs to work on equal access to all, no matter where they live in the city."</p> <p>"I also agree the transition to JQ or another larger, French Immersion programme, will be beneficial for the small school population currently at QEA now."</p>
Closure is better for students (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bigger school will have more resources, is better for students • Better learning opportunities at other school • Fewer transitions • Better for students (general) 	<p>"I actually think children can also benefit from the larger school setting."</p> <p>"having "full" k-7 schools allows better access to resource teachers and other support staff."</p> <p>"Students from QEA would likely get better programs and a better learning environment in a larger school and they would be going to JQ anyway in Gr. 4"</p>
Demographics (5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comment about demographics • Population will grow 	<p>"I live in this area and the number of children currently living in the neighbourhood is low. Many of these attend local private schools."</p> <p>"...but what about demographic changes? There may be fewer students but we might expect the demands of those students change."</p>
Students will move to receiving school anyway (4%)	N/A	<p>"The students at the annex must move schools at some point regardless."</p> <p>"it seems relatively straightforward to move the students to nearby elementary schools, to which most of the students will move after their primary years in any case"</p>

<p>Comment about lawsuit (3%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawsuit is a good reason to close • Question about the legal proceedings 	<p><i>"I think the civil suit by the CSF in particular is a good reason to close"</i></p> <p><i>"[...] I am confused by the legal proceeding underway being a concern"</i></p>
-----------------------------------	---	--

Opposed to Closure – 286 total comments		
Theme / % of 286 total comments	Sub-themes (where applicable)	In their words
<p>Demographic considerations (30%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population will grow (general) • Population will grow at Jericho / UBC • Other comment about demographics 	<p><i>"Schools should not be closed! [...] Dunbar's population will inevitably grow - future kids need this school."</i></p> <p><i>"Please do your homework and look at long range density planning in the areas adjacent to QEA. Absolute foolishness to close it when the area is booming in terms of housing construction that will accommodate young families."</i></p> <p><i>"The Jericho lands development will put stress on the school capacity of this side of town"</i></p> <p><i>"With increased density planned for the west side this proposal is both short sighted and foolhardy."</i></p> <p><i>"With the anticipated population growth in Vancouver, which includes growth in the Dunbar and UBC areas as large housing projects have are in progress to add densification, more schools will be needed."</i></p>
<p>Do not sell land / lease space instead (21%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>"Selling the site is short sighted regardless of your decision. Keep the land."</i></p> <p><i>"This is a huge land asset, once it's gone it's gone. What is VSB long term plan?"</i></p> <p><i>"Selling off assets to bridge funding gaps is short-sighted. VSB will never be able to afford or purchase new land or buildings on the West Side, it should focus on maintaining and improving what it has."</i></p> <p><i>"It is absolute lunacy for any public entity to sell real estate. If the school truly must be closed due to operating expenses etc, which I find hard to believe, then the land should only be considered to be made available for lease."</i></p>
<p>General opposition to closure (15%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>"We should not be closing any schools."</i></p> <p><i>"School closures should be avoided at all costs. This school in particular is an integral landmark."</i></p> <p><i>"Given the pandemic it is a CRAZY decision to close QEA, crazy!!!"</i></p>

<p>Closure is not good for students (14%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community at QEA • Better learning outcomes at QEA / at small school • Not good for student mental health 	<p>"Closing the QEA school site DOES NOT prioritize student learning."</p> <p>"This annex has been a historical and integral program for the community. The community at QEA is close knit and supportive, imperative to fostering resilience; a sense of belonging, and connectedness within the future generation."</p> <p>"smaller schools can be very beneficial to a portion of the student community. My kids would not be who they are today if they went to a larger school."</p>
<p>Comment about French Immersion (14%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure there are enough FI spaces /cannot lose FI spaces • Need to ensure more FI spaces • Closing school will not be good for FI outcomes 	<p>"There is always a shortage of French Immersion spots in the City and many people would be prepared to travel to QE annex"</p> <p>"It is already very challenging to enroll a child in French Immersion in 2022 and closing QEA further reduces the spots available."</p> <p>"What is left completely nebulous if whether the same number of spots for future French immersion students that will be lost with QEA closure will be accommodated elsewhere. In my experience, spots for French immersion are in short supply relative to demand in the VSB."</p>
<p>Comment about survey (12%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>"Your survey wording was poorly written"</p> <p>"This survey is terrible and biased to closing the school."</p>
<p>Not enough space at receiving school / at JQ (12%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JQ cannot accommodate more classes / students • Receiving school(s) cannot accommodate more classes / students (general) 	<p>"I don't understand how moving these kids to JQ is feasible. The outdoor space at JQ is simply too small to accommodate an extra 80 kids, particularly in the area reserved for the primary students. My kids already struggle at recess because of the noise and chaos."</p> <p>"I have serious concerns about the capacity of JQ to absorb the potential closure of QEA."</p> <p>"Closing QEA will likely overcrowd JQ/QE. This is especially problematic in the COVID era."</p>
<p>Seismic considerations (8%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>"The rationale for closing the school is so weak: 1) QEA is not seismically safe, so let's add them to QE which is also not seismically safe."</p> <p>"ALL students should be in seismically safe schools. But they aren't. And you only seem to care at times like this"</p> <p>"They should seismically upgrade the school and consider providing some rental units above the school (similar to Crosstown Elementary in downtown) for families with young children so they can attend the school"</p>

<p>Comment about lawsuit (6%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal issues are not argument for closure / should not impact students negatively • Question about legal proceedings 	<p><i>"Ending ongoing legal issues is not a justification for closing a school"</i></p> <p><i>"I'm concerned that the current costly legal dispute with the Francophone public school board is being factored too heavily in the decision to close QEA"</i></p>
<p>Need long term / 30-year plan first (5%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>"I do not support closing this school or any other VSB schools until a transparent long term plan for schools facilities based on where kids live now and where kids will live in the future is in place."</i></p> <p><i>"a 30-year long term plan for schools facilities, that's based on where kids live now and where kids will live in the future and transparently discloses enrollment assumptions, is needed before closing any schools"</i></p>
<p>Finances / funding equity is not argument (3%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>"being fiscally responsible and providing funding for students are not mutually exclusive! some students need more funding than others."</i></p> <p><i>" the idea that per student funding will be the same for all students across a district, city or province reflects a grave misunderstanding of economics, especially with respect to real estate value."</i></p>
<p>General support for QEA (3%)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>"My children and I love QEA. [...] My children are excited to go to school every morning because of the staff and the students."</i></p> <p><i>"QEA was a wonderful learning environment for my sensitive, timid son, who was supported there and thrived, as he is doing now, thanks to the wonderful, intimate, nurturing environment"</i></p>
<p>Expand QEA instead of closing the site (3%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize capacity at QEA / Make QEA English / Dual track • Expand QEA 	<p><i>"If anything QEA should be expanded so more children can have access if possible."</i></p> <p><i>"No school closures!! West side is growing in population, With expansion of UBC and Jericho lands. WE NEED MORE SCHOOLS and definitely French Immersion. If any change is needed it would be INCREASING capacity for QEA."</i></p>

Optional: Preference for receiving school if closure is approved

Respondents were asked:

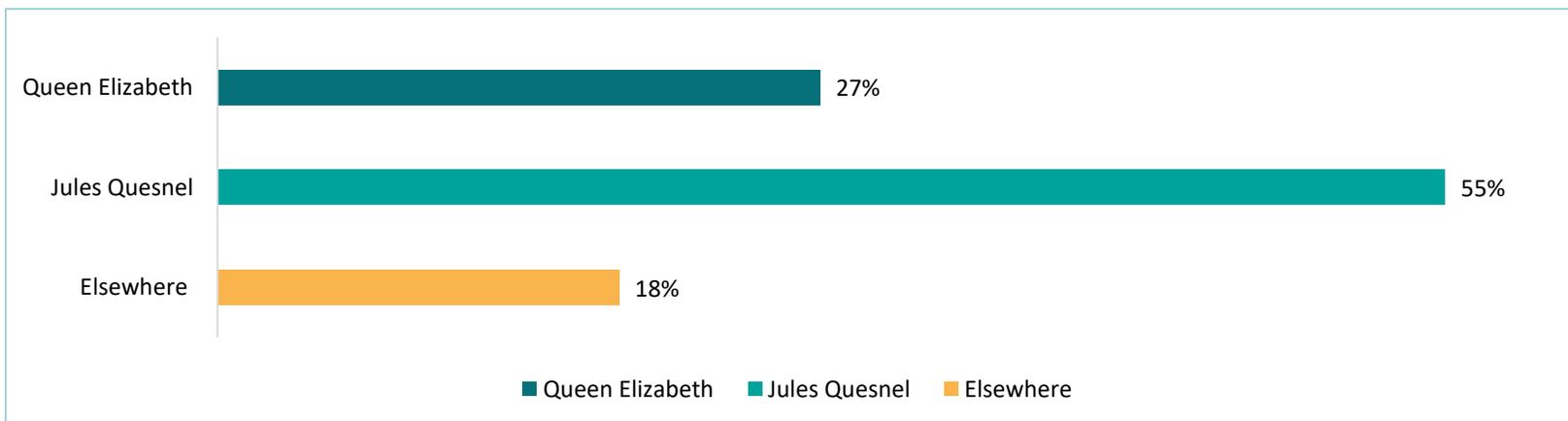
Based on this information, should the Board decide to close QEA, would you prefer that the program relocate to JQ, QE or elsewhere?

This question was optional. Respondents were able to leave this question blank and still submit their survey. As such, only 931 responses were received, compared to the mandatory questions which all received 1,031 responses.

When asked for their preference of receiving school, if the closure is approved, a majority of respondents (55%) indicated they would prefer that the QEA program were moved to JQ. Over one quarter (27%) would prefer QE, and the remaining 18% indicated they would prefer the program be moved elsewhere.

Respondents who selected “elsewhere” had the option to write-in a suggestion; however, upon analysis of responses provided, most did not name a specific site or location, but rather commented that they did not want QEA to close at all or entered comments that were out of the scope of the question or the engagement.

A small number of alternate suggestions were received, including that the Board allow each individual family to choose, rather than to move the program as a whole to one school or another. Other suggestions included: to have a new K-7 French immersion program, either elsewhere (unspecified), in the Olympic Village, or on the existing QEA site; or to swap buildings, with JQ and QEA moving to the QE site and QE students moving to the JQ site.

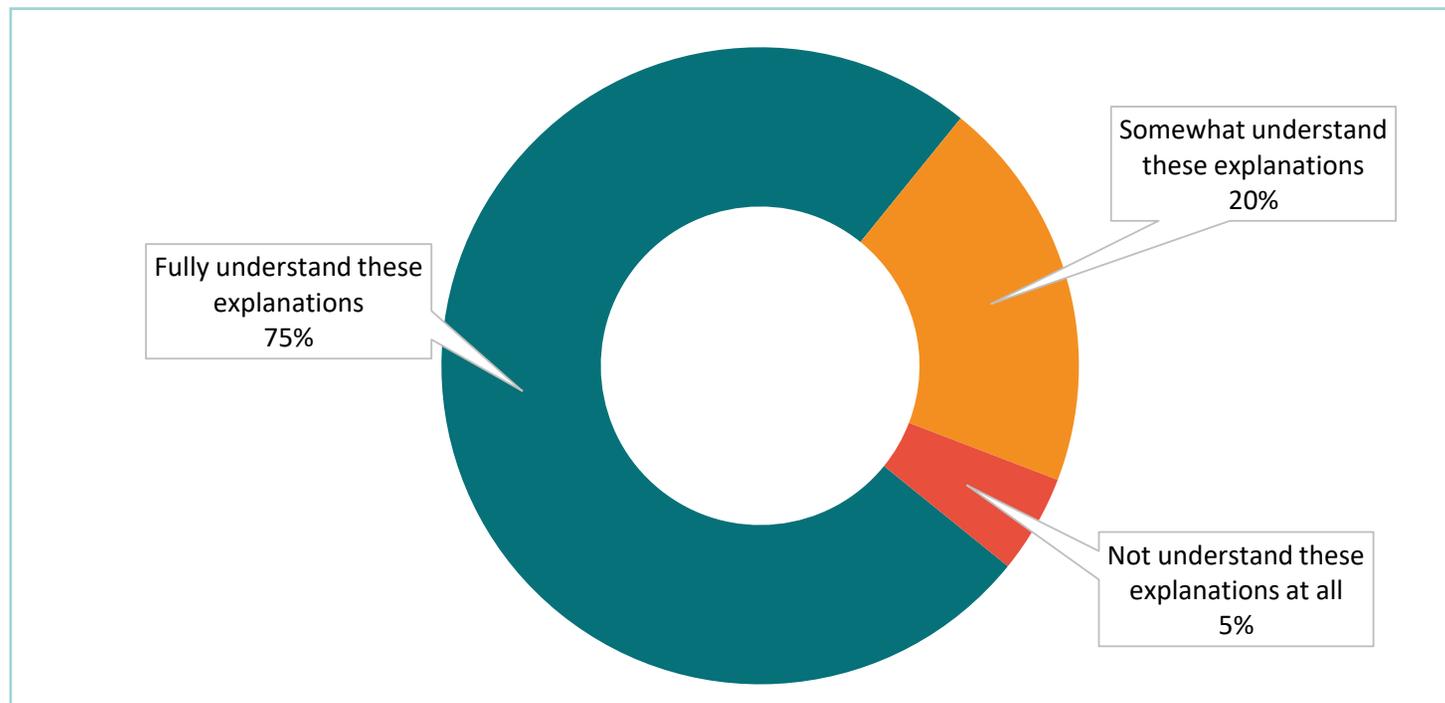


Survey evaluation: Participant feedback on information presented and engagement process. Two questions about the survey and the engagement process were included in the survey.

First, respondents were asked about the background information provided in the beginning of the survey, which discussed the reasons behind the recommendation to close QEA.

For the most part, respondents indicated that the information was clearly understood.

Three quarters of respondents (75%) indicated they fully understood those explanations, one in five (20%) understood them somewhat and 5% said they did not understand the explanations at all.

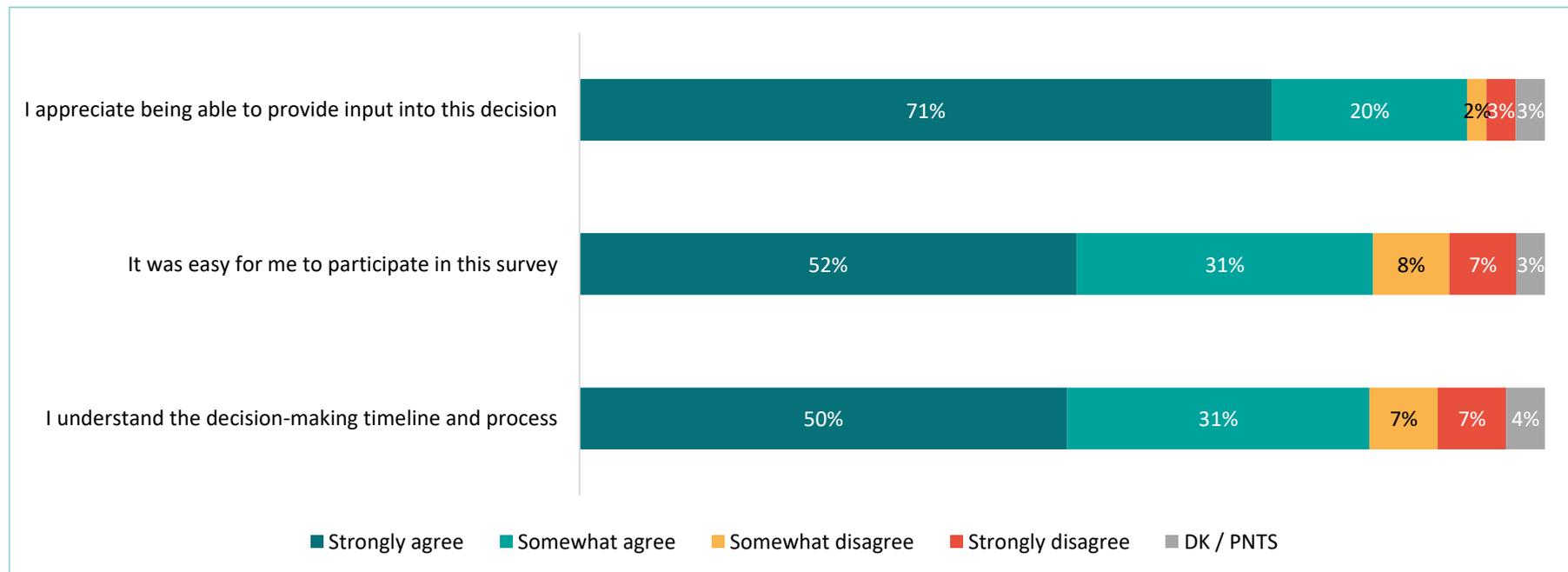


Secondly, at the end of the survey itself, respondents were asked a question measuring ease of participation, appreciation for the ability to provide input into the decision and understanding of the decision-making timeline and process.

The majority of respondents agreed that they *appreciated being able to provide input into the decision*, with 71% strongly agreeing and 20% somewhat agreeing with this statement. The remainder either somewhat disagreed (2%), strongly disagreed (3%) or was not sure (3%).

More than eight in 10 also agreed, either strongly (52%) or somewhat (31%), that it was *easy for them to participate in the survey*, with 8% somewhat disagreeing and 7% somewhat disagreeing with this premise (3% indicated they did not know, or they preferred not to say).

Lastly, similar results were seen for the statement *I understand the decision-making timeline and process*, with half (50%) in strong agreement, three in ten (31%) agreeing somewhat, 7% somewhat disagreeing, 7% strongly disagreeing and 4% answering that they don't know or preferred not to say.



Community Dialogue Sessions - Findings

Background

Five community dialogue sessions were held over Zoom (virtually) from Apr. 19 – 28. The sessions were 90-minutes in length and facilitated by Delaney. Community dialogue sessions were promoted by the District through direct communication to all VSB families (letter), on the District’s website, social media channels and through a news release (Apr. 5).

Initially, three community dialogue sessions were planned; however, during early engagement meetings in March, the QEA and JQ PACs both requested additional dedicated sessions for their school communities. For that reason, it was recommended adding two school specific sessions that could be specifically promoted to QEA parents, and another to the JQ school community.

A small number of individuals registered for multiple sessions; out of 100 registrants, there were 93 unique individuals who registered to attend. At the sessions, there was a total of 61 attendees, including some who attended more than one. Although the number of people attending each session was recorded, names/identities of participants were not documented.

Key Dates

Date / Time	Event	Participants Registered	Participants in Attendance <small>*small # participants attended multiple sessions</small>
April 19: 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	QEA community session	26	18
April 20: 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	JQ community session	28	19
April 21: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Public session 1	13	5
April 27: 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Public session 2	11	6
April 28: 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Public session 3	21	13
	TOTAL	100 (93 unique registrations)	61

Format

All five community dialogue sessions were led by Delaney and began with a territorial acknowledgement, welcome, overview of the agenda and of values for engagement (respectful dialogue, hear from all voices, spirit of community, and speak only for ourselves).

Each session was attended by Deputy Superintendent David Nelson, who presented an overview of the District's proposal to close QEA to participants.

The [slides](#) and [a recorded version of the staff presentation](#) from the community dialogue sessions were posted on the project information website.

As part of the presentation, participants were invited to submit questions for clarification in the chat to Deputy Superintendent Nelson. FAQs on the project information website were updated following each session, including responses to clarification questions.

Following the presentation, participants were assigned to breakout groups for the second half of the session (approximately 45 minutes). The purpose of the small group format was to ensure that all participants at the community dialogue sessions would have opportunities to speak and provide spoken input/feedback to the proposed closure. During dialogue sessions where there were fewer than 10 participants, no breakout groups were required.

Three questions guided discussion during the breakout groups. In each group, the process was consistent: the facilitator read the first question, and then in roundtable format, invited participants to speak individually and uninterrupted for approximately three to four minutes in response to the question. Once all participants were offered an opportunity to answer, the facilitator read the second question and once again provided participants the option to respond individually. The process repeated with the third and final question.

- 1) In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, what are concerns and/or opportunities from your perspective?
- 2) In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, what factors should be a priority for the Board in making their decision?
- 3) Are there additional comments you would like to contribute that may not have been shared yet?

Delaney facilitators captured feedback received at the breakout sessions in de-identified notes (no names were included).

After each session, the District sent an email to all individuals registered for the session to thank them for their interest and provide links to the QEA survey and VSB engage email account (engage@vsb.bc.ca), should they have additional feedback.

Process Design

It is important to note that there are limitations with any engagement process design that may impact the results of the engagement process. A limitation for these community dialogue sessions included the available time and schedule: the duration of each session was 90 minutes, which

included the District presentation. Depending on the number of participants per session, the time available per individual to provide spoken feedback during breakout groups varied. As a balancing strategy, all participants were reminded of the option to contribute written feedback through the online survey and the VSB engage email address.

The community dialogue sessions were designed to create a small, safe setting for participants to feel comfortable sharing open and honest verbal feedback to a neutral third party. For some people, this makes participation in the engagement process easier and more comfortable than completing a written survey or written submission.

To maintain this dynamic, Delaney used breakout groups of 10 people or fewer for the roundtable discussions. This meant that in sessions where there were multiple breakout groups, participants did not hear firsthand the input of all the other participants, but rather just of those in their smaller group. This format ensures participants more privacy in sharing their personal perspectives and input than they would have in other available options, such as the Special Board Meetings (delegations) held on April 19 and May 24. At Special Board Meetings, which were livestreamed on YouTube, individuals were able to make presentations directly to the Board.)

As such, despite structural constraints and limitations, members of the public had multiple options to be able to participate in the consultation process and could identify a method or methods that suited their preferences and needs.

Community Dialogue Sessions: What We Heard

Across all five community dialogue sessions, participants raised concerns about the proposed QEA closure and the Board process for decision-making.

No participants at the community dialogue sessions voiced support for the QEA closure. There were a small number of comments made, however, recognizing that the Board's role is to consider needs of all of the students in the District, not just those in one area.

Here is a summary of the feedback received from participants at the dialogue sessions:

1) Lack of trust and lack of confidence in VSB

The most common theme across all five community dialogue sessions was an overall lack of trust in VSB generally, including its decision-making and consultation processes. This was among the key messages of participants who attended multiple dialogue sessions, as well as others who attended only one.

Specifically, several people referenced that the proposal to close QEA has been made three times previously, and each time they voted not to proceed (2008, 2016, 2019). Some parents and participants who indicated that they had been through the closure discussion previously, said as a result of these experiences, their trust in the District staff and Board process is low.

Numerous references and comments were made that parents of students in the impacted schools (QEA, QE, JQ) were not being provided accurate and transparent information by the District. Some felt this was a pattern that has been evident in past discussions related to the proposed closure of QEA. Additionally, one participant who attended multiple dialogue sessions, noted being told in 2019 by VSB that the community had been advised then that a QEA closure would not be brought forward again.

Consistently and across all five sessions, there were participants who voiced “process concerns” and said they felt it was neither open nor fair to parents. “Information has been from one perspective” and that there is a “lack of transparency” about all the options considered by District staff were common themes. The question “what other options besides closure were considered” was asked on multiple occasions. Parents with children at the impacted schools (QEA, QE and JQ) spoke about a lack of notice ahead of meetings and decisions being made (“three days” and “late Friday afternoon”), and one person commented, “A year is not enough time to prepare for transition... it is a rush decision for implementation.” Others said their trust had been violated through this experience, and as a result, they find it hard to trust the outcomes of the process.

When asked what factors Trustees should consider in making their decision, some participants said the Board should consider their role and whether the consultation and decision-making process has been fair and equitable. One participant said Trustees should know how frustrated parents are by this process and felt that Trustees should be more directly accessible to the public.

2) Long-range planning:

A consistent theme in questions asked by participants and in concerns raised was on the topic of long-range planning, and the belief that the District should have in place a “30-year plan” before proceeding with a decision to close a school. Several participants referenced VSB as having a seven-year Education Plan, which was described as “short-sighted,” especially as compared to the City of Vancouver’s ‘Vancouver Plan’ which is described as supporting growth to 2050 and beyond. One participant said it is best practice for planners to use a 50-year horizon. This comment received support from others in that group.

Several people questioned why it seems that District staff use past enrolment trends to make decisions, rather than taking a future-focused, projections approach. Overall, participants did not have a common, nor clear understanding of how the District determines its long-range plan and decisions.

Combined with the previously mentioned lack of trust in VSB, this resulted in several people expressing a range of responses, including frustration, anger and concern. Some said that Trustees are risking making an “uninformed decision” or ill-informed decision about QEA that will have negative long-term financial implementation for VSB, and that will have direct negative impacts on student learning for students of QEA, JQ and QE.

3) Use of population data:

Several participants at each of the five sessions spoke to the growing communities and development in the area around QEA, including Dunbar, West Point Grey, Kitsilano, UBC and Jericho Lands. Comments included that more young families are moving and will continue to move to the

area. Some people referred to new daycare businesses opening for newborns and young children, who in the coming years will be entering the school system. Others spoke more generally to ongoing densification in the area, including overall population growth.

Similar to the previous theme, multiple participants raised concerns that from their perspective, the District's data does not align with City of Vancouver population and planning data. One participant spoke about the City anticipating an increase of "65,000 units on the westside" and said the District's plans do not account for that scale of growth.

Others said that City planning staff and City councillors have indicated they have not heard from or worked with the District on long-range planning. Generally, comments reflected again a lack of confidence in the District, in this case in staff's ability to coordinate planning activities with the City of Vancouver and to reflect long-range planning considerations in decision-making.

Participants asked whether District staff had reviewed the most current Census data, which they said shows that the population in the area is not declining. A small number of participants referred to their own data and enrolment information that has been gathered locally over the years that QEA has been considered for closure.

Concerns raised by participants included that while QEA is a District-choice program school currently, it may be needed as a neighbourhood school in the coming years. From participants' perspectives and observations, the population of the west side of Vancouver is changing and will require more school sites. A few participants suggested transitioning QEA to a kindergarten to grade seven school. Others urged Trustees to prevent creating a situation where families are forced to drive their children to schools rather than have them able to bicycle or walk.

4) Potential impacts on Jules Quesnel (JQ) school and student experience:

One of the five community dialogue sessions (April 20) was identified and promoted as being specifically open to parents and people in the community with connections to JQ; however, comments specific to JQ were made at all sessions.

The most common concern raised at the sessions related to JQ was the belief that the student population at the school is already crowded and/or "at capacity." Some participants said they had heard that already there were classrooms without windows to the outdoors, and worried that current JQ students would be moved into portable classrooms if the QEA students were added.

Some parents raised concerns about learning support programs at JQ, specifically that Applied Design Science and Technology (ADST) would lose the classroom space it occupies today if QEA is closed. They worried the programming would be cut back or no longer available at JQ. Others referenced the current need for and use of "flex" spaces and classrooms at JQ, and they challenged the information presented by District Superintendent Nelson around space planning.

In addition to comments about indoor space limitations, several participants spoke about limited outdoor and playground space at JQ. They said that JQ lacks sufficient play areas already, and that there is limited green, grassy space at the school. One parent referenced attending JQ as a student in the 1980s and said that since that time, the outdoor space has been reduced to half of the area it once was. Another participant said that

their child already finds it difficult to be outside because it is so crowded, and worried that adding QEA students to the school population would negatively impact the child's experience. Participants said that by comparison, JQ's outdoor space has among the smallest-per-student amount of land of all schools in the District.

Several people made comments such as, "adding additional kids will just exacerbate an already congested school." Another participant identified that, although small, the outdoor space is difficult to supervise and therefore safety is an issue, given the amount of paved space.

A related concern voiced specifically by JQ parents was that many of them had not been inside the school for over two years (which for parents of younger children this may mean they have never been inside the school), since before the COVID-19 pandemic, due to public health restrictions and school direction. They said it was challenging for them to understand the full impacts of the proposal to relocate QEA students to JQ, because they have not themselves seen the physical space and classrooms in the school.

5) Concerns about CSF land request:

Several participants across different dialogue sessions made at least brief references to the Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) and its interest in the QEA site as a potential location for a French language school. In most cases, they dismissed the CSF's ongoing legal actions as not relevant to the QEA closure discussion.

Many people said they felt it is not the responsibility of VSB, but rather it is the Ministry of Education which is obliged to negotiate with the CSF in relation to ongoing legal action. Comments included "the VSB should not be forced to offer the land," "the VSB can say no," and "the Board should be focusing on needs of the students and spend less time worrying about litigation."

Several parents who self-identified as having children at QEA said they believe that the decision to close the school is very clearly about land and not about the students and their learning experience; they said Trustees should be thinking about the children, the benefits of a smaller school, particularly during a pandemic, access to outdoor spaces and walkability. "Staff and Trustees are failing in their duty," said one parent, "My trust has been violated."

Similarly, participants at multiple sessions referenced their lack of trust because they feel there have been secret deals and closed meetings between the Board and the Ministry of Education which would illuminate the true reasons for closure. They felt that the decision to close QEA has likely already been made because of the legal direction to the provincial government to provide land to the CSF. One participant said that if VSB is "trading" the land at QEA for a new school in Olympic Village, the Board and the Ministry should state that publicly. Dialogue around CSF and litigation further re-enforced the first theme, being a lack of trust in the process and in VSB.

There were a small number of participants who suggested that the Board consider leasing some of the QEA property to the CSF for use (e.g., portables) to generate revenue, and they wondered if this had been considered as an option.

6) Timing of proposed closure:

The timing of the proposed QEA closure was raised in almost all the sessions, including both the session dedicated to QEA families and the session for JQ families.

Some QEA parents noted that when a QEA closure was proposed in 2019 and did not move forward with official public consultation, the school community was told by the Board that the issue was closed. They voiced frustration that they had “been through this before” with their older children and were now experiencing a repeat of the same issue with their younger children. Multiple participants said this discussion and process is exhausting and traumatic for them and their children to go through repeatedly.

Other parents voiced frustrations that the closure was being proposed so soon after the pandemic, saying that QEA families are already suffering from the effects of interruptions to regular school routines due to COVID-19. Two or three parents said specifically that the proposed closure was impacting the mental health of their kids, who want to stay at QEA. One said, “the timing of adding this extra stress is very poor.” Another spoke about their child being frustrated there was no way for (young) students to understand and participate in the public consultation.

7) Broader neighbourhood and community impacts:

Participants in the dialogue sessions voiced strong appreciation for QEA and its current and future contributions to the local community, beyond classroom instruction. One participant described QEA as a “magical place that we all love so much,” while others referenced the natural setting and environment where the school is situated. Related comments included that QEA is a gathering place for the community, and a place families come after school hours and on weekends. They spoke to the “safe area” that QEA provides, and a concern that if the closure proceeds in future years the land could be developed into townhomes. Another participant shared how QEA was a community upon which they could rely, particularly during difficult times. They added that a small, tight knit community was a “gift” and helped their family during difficult times.

Some participants worried that closing QEA would mean more families would need to drive their young children to school at JQ or QE because it is farther away, adding more vehicle traffic to the neighbourhoods of those two schools. They questioned whether District staff had done traffic analysis to consider safety impacts of having more students at JQ or QE, though this concern was primarily raised in discussion about transitioning students to JQ.

Participants in two different dialogue sessions asked climate change had been a consideration in the District’s proposal. Some referenced the local support for “car free May,” and said that from their perspective, families in the impacted neighbourhoods are very committed to making choices aligned to environmental concerns. In their opinion, the proposed closure is contrary to the values held by residents in the area as well as the District’s own stated values. Concerns were also raised that if QEA became the site of a Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) school, it would have a regional catchment and mean up to 600 additional cars could be driving to the neighbourhood daily.

8) Benefits of small school learning environments:

Although not a primary theme, the benefits of smaller schools, and in particular Annex schools, was raised by multiple participants in the dialogue sessions. Participants noted that children have a range of learning styles and needs, and that for some children a smaller school environment like QEA provides a better learning environment. For younger children, parents said QEA offered an easier and more supported transition from preschool.

Some participants said they were frustrated that “VSB is putting everyone in a singular box” and that “we need to support smaller schools” in the District. They referenced the benefits of the outdoor spaces around QEA and how the outdoor space supports student learning. Small schools provide the option for “kids to be kids,” said one person, referring to challenges with “influences” of older students on younger children. Additionally, participants referenced the need to allow parents choices for where they send their children and that for some, “small kids in small schools” works best for them. A participant identified how their child didn’t cope well with noise and that a small school like QEA was a much calmer environment that worked well for them.

There were some concerns raised that the District would move forward to propose closing other small schools (annexes) if the QEA closure is approved.

One parent of a QEA student who valued the small school learning environment and as a first choice preferred to see the school continue to stay open, however, they noted that if Trustees do decide to approve the closure, they hoped that it would mean more equitable distribution of VSB funding and resources to benefit all students.

9) Access to French Immersion

Some participants raised concerns about continued access to French immersion on the westside in their feedback during the community dialogue sessions. They referenced “demand across the city” for French language programming and noted that no one wants to see a reduction in current capacity. It was asked how any school that offers French Immersion could be on a VSB closure list and suggested that if additional seats were offered at QEA it could lead to growth in the school population because “if you build it, they will come.” Participants said that families across Vancouver are “desperate” to get into French immersion, so the Board should be considering how to expand access through QEA.

Some participants in the QEA session spoke about the District’s enrolment data and said the past two years of numbers represent a “blip” due to the pandemic, and that with JQ “at capacity” the Board should expect an increase in enrolment at QEA in the coming post-pandemic years.

There were additional concerns that should the QEA closure be approved, about the proposed option of relocating current students to QE, which is currently an English only school. Participants said it does not make sense to transition French immersion learners to a larger English school, because they would lose out on the fully immersive experience.

Finally, a number of participants asked about the District's plans for new schools in the future, as the Jericho Lands development moves forward, and more people move into the area around UBC. They questioned whether the new schools to accommodate these families would be English track or French immersion and were concerned that this information was unclear in the District's presentation.

10) Seismic safety of school facilities

Although included in the District's rationale is that QEA has a low seismic safety rating, this was not a top concern for many participants. Generally, participants disagreed with the notion that moving student programming to another school would increase student safety.

Participants noted that QEA is a small, one-storey building; they felt those factors alone would make it easier to evacuate and/or keep children safe during a seismic event, as compared to QE. Some participants questioned how moving students from QEA to QE, which has the same seismic rating, was a safety improvement for those children.

11) Engagement and consultation process

Although not directly related to the QEA closure proposal, it is important to note that some participants who attended community dialogue sessions raised concerns about the engagement process itself. From their perspective, some people said they believe the online survey and the three questions used in the dialogue sessions were intentionally "leading" and biased, and that they provided participants no option to object to the closure outright. They said they felt that if they answered the questions at all, it would be interpreted as support for the closure, which was not their intent.

This prompted some participants to attend the dialogue sessions to *listen*, but to voice their objections overall to the process and to decline the opportunity to speak during the roundtable.

Other participants voiced concerns about the format of the community dialogue sessions themselves. Comments included frustration that the sessions were not being livestreamed; that media were not allowed to attend; that participants could not unmute themselves during the District's presentation; that participants could only type in questions in the chat box to the moderator during the first half of the session; that participants could not engage in direct debate with District staff; that questions for discussion were leading; and that the technology (Zoom and Eventbrite) created barriers for some people to participate.

Next Steps

This report describes in detail the engagement and communications efforts planned and implemented to support public consultation and engagement related to the proposed closure of QEA in alignment with Board policy 14.

The next step is for the Vancouver School Board to consider the feedback received and summarized in this report, as well as the written feedback about the proposed QEA closure received by email to the VSB's engage email account between Feb. 10 and May 26, 2022.

Feedback received in the consultation process is one element of data for consideration as Board makes its final decision in accordance with VSB policy.

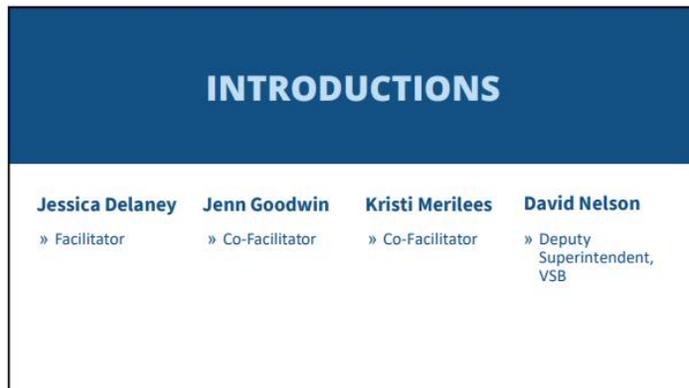
Appendix A: Community Dialogue Sessions – Presentation



1



2



3



4

AGENDA

- » Introductions, Operating Values, Agenda Review
- » **Poll:** Who is joining the conversation today
- » **Review:** Where are we now
 - » David Nelson, Deputy Superintendent, VSB
 - » Process & requirements: VSB Policy 14
 - » Q&A – clarification (10 minutes max)
- » **Engagement goal:** Why we're here today
- » **Your feedback:** Roundtable discussion
 - » 45 minutes – 60 minutes
- » Next steps

5

POLL...

... Who is in the room today?

» *In the Zoom poll, let us know your primary interest in QEA and the proposed closure.*

6

WHAT IS BEING CONSIDERED?

The Board is considering the closure of QEA effective June 30, 2023.

If the Board decides to close QEA students could be relocated, as a group, to either Ecole Jules Quesnel (JQ) or Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE).

7

DISTRICT CONTEXT

Increase in Vancouver's overall population.

Decrease in school-aged population and enrolment.

This trend has been happening since 1997.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX
Current Student Distribution**

● Ecole Jules Quesnel (JQ)
● Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA)
● Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE)

NOTE: Some student points are overlapped due to their proximity.
Data Source: 2012, 2015 (2019) (2020)

8

ABOUT QEA

QEA and JQ form one French immersion program for K – 7 students.

- JQ offers K-7 French immersion programming
- QEA offers K-3 French immersion programming.

QEA students continue French immersion program at JQ for grades 4-7.

QEA enrolls students from across the District; it does not serve a neighbourhood catchment area.

QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX
Current Student Distribution

■ DUBLIN CREST
 ■ BOYLE HILLS CHRISTIAN
 ■ QUEEN ELIZABETH AMBESIDE
 ■ QUEEN ELIZABETH ELEMENTARY QEA
 NOTE: Some unlabelled points are not tagged due to their proximity.
 See Annex B.1.1.1, 2017-18 QEA Roll List

9

ABOUT QEA

- One story annex built in 1964
- Interior space – 5 classrooms, 1 multi-purpose room, 2 resource rooms
- Accessibility – QEA is wheelchair accessible, and has an accessible washroom
- Outdoor space – 1.5 ha
- Seismic rating High 3

10

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Rationale for the proposed closure, including, but not limited to the pertinent facts and information related to the factors identified within the policy;

The timing of the proposed closure and the implications for the placement of students;

Possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

11

RATIONALE

Primary

1. Responsible use of resources to benefit all students
2. Prioritize student learning

Other considerations

3. Student safety
4. Potential revenue
5. Legal proceedings

12

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6. Access to French immersion
- 7. Current and forecast enrolment

13

1. RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES

QEA has high operating costs.

The average cost per student to operate QEA is estimated to be 40% higher (\$11,288 per student in 2019) than the provincial enrollment allocation of \$7,885 per student.

14

RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES

If QEA is closed, the District would realize annual operational cost savings of approximately:

- \$150,000 per year if students are relocated to QE
- \$300,000 per year if students are relocated to JQ

Annual operational savings can be re-allocated to support programs and services for VSB students across the District.

15

HOW WOULD COST SAVINGS BE ACHIEVED?

The BC educational funding model is almost entirely enrolment based (funding based on per student allocation).

Over 90% of the annual District operating revenue is allocated to staff salaries and benefits.

Closure of QEA would facilitate more efficient and effective use of staff.

Note: No VSB personnel will lose employment if QEA were closed.

16

2. PRIORITIZE STUDENT LEARNING

The findings of the French Program Review (2018) and the Preferred School Size Working Group Process (2021) support the proposed relocation of the QEA program to either JQ or QE.

Both Initiatives were multi-stakeholder engagement processes that involved the District educational partners:

- Parents - DPAC
- Teachers - VESTA/VSTA
- School Administrators - VEPVPA/VASSA

17

ABOUT JQ

- Three story building opened in 1926.
- Seismic upgrade completed in 2011, included the addition of classrooms, a gym, and a multi-purpose room.
- Interior space – 18 classrooms, 3 resource rooms, library, multipurpose room, gym, 3 common areas.
- Accessibility – JQ is wheelchair accessible: parking, elevator and washroom.
- Outdoor space – 1.16 ha, adjoins larger Byng secondary site.
- Seismic risk rating Low.

18

PRIORITIZE STUDENT LEARNING

Relocation of QEA to JQ:

- Provides a robust French immersion and cultural experience for students.
- Allows for multiple school organization and class casting opportunities to support social emotional learning.
- Provides a seamless K-7 learning experience – no transition for grade 4 required.
- Increased access to administrator support, District staff support.
- Enhanced opportunities for teacher collaboration and opportunities for cross-grade student collaboration.
- Additional opportunities to participate in cultural events and performances.
- Increased access to learning resources.
- Sustains the French immersion program at its current level across the District.
- Aligns with findings of the French Immersion Program Review and the Preferred School Size Working Group.

19

ABOUT QE

- One story building built in 1940, with additions in 1957 and 1967.
- Interior space - 18 classrooms, 1 computer room, 3 resource rooms, library, 1 multipurpose room, 2 gyms/auditorium, 2 play areas.
- Accessibility – QE is wheelchair accessible: parking, stair lifts, and washroom.
- Outdoor space – 6.60 ha, adjacent to Pacific Spirit Park.
- Seismic risk rating High 3.

20

PRIORITIZE STUDENT LEARNING

Relocation of QEA to QE:

- Increased access to administrator support, District staff support.
- Enhanced opportunities for teacher collaboration and opportunities for cross-grade student collaboration.
- Proximity to JQ provides additional opportunities for collaboration and access to opportunities to participate in cultural events and performances.
- Increased access to learning resources.
- Sustains the French immersion program at its current level across the District and west of Granville Street.
- Large outdoor school area adjacent to Pacific Spirit Park.

21

3. STUDENT SAFETY

School	Seismic Risk Rating
QEA	H3
JQ	Low
QE	H3

- Relocating QEA students to JQ would optimize utilization of a seismically safe building as JQ has been upgraded.
- The seismic risk rating of QEA and QE is the same. Relocating students to QE would increase enrolment at QE which may improve the business case for a future seismic upgrade.
- Relocating QEA to either JQ or QE would be a more effective use of District resources and facilities as annual operating and maintenance costs to operate QEA would be eliminated.

22

4. POTENTIAL REVENUE

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) has expressed interest in acquiring the QEA site to offer French language programming to Vancouver residents.

Any lease or sale of the QEA site has the potential to generate substantial capital revenue for the District.

23

POTENTIAL REVENUE

Capital revenue which the District generates through any potential sale or lease of a site would be used to:

- enhance government funding for projects in the seismic mitigation program
- support building new schools - Boards can be asked to contribute up to 50% of the cost of a new school project
- support additions to current schools
- fund improvements to school facilities
- fund other capital priorities

24

5. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) has initiated two proceedings naming the Vancouver School Board:

- **Education Mediation Regulation Process** is a confidential process intended to resolve a dispute between one or more Boards of Education and one or more francophone education authorities.
- The CSF has filed a **Notice of Civil Claim** in the Supreme Court of BC, naming the Province, the Ministry of Education, and the Vancouver Board of Education

The closure of QEA would provide a potential pathway for the Vancouver School Board to resolve both proceedings thereby mitigating risk to the Board.

25

6. ACCESS TO FRENCH IMMERSION

Demand for the JQ/QEA Early French Immersion (EFI) program has been declining for several years.

The decline mirrors the overall decline in student enrolment and in this area of the District.

**Program demand is determined by the number of first choice applications for kindergarten each year.*

26

KINDERGARTEN APPLICATIONS

Year	Number of Applicants
2015	100
2016	90
2017	88
2018	85
2019	82
2020	70
2021	75
2022	65

27

KINDERGARTEN WAITLISTS

- Along with a decrease in the number of first choice applicants to the JQ/QEA program the number of students placed on a waitlist has declined.
- There is not a waitlist for first-choice applicants entering kindergarten in 2023

Year	First Choice Waitlist
2015	34
2016	16
2017	19
2018	15
2019	1
2020	9
2021	5
2022	0

28

MAINTAINING FRENCH IMMERSION

French immersion is a District Choice Program, students apply and attend from across the District.

If QEA is closed, access to French immersion programming will be **fully maintained** in the District and on the westside of Vancouver.

The JQ/QEA program currently enrolls 3 kindergarten classes each year.

- If the QEA program is relocated to QE, the program would continue to intake 3 kindergarten classes a year.
- Relocating students to JQ would mean that in some years the program would enroll 2 kindergarten classes and in some years it would enroll 3 classes.
- In years where the JQ program enrolls 2 kindergarten classes another French immersion program would take in an additional class – maintaining overall program access on the westside.

29

MAINTAINING FRENCH IMMERSION

Number of French immersion cohorts at a school

School	2021 (Current Year)	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jules Quesnel	3	3	2	2	3	2
Trafalgar	1	1	2	2	1	2
Quilchena	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kerrisdale	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	7	7	7	7	7	7

30

7. CURRENT AND FORECASTED ENROLMENT

- If QEA is closed, students will be relocated as a group to one site, either JQ or QE.
- All students enrolled at QEA can be accommodated at JQ or QE
- There is sufficient classroom space at both JQ and QE to accommodate QEA students

31

JQ ENROLMENT

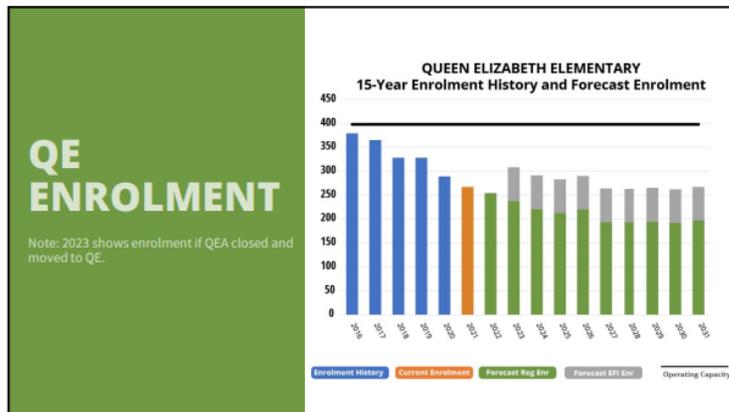
Note: 2023 shows enrolment if QEA is closed and program moved to JQ. Students would be accommodated in enrolling classroom spaces.

**JULES QUESNEL ELEMENTARY
15-Year Enrolment History and Forecast**

Year	Enrolment
2016	420
2017	400
2018	390
2019	380
2020	370
2021	360
2022	350
2023	360
2024	370
2025	380
2026	390
2027	390
2028	380
2029	370
2030	360
2031	370

*Beginning in 2023 the enrolment forecast for JQ includes students relocated from QEA

32



33

SPACE NEARBY

- An assessment of space at nearby schools is most relevant when a catchment school is proposed for closure.
- QEA does not have a neighbourhood catchment, it intakes students from across the District.
- Based on declining enrolment in the QEA area staff do not foresee impacts to surrounding schools, other than QE or JQ, should QEA be closed.
- The District has surplus capacity at Bayview, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Kitchener, and Southlands in this area of Vancouver.

34

FUTURE ENROLMENT GROWTH

The Wesbrook site has been set aside to accommodate future enrolment growth from UBC/UEL.

The Jericho Lands are in the Queen Mary Elementary catchment, there is significant surplus capacity at Queen Mary, Bayview, and Queen Elizabeth elementary schools as well as other nearby schools.

The District is working with City of Vancouver to ensure that there is sufficient local capacity to accommodate future enrolment growth from the Jericho Lands.

The QEA site is not required to accommodate students from the Jericho lands.

35

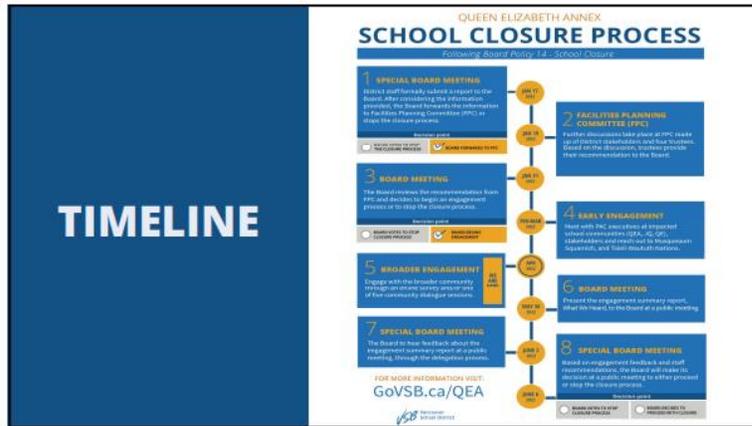
TIMELINE

The Board will make a decision about the proposed closure of QEA at a Special Board meeting on June 6.

If the Board decides to close QEA, the school closure date is June 30, 2023.

If the Board makes the decision to close QEA, staff will work directly with the impacted school communities to support the transition of staff, students and families.

36



37

FUTURE USE

The future use of the QEA site and facilities would be made, by the Board, only if it has made the decision to close the school.

If QEA is closed, by decision of the Board, the Superintendent will make a recommendation to the Board as to an alternate use of a closed facility.

In the case of QEA this may include a recommendation to dispose of the site as per Board Policy 20.

As noted, the CSF is interested in acquiring the QEA site.

38

FUTURE USE

Disposition of Land and Improvements (buildings) is a provincially regulated process guided by Board Policy 20 – Land Disposition.

39

BRIEF Q&A

- » 10 minutes maximum
- » For clarification
- » More information: govsb.ca/QEA

40

ENGAGEMENT GOAL

To provide opportunities for those interested and impacted by the proposed QEA school closure to share feedback that will be **considered by the Board as they decide** the future of the QEA school.

41

3 QUESTIONS

- » In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, what are **concerns** and/or **opportunities** from your perspective?
- » In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, **what factors should be a priority for the Board** in making their decision?
- » Are there **additional comments** you would like to contribute that may have not been shared yet?

42

HOW WE WILL RECEIVE FEEDBACK

1. Move into smaller **breakout groups** for dialogue
2. For each question: **Roundtable** discussion.
3. Choose to **speak (2 minutes) or pass**.
4. Remember our **Operating Values**: Respect, Spirit of community, Hear from all voices, Speak for ourselves
5. Delaney will take notes, de-identified (no names)

43

Q1: What concerns or opportunities...

- » In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, what are **concerns** and/or **opportunities** from your perspective?

44

Q2: What factors are most important...

» In assessing the proposed closure of QEA, **what factors should be a priority for the Board** in making their decision?

45

Q3: Is there anything else...

» Are there **additional comments** you would like to contribute that may have not been shared yet?

46

ENGAGEMENT DATES

- » Early engagement with stakeholder groups | February - March
- » Community dialogue sessions (5) | April 19 - 28
- » Online survey | April 11 - 29
- » engage@vsb.bc.ca | open since February 10, 2022

47

**NEXT STEPS
&
THANK YOU**

48

Link: [202 20419 PPT Community Dialogue Session.pdf \(vsb.bc.ca\)](#)

Appendix B: Online Survey

QEA Proposed School Closure | Survey

Welcome!

On behalf of the Vancouver School Board, thank you for your participation in this survey.

In January 2022, the Vancouver School Board Trustees approved a motion to launch public engagement into the school district's proposal to close Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) school.

QEA offers French immersion to Vancouver students in Kindergarten to Grade 3. There are 71 students currently attending QEA. It is the feeder school to Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ), which offers K to 7 French immersion programming. As a District program, the Annex does not have a neighbourhood catchment, rather it enrolls students from across the District.

Should the Board decide to close QEA, District staff propose that students could be relocated to either Jules Quesnel Elementary (JQ) or Queen Elizabeth Elementary (QE).

The Board has not yet made a decision on the proposed closure of QEA. No decision will be made until after the public engagement has finished, and the feedback report is presented to the Board for consideration. The Board will make a decision on the proposed closure at a public meeting on May 30, 2022. If the Board votes to approve the closure of QEA, it will take effect after a full school year, on June 30, 2023. This will allow time to support a successful transition to the new school for QEA students and families. All current students at QEA would be able to continue in the French immersion program, should the Board make the decision to close QEA.

The Survey

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Anonymity

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. No personal information will be collected. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. The responses you provide will be combined with the responses of other survey participants and individual responses will not be identified.

Please do not include personal identifiable information, such as your name, email address, phone number, address, etc. in the comments.

Privacy

Your responses will be collected and analyzed by independent engagement firm Delaney, *the engagement people*, for the purpose of this engagement process. Your responses will not be used for any other purpose and individual responses will remain anonymous. This collection is authorized under section 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC).

Questions

1. *Which of the following describes your interest in the proposed school closure? Please select all that apply.*
 - a. I am a family member of a student at Queen Elizabeth Annex
 - b. I am a family member of a student at Queen Elizabeth Elementary
 - c. I am a family member of a student at Jules Quesnel Elementary
 - d. I am a family member of a student at another school in VSB
 - e. I am a student at Queen Elizabeth Annex
 - f. I am a student at Queen Elizabeth Elementary
 - g. I am a student at Jules Quesnel Elementary
 - h. I am a student at another school in VSB
 - i. I am a family member of a future student at Queen Elizabeth Annex
 - j. I am a family member of a future student at Queen Elizabeth Elementary
 - k. I am a family member of a future student at Jules Quesnel Elementary
 - l. I am a family member of a future student at another school in VSB
 - m. I am a VSB staff member
 - n. I am a community member with another connection to this process (Please specify):

[NEW PAGE]

The recommendation to close a school is not taken lightly and must be made in alignment with Board policy and informed by data. District staff have recommended this closure to the Board to ensure responsible use of resources to benefit all students while prioritizing education opportunities for Queen Elizabeth Annex (QEA) students.

Current situation

Despite an overall increase in Vancouver's population, both the birth rate and the percentage of school-aged children continues to decline. In fact, enrolment in Vancouver schools has been declining since 1997. Over the past 10 years, the District has seen approximately an 8.4 per cent decline in enrolment, representing approximately 4,400 fewer students. Current forecasts indicate further enrolment decline in the years ahead.

Why consider closing QEA?

Closing the QEA school site ensures responsible use of resources to benefit all students.

QEA has high operating costs. Costs to operate QEA are 40 per cent higher (\$11,288 per student in 2019) than the provincial enrollment allocation of \$7,885 per student. Closing QEA would result in significant operational savings of between \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually, which could be re-allocated into programs and services supporting students across the District. Effectively managing District resources aligns with the recent Board approved [Education Plan](#), where the Board has made the commitment to “*improving stewardship of the District’s resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.*”

Closing the QEA school site prioritizes student learning.

District staff believe that there is greater educational benefit for students in a language program to be part of a larger community because it allows for more robust French programming, increases students’ cultural experiences and enhances opportunities for teacher and student collaboration. Moving the French immersion program at QEA to JQ would also allow students to stay in one school from kindergarten to Grade 7, making one less transition for QEA students, who currently continue their French immersion program at JQ from grades 4 to 7.

Bringing QEA students together with JQ or QE students allows them to be part of a larger school community within the [preferred school size range](#). This provides additional access to shared resources and supports for learners, as well as increased opportunities for staff collaboration.

It is important to note that if this closure proceeds and the QEA students join a new school, their access to quality educational programming and French immersion is protected. The proposed closure guarantees QEA students continued placement in French immersion. If QEA is closed, staff will work closely with the QEA community to ensure a successful transition to the new site.

Other Considerations:

STUDENT SAFETY: The proposed closure could advance the District’s goal of having all students in seismically safe schools. QEA is not a seismically safe facility, and it is highly unlikely that the funding required to seismically upgrade or replace the school will ever be made available to the District. In January 2021, the Board adopted an updated Long-Range Facilities Plan that prioritizes student access to seismically safe schools as soon as possible. Should the Board decide to close the school, one proposal would be to relocate students to JQ which has been seismically upgraded. Another proposal would be to move students to QE, which has the same seismic rating as QEA, but, increasing enrolment at QE may strengthen the rationale for a future seismic upgrade sooner, creating safer spaces for more students.

POTENTIAL REVENUE: There is serious interest from the Francophone public school board, [Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique](#) (CSF), to acquire the QEA site. Although land disposal is a different and separate process, there could be significant capital revenue generated from CSF acquiring the QEA school site. This revenue could be used to support other capital priorities such as building new schools, expanding existing schools, and/or enhancing seismic projects from an upgrade project to a replacement school.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS: The CSF has filed a civil claim against the District, the Province of B.C. and the Ministry of Education. The claim mentions a 2016 B.C. Supreme court ruling requiring the Province to supply a school site in Vancouver west of Granville Street, to CSF. The claim also refers to the District’s process in 2019 that did not result in closing QEA. In addition to the civil claim, there is a confidential education mediation underway involving the CSF, the District and Ministry of Education to resolve a land dispute. These two separate proceedings require extensive and costly District resources.

2. *Having read these reasons behind the recommendation to close QEA, do you...*
 - a. Fully understand these explanations
 - b. Somewhat understand these explanations
 - c. Not understand these explanations at all
 - d. Don't know / prefer not to say

[NEW PAGE]

3. *Please tell us to what extent each of the following should be a priority the Board in making their decision regarding the possible closure of QEA:*
 - a. To be fiscally responsible and prioritize funding for student programs and services
 - b. To be fiscally responsible and ensure funding is balanced among all students
 - c. To support student learning by maintaining the French immersion program
 - d. To have more students in seismically safe schools
 - e. To potentially generate capital funds for the District that would be used to support building new schools where they are needed and/or enhancing seismic upgrades to existing schools.
 - f. To ensure a strong sense of school community is maintained in making any decisions about school facilities

- 1 – not at all a priority
- 2 – a low priority
- 3 – a moderate priority
- 4 – a high priority
- 9 - Don't know / prefer not to say

4. *In assessing the proposed closure, please indicate the levels of concern you may have for the following:*
 - a. Future population growth in the QEA area
 - b. Losing access to the small learning environment at QEA
 - c. Physical school space (capacity)
 - d. More students being accommodated at JQ or QE
 - e. Health and wellbeing of my child/family
 - f. Change for my child/my family
 - g. Learning outcomes for my child
 - h. Loss of community connection
 - i. Proximity to school (including safety/walkability)

- 1 – not at all a concern

- 2 – a low concern
- 3 – somewhat of a concern
- 4 – a serious concern
- 9 - Don't know / NA

5. *Given the information provided, to what extent do you support or oppose closing QEA?*

- 1 – Strongly support
- 2 – Somewhat support
- 3 – Somewhat oppose
- 4 – Strongly oppose
- 9 - Don't know / prefer not to say

6. **OPTIONAL:** Do you have any other comments or concerns about the proposed QEA school closure that you would like to share? (open-ended)

[NEW PAGE]

Should the Board decide to close QEA, students could relocate as a group to either Jules Quesnel (JQ) or Queen Elizabeth (QE). *The following table lays out some of the opportunities and challenges of relocating the program to each of these schools.

**other school locations identified as part of this consultation will be considered, see question below for more information.*

MOVE TO JQ	MOVE TO QE
OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to administrator support, District staff support • Increased access to learning resources • Enhanced opportunities for teacher collaboration and opportunities for cross-grade student collaboration • Maintain the French immersion program at its current level in the surrounding area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to administrator support, District staff support • Increased access to learning resources • Enhanced opportunities for teacher collaboration and opportunities for cross-grade student collaboration • Maintain the French immersion program at its current level in the surrounding area

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional opportunities to participate in cultural events and performances • Aligns with findings from the Preferred School Size working group, made up of multi-stakeholders where the group recommends a preferred elementary school size should range between 300-500 students. • Results in at least two French immersion classes at JQ, which aligns with the findings from the French immersion review, where the District endeavours to enroll two Kindergarten French immersion divisions in each site which could involve a combination of consolidating, relocating or adding programs. • Provides an enhanced French language immersion and cultural experience • Provides a seamless K-7 learning experience – no transition for Grade 4 required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to JQ provides additional opportunities for collaboration and access to opportunities to participate in cultural events and performances • Aligns with findings from the Preferred School Size working group, made up of multi-stakeholders where the group recommends a preferred elementary school size should range between 300-500 students. • Large outdoor school area adjacent to Pacific Spirit Park
CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to a different and larger school • Potential increased traffic concerns during pick-up and drop-off* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to a different and larger school • Potential increased traffic concerns during pick-up and drop-off*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The move would result in three Kindergarten classes at JQ, however, JQ will not be able to accommodate three K classes every year due to space constraints. Instead, the District will need to disperse future French immersion Kindergarten intake amongst other French immersion schools in the area (i.e. Trafalgar and Kerrisdale) • The outdoor play spaces at JQ are in several areas and may require increased supervision with more students attending** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in only one early French immersion class at QE. This does not align with the findings from the French immersion review, where the District endeavours to enroll two Kindergarten French immersion divisions in each site which could involve a combination of consolidating, relocating or adding programs. • Students who wish to continue French immersion will still need to transition to JQ in Grade 4. • QE is an English program so QEA students would not benefit from an enhanced immersion experience as in a K-7 French program. • Not a seismically safe school
---	---

*Note: The District will work with the school community and the City of Vancouver to put in place plans to address concerns relating to increased traffic at pick up and drop off times at either JQ or QE.

** Note: The District will review the staffing needs of the JQ site for supervision of students at recess and lunchtime should QEA students be moved to JQ.

7. **OPTIONAL:** Based on this information, should the Board decide to close QEA, would you prefer that the program relocate to JQ, QE or elsewhere?
- Queen Elizabeth
 - Jules Quesnel
 - Elsewhere (Please specify: _____)

8. **OPTIONAL:** Should the Board decide to close QEA, what further considerations would you like to raise regarding the relocation of the program? (open-ended)

[NEW PAGE]

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that...

- a. It was easy for me to participate in this survey
- b. I appreciate being able to provide input into this decision
- c. I understand the decision-making timeline and process

1 – strongly disagree

2 – somewhat disagree

3 – somewhat agree

4 – strongly agree

9 - Don't know / prefer not to say

[NEW PAGE]

D1. **OPTIONAL:** To receive updates about this proposal, please provide your email address: (Note: your responses to this survey will remain anonymous)

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input will help inform the Board's decision on whether or not to close QEA.

Appendix C: IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheets Web sites Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen advisory committees Consensus-building Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision

Appendix D: VSB – Social media communications (QEA)

Queen Elizabeth Annex Engagement – Social Media Plan

Campaign: QEA Public Engagement **Timeline:** April 11 – April 29

Key Objectives:

- To inform community members of the public engagement process for QEA.
- To drive traffic to the online survey using paid and organic promotion.
- To drive traffic to the project website (govsb.ca/QEA) to encourage learning about the proposed closure, participating in the survey and registering for community dialogue sessions

Ad Schedule	Ad Copy (125 characters)	Headline (25 characters)	Description (30 characters)	CTA	Ad Graphic	Notes
7 days Start: Apr 11 End: Apr 17	Provide your feedback on the proposed closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex.	We want to hear from you!	Take our online survey until April 29.	Learn more: engagevsb.ca/qea		

Schedule	CTA	Social Media Copy	Graphic
Mon Apr 11	*Promo online survey	Post #1: It's important that we hear directly from our school communities. Participate in our online survey on the proposed closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex– available now until April 29: engagevsb.ca/qea #VSBengage #VSB39	
Fri Apr 22	*Promo online survey	Post #3: Engaging our school communities is our top priority. That's why we want to hear from you. Share your thoughts on the proposed closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex via our online survey open until April 29: engagevsb.ca/qea #VSBengage #VSB39	

<p>Tue Apr 26</p>	<p>*Promo online workshops</p>	<p>Post #5: We're hosting public community dialogue sessions this week to hear from school communities on the proposed closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex. Details below: *Wed, April 27 3:30 -5:00 pm *Thu, April 28 7:00 -8:30 pm</p> <p>Sign up for a session now: engagevsb.ca/qea</p> <p>#VSBengage #VSB39</p>	
<p>Thu Apr 28</p>	<p>*Promo online survey</p>	<p>Post #4: Your feedback will be shared with the Board. Share your thoughts on the proposed closure of Queen Elizabeth Annex. Our online survey is open until April 29: engagevsb.ca/qea</p> <p>#VSBengage #VSB39</p>	
<p>Fri Apr 29</p>	<p>*Promo online survey</p>	<p>Post #6: Last chance to participate in our online survey! Your input matters and will help inform the Board on its decision-making process for Queen Elizabeth Annex. Engage with us now – take our online survey: engagevsb.ca/qea</p> <p>#VSBengage #VSB39</p>	