

Presentation to
**The Select Standing Committee
on Finance and Government Services**

Vancouver Hearing, September 19, 2016

Submitted by
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on behalf of
**The Parent Advocacy Network
for Public Education**

Honorable Scott Hamilton, Carole James and Members of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

I am speaking today on behalf of the Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education. We are a grassroots organization of parents from over 70 schools in Vancouver who are committed to the value of public education.ⁱ

We are gravely concerned that the level of underfunding experienced within our public schools is now so severe, that it is threatening the very founding principles of public education as outlined in the BC School Act which is the democratic right of all children in British Columbia to an education that allows them to meet their full potential and become contributing citizens in our society.ⁱⁱ

Our Government claims that they are spending 'unprecedented' amounts on education.ⁱⁱⁱ As working families, we are all spending unprecedented amounts - on feeding, clothing and housing our children - and, moreover, every year we are spending unprecedented amounts on subsidizing a public education system in crisis.

I could now quote the usual figures about the reduction of education spending as a share of GDP, its failure to keep pace with inflation, and BC's infamous claim to the second lowest per pupil spending rate in Canada.^{iv} (And everyone's eyes would either roll or glaze over)

But instead, I am going to speak about what underfunding really looks like for students and families every day; the depletion of educational quality and the increasing inequity that is occurring within Vancouver Schools.

In Vancouver, 38.9% of all children entering primary school speak little or no English and yet over 50% of our English Language Learner teachers have been cut while primary class sizes have increased.^v A quarter of all library staffing has been reduced.^{vi} A third of our Special Education teachers have been cut, even though the number of identified special needs children has significantly increased.^{vii} That means, that last year 27 primary classrooms had 4 or more children with IEPs and 1,882 Gr. 4-12 classrooms had 4 or more children with IEPs, 757 of those containing 7 or more students with designated special needs.^{viii} (Appendix A) More than half of the 5, 199 special needs children identified in this district did not receive any additional funding.^{ix}(Appendix B)

Virtually all art and music specialists have been eliminated in elementary schools in Vancouver, with the most recent loss of the remnant itinerant band and strings programs. Any quality education in the arts has been extinguished.^x For a province implementing a new curriculum whose core competencies include communication, creative thinking and the understanding of personal and cultural identities - this erasure is particularly incomprehensible.^{xi} How is it possible under these conditions for all children to access an education that meets their learning needs?

As you are no doubt aware, it is parents that are increasingly pressured to compensate for the lack of essential resources in schools. This includes school fees and the myriad expenditures requested for school activities throughout the year (one parent of three children - in a lower income neighbourhood - totaled these last year's expenses to \$434 dollars. See Appendix C.) This also includes extensive fundraising to purchase resources such as playgrounds, digital technologies, library books, classroom supplies, photocopy paper, musical instruments and arts programming. xii This is creating huge inequities between schools in wealthier catchments, whose parents can raise significant funds, and those who through cultural or economic barriers, cannot.xiii

But this is not all: the loss of resource and specialist teachers is driving parents to outsource what was once provided within a comprehensive public education. For example:

Remedial tutoring - \$60/hr per week for 43 weeks	\$2,550.00
Psych ed. assessment (to avoid 2-3 year wait list)	\$2,000.00
Choir - 2 terms at \$184	\$368.00
Musical instrument - \$30/half hr. for 43 weeks	\$1,290.00
Art classes - \$200-\$300 per term for 3 terms	\$600.00
Sports teams - 1 season of soccer	<u>\$200.00</u>
Total per child per year	\$7,008.00

For the average family - this is too much.

For the 22% of children in Vancouver, who live in poverty^{xiv} including children of the working poor - this is insurmountable.^{xv}

We appear to have deviated from a Public Education system predicated on the redistribution of resources to create equal access and opportunity for all children to one in which an increasing number of children, are being denied their basic educational rights.^{xvi}

All this (we are told) is as a result of declining enrolment and can be addressed by closing schools for more efficient use of space.^{xvii} But this masks the underlying flaw of the current per pupil funding model, introduced in 2002, that no longer adequately compensates for the diversity of needs within a district and has removed all funding allocations for facilities. This has created a situation in which school buildings as fixed expenses, are now liabilities to school districts, resulting in funding shortfalls, across BC, disproportionate to the degree of enrolment decline. School closure becomes the only option for stretching diminishing funds.^{xviii}

Make no mistake, the recent proposal in Vancouver to close 12 schools (now reduced to 11), is not in the educational interests of children or even taxpayers returns, but is a desperate measure taken to mitigate the severe effects of underfunding within the district and to meet the arbitrary goal of 95% capacity utilization recently imposed by the current provincial government, as a precondition for funding to make Vancouver's schools structurally safe in the event of an earthquake.^{xix} (Vancouver's present capacity utilization is at 84%, comparatively

high in comparison to most districts in BC whilst the number of student in high risk facilities, 28,483 students is unconscionable.)^{xx}

Even though the closure of these 12 schools would have reached a capacity percentage of 94%, (just one percent shy of the magic target) the VSB would only save \$7.7 million.^{xxi} This does not restore the \$21 million in ongoing cuts made to the district this year, or the previous \$60 million in cumulative cuts since 2002.^{xxii} It does not even cover next years' shortfall, currently projected to be \$15 million.^{xxiii}

And here is what closing schools in the urban setting of Vancouver would actually look like. I cite a few examples from the proposed closure report:

A school of 193 children, 40% aboriginal and 40% recent immigrants, (operating at 71% capacity) with some of the highest level of poverty and need within the city, will lose the relational and community supports that this schools provides and will be split and crowded into two other high poverty schools (Tier 1 and 2 respectively) at even greater seismic risk, impacting all three communities with concentrated need, increased class sizes, and the loss of crucial resource, art and music spaces.^{xxiv}

Another proposal is to close a school of 275 children, 60% of which are ELL and currently operating at 71% capacity, and stuffing these children into a large, Tier 3 school, also with 60% ELL,^{xxv} to create a mega elementary school of 758 students, almost double the recommended maximum size for an elementary school,^{xxvi} again with the loss of resource spaces and crucial community immigrant resources.

A third, is the expulsion and dispersal of 1029 high students into 4 different high schools merely to create a swing space while other schools are being upgraded - because the government has refused to fund temporary accommodation^{xxvii} and to boost the capacity percentage of receiver schools (all over 1000 as well) so they might become eligible to receive government funding for seismic mitigation. This would be the largest school ever to be closed in this province, (and incidentally, one internationally renowned for its school based robotics and dance programs.)^{xxviii}

Is this what taxpayer accountability looks like?

Is this really government's vision of educational efficiency?

Between the government's rigid 95% target, and its refusal to replace and right-size facilities that have outlived their lifespan, even though it will actually save taxpayers money when factoring in deferred maintenance costs,^{xxix} the VSB is given no other option but to close smaller neighbourhood schools predominantly in lower income areas whose low utilization is largely a reflection of the discriminatory policy of choice legislation and not population decline.^{xxx} The Parent Advocacy Network, is extremely concerned that this 95% capacity utilization target, based on profit margin accounting and not on educational priorities, is being

used as a coercive means of forcing school closure in Vancouver, to reduce its own capital expenditures on seismic upgrading.

The government has an opportunity, a real opportunity through the Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP) to provide the funds and flexibility needed to build safe and educationally appropriate facilities consistent with its own progressive initiative (2008) to use space as a valuable resource to create schools as “neighbourhoods of learning”. This vision recognizes the interconnectedness of vital services to children and families (such as early childhood education, English Language Learning, adult education, and family counseling and support services) that will preserve neighbourhood schools with sufficient space for current and future generations and provide much needed services for communities who most need them. ^{xxx1}

In short, chronic underfunding has reached a crisis in this province, creating unacceptable inequities within our public education system and is no longer able to provide a quality education to meet the needs of all learners. Moreover, the inflexible policies of the government around seismic upgrading in Vancouver is forcing school boards to make educationally unsound decisions that reinforce socioeconomic inequities, and will undermine neighbourhoods most in need of the stability that neighbourhood schools provide. In their zeal to bend the cost curve and force efficiencies, the government has neglected its primary responsibility - the provision of operational funds and the infrastructure necessary to enable all children to receive a quality education that allows them to reach their full potential under the guiding principles of the BC School Act. This, after all, is shown to be the best investment for achieving societal health and future economic prosperity. ^{xxxii}

In conclusion, the Parent Advocacy Network affirms:

- The recommendations of the last two Select Standing Committees to provide adequate, stable and sustainable funding to school boards to provide all children with the educational opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

We further request:

- The overhaul of the current funding formula to reflect the true costs of operating schools, to provide the supports and resources needed to meet the diversity of educational needs and offer a comprehensive, quality education that includes the arts.
- To rescind the 95% capacity mandate and adequately fund infrastructure and capital projects to ensure that all children are provided with safe, educationally appropriate facilities, without sacrificing the quality or breadth of their education through cost cutting measures.
- To partner across ministries to include education as part of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy through the Seismic Mitigation Plan to expand the number of neighbourhood schools that include early childhood learning and care and crucial family supports and programs that serve community needs.

Appendix A

- https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/class_size/2007/039.pdf
- https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/class_size/2015/039.pdf

Appendix B

- <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/resource-management/k12funding/15-16/15-16-sd39.pdf>

Appendix C

School Expenditures

Child 1 (Tecumseh Elementary)	
Glue sticks	1.25
School Fees	48.00
Pumpkin activity	1.00
Pens	2.78
VPL trip	3.50
Glad Dance field trip	2.00
Camp	219.00
VPL trip	3.50
Presentation board	4.50
Stanley Park	3.50
Museum of Anthropology	9.00
Total	298.03
Child 2 (Tecumseh Elementary)	
School Fees	48.00
Kleenex	1.79
Sharpie	6.99
Field trip FR Disc	5.25
Field trip Glad.	2.00
Artifacts	3.00
Sharpies and Glue sticks	8.00
Celebration of Learning	4.25
Owl program	5.00
Total	84.28
Child 3 (Gladstone Secondary)	
Supply Fees	30.00
Lined paper	1.25
Robotics tournament	10.00
Robotics tournament	10.00
Total	51.25
Final total	433.56

ⁱ We believe "ALL children have a right to high quality public education, accessible in their own neighbourhoods, in educationally appropriate and seismically safe buildings with the resources and staff necessary to meet their learning needs." PAN Vancouver, 2016. <http://www.panvancouver.ca>

ⁱⁱ The preamble to the BC School Act states "And whereas the purpose of the BC School system is to enable all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy." BC School Act. http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96412_00

ⁱⁱⁱ "What We've Achieved Together", Today's BC Liberals. <http://www.bcliberals.com/premier/>

^{iv} Alex Hemmingway, "What's the real story behind BC's Education funding crisis?", *Policynote*, 2016.

^v There were 9,867 identified ELL in Vancouver or 18.7% of all students in 2015/16. The English Language learner designation is lifted after 5 years, so 18.7 % signifies the huge cultural diversity in Vancouver and the need for strong language and cultural support within our system. Since 2002, 178 full time equivalent ELL teacher positions (297 reduced to 118 have been eliminated. This reduction is grossly disproportionate to a 10% enrolment decline. Margaret White, *FTE Learning Specialist Teachers, 2001/02-2013/14: Change before and after the Learning Improvement Fund*. BCTF, April 2014. <https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/ResearchReports/RR2013-07.pdf>

In Kindergarten the average class size has increased from 17.5 to 19.7 and primary classes from 20.3 to 21.8 from 2002 to present. This is particularly troubling because it is early intervention in the primary years that sets children up for academic success. See *Get the Facts Straight*. BCTF, Feb 2014.

<http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/BargainingContracts/2014CourtDecision/GetTheFactsStraight.pdf> and *Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools 2015/16*, BC School Reports, Ministry of Education, 2016. https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/class_size/2015/039.pdf

^{vi} Many elementary schools use parent volunteers to maintain and keep libraries open. A 10% decline in enrollment does not alter the number of libraries that would need to be staffed even if there were a 10% reduction in school facilities.

^{vii} 121 full time equivalent Special Education teacher positions have been cut since 2002. There are currently over 5,199 children designated as special needs in Vancouver public schools. Margaret White, *FTE Learning Specialist Teachers, 2001/02-2013/14: Change before and after the Learning Improvement Fund*. BCTF, April 2014. <https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/Publications/ResearchReports/RR2014-03.pdf> the number of primary classes with 4 or more students with IEPs has increased from 20 to 27 from 2007/8 to 2015/16, with 5 classes containing 7 or more IEPs. The number of Gr 4-12 classes with 4 or more IEPs has increased from 1,264 to 1,882 from 2007/8 to 2015/16 with 757 classes containing 7 or more students with IEPs. See *BC School Reports*. BC Ministry of Education <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php?mode=District&report-school-district=Vancouver+SD%23039&district-index=56>

Only 2,376 of the 5,199 children with special needs triggered funding support last year, which is insufficient already to meet the needs of children that qualify. The highest level of support (level 1) that requires full time support at \$37,700 is not sufficient to cover the salary and support expenses required. *Final Operating Grant Full Year Summary 2015/16*. BC Ministry of Education.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/resource-management/k12funding/15-16/15-16-sd39.pdf>

^{viii} Last year's Ministry of Education Special Education audit reduced the total grants by \$245,500 but otherwise confirmed the accuracy of this level of extraordinary need. It also shows the extensive paperwork required to process student claims, significantly reducing the time teachers spend working with students.

https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/16Apr13_op_commlll_item3.pdf

^{ix} These statistics, as shocking as they are, do not even register the special needs children who have left the public system due to inadequate resource, lack of trained support and deteriorating mental health. Those that remain, do so, not because their needs are being met - but because they do not have the financial means or cultural capital to seek other options. The report reveals that 49% of children with special needs have left the system and a further 39% were contemplating leaving. BC Parents of Special Needs Children, "Are BC Public Schools Forcing Students

with Special Needs Out? April 2015 Survey Results and Recommendations", January 2016.

<https://equitableaccesstoeducation.wordpress.com/full-forced-out-survey-report/>

^x In the 2014/15 satisfaction survey, only 42% of grade 3/4 students and 34% of Grade 7 students responded with strong affirmation to the question "At school are you learning about art?" In the same survey only 52% of grade 3/4 students and 42% of grade 7 students responded with strong affirmation to the question "At school, are you learning about music?". In Vancouver, the loss of specialized arts education training for elementary teachers in universities, and the loss of specialist positions within elementary schools has decimated the number of arts education teachers with specialization in these areas. Less than a third of the 91 elementary schools in Vancouver have a K-7 music teacher, and only 1 school (Nootka, the designated Fine Arts school) has a K-7 art teacher. Satisfaction Survey 2014/15. BC Ministry of Education.

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/sat_survey/public.pdf and "Questions on Notice for the Select Standing Committee", PAN, October 2015.

^{xi} "Core Competencies." [Building Student Success: BC's New Curriculum](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies). Ministry of Education, 2016.

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies>

Edgar Cown, "Canada's creative industries can lead the economic charge, The Globe and Mail, July 3, 2015. Cowan notes that Canada has slipped in global competitiveness and in innovation.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob->; Action Canada, Creativity Unleashed: 2011-2012 Action Canada Task Force Report. It argues that the 21st century is the century of the creative economy "Leading companies and top universities have recognized creativity as a key factor in driving innovation, and by extension, productivity and prosperity." <http://www.actioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/AC-TF3-Creativity-Report-EN-web.pdf> commentary/canadas-creative-industries-can-lead-the-economic-charge/article25236146/; Policy Research Group, The Creative economy: Concepts and Literature Review Highlights, May 2013, identifies Fine Arts graduates as possessing the characteristics necessary for success in the creative economy.

https://cch.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/inline/documents/creative-economy-synthesis_201305.pdf

^{xii} Cheryl Rossi, "VSB Schools raise \$3.4 million in one year", [Vancouver Courier](#); BCCPAC "Fundraising efforts produce \$3.4 million for Vancouver Schools, Dec. 2013, Nov 5, 2013; Arik Ligeti, "Fundraising playing key role at some of Vancouver's poorest schools, [Globe and Mail](#), Feb 20, 2015 (21 2015); Carlito Pablo, "Vancouver Parents feeling school fundraising fatigue, [Georgia Straight](#), January 24, 2013; "Fundraising", [Huffington Post](#), September 24, 2014; Katie Hyslop "For Vancouver Parents, School Fundraising 'Has Become Our Lives.", [The Tyee](#), 6 March 2015.

^{xiii} In a 2014 report comparing fundraising abilities between schools, the difference ranged from \$194 per student to \$0. "See the Fundraising Totals at Every Vancouver School over the Past Three Years," [The Globe and Mail](#), Feb 20, 2015 (21 2015) <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/how-much-each-vancouver-school-has-fundraised/article23137493/>

^{xiv} "BC Child Poverty Maps," First Call, 2016. http://still1in5.ca/?page_id=110

When you consider that Vancouver has the highest number of independent schools, with 24% of all elementary aged children attending private school, the percentage of children in Vancouver public schools is considerably higher than the city wide total of 22%.

^{xv} Igljika Ivanova, [Working Poor in Metro Vancouver](#), CCPA, June. Metro Vancouver has the 2nd highest rate of working poor in Canada. 42% of working poor are raising children. Many are single parents, new or recent immigrants. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BCOffice/2016/06/CCPA_Working_poverty_full.pdf Contrary to the liberal solution to poverty, jobs do not necessarily lift families out of poverty, particularly when they are low paid and temporary. "What We've Achieved Together", Today's BC Liberals. <http://www.bcliberals.com/premier/>

^{xvi} This violates the tenets of the school act, Canada's declaration by the CMEC of equal access to a quality education for all children in Canada at the international UNESCO convention against discrimination in education in 2012, http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/289/2012.11_Promoting_Equality_of_Educational_Opportunity_EN.pdf and the rights of the child under the UN declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 and 27.

http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/289/2012.11_Promoting_Equality_of_Educational_Opportunity_EN.pdf.

CommunityLINK funding for vulnerable children, provides some schools with hot lunch programs and Community School Teams. However, a recent VSB report affirmed the inadequacy of the funding to meet the extent of need, and the reliance on charities for supplementing funds and services. Val Odegard, Re-visioning Inner City CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools. VSB, February 2014.

https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/Final_IC_Revisioning_Report_February_2014_with_Appendices.pdf

^{xvii} "B.C. Education Minister says VSB should plan, spend more wisely." CBC News, April, 1, 2016.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-education-minister-says-vsbs-should-plan-spend-more-wisely-1.3516418>

^{xviii} Enrolment in Vancouver public schools has declined by 10% over the last 15 years, a dip largely accounted for by increased private school enrolment. See "Declining Enrollment and Population Distribution." Pan Vancouver, 2016. The cost and needs based formula prior to 2002 allocated a greater share of funds to factors such as special needs, English language, aboriginal students, and geographical factors, protecting districts from fluctuating enrolment, to one driven largely by numbers. Enrolment now accounts for 75% of funding up from 50% previously. Dick Chambers, School Closures in BC: Past, Present and Future, BC School Trustees Association, 2007.

<http://sd57dpac.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/School-Closures-in-BC.pdf>

^{xix} For an analysis and context of the constraints around seismic funding see "Seismic Upgrading and School Closure," PAN Vancouver, 2016. <http://www.panvancouver.ca/seismic-upgrading--school-closure.html>

^{xx} Vancouver as a district has a relatively high capacity utilization for its facilities. For a comparative graph of utilization percentages by district see p. 37 of 2011/12 Summary of Key Information. Ministry of Education. https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/docs/SoK_2012.pdf. Vancouver currently has 68 facilities still at high risk for structural collapse. 42 have not even begun a project definition process. "Progress Report - Seismic Mitigation Program". http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/resource-management/capital-planning/seismic-mitigation/progress_report.pdf for more details on the implications for 95% capacity and its impacts on schools see "Capacity Matters: Definition" and "Impacts", PAN Vancouver, 2016.

<http://www.panvancouver.ca/capacity-matters-definitions.html>

^{xxi} This amount has been refined from an estimated \$8.8 million in June of 2016, and only \$6.6 million would be saved in the first year (accounting for severance, relocation and closure expenses). Strategic Report: Potential School Closures, Sept 15, 2016. <http://engage.vsb.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Strategic-Report.pdf> The amount saved purely from facilities related costs is actually only \$5.1 million. See "Why Close Schools," PAN Vancouver, 2016. <http://www.panvancouver.ca/why-close-schools.html>

^{xxii} See the Vancouver School Board restoration budget, VSB, April 2016.

<https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2016-17Restorationbudget-20160425.pdf>

^{xxiii} The truth is that funding is actually insufficient to operate all of VSB's facilities even if it were operating at 100% capacity. Surrey, with a district utilization capacity well above 100% was still forced to make cuts to balance its budget in 2016. To see a list of all the districts struggling with shortfalls prior to surprise one off funding announcements in May 2016 see "BC Ed in Red", FACE, April 10, 2016.

<https://facebc.wordpress.com/2016/04/10/bcedinred/calculations>

^{xxiv} Research is overwhelmingly consistent in showing that lower class sizes have significant impact on improving student learning for lower income children. "Class Size Reduction: A Proven Reform Strategy", NEA, 2008. http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB08_ClassSize08.pdf while class sizes are determined at a district level, the increased capacity of amalgamated schools to 100% and the reduction of available space gives the district little flexibility in allowing smaller class sizes to meet the high needs for these vulnerable students. Queen Alexandra, the school that is proposed to be closed is a district Multi-Cultural Fine Arts school that serves largely disadvantaged populations. If closed this program will be disbanded and there will likely not be 'space' for fine arts programs in either receiving school. Research shows that children from low socio-economic backgrounds with a high arts exposure came close to and sometimes surpassed inequality gaps with children from more affluent backgrounds in test performances, post-secondary attendance, graduation, volunteer work and civic involvement -

including political activity. James S. Catterall, Susan A. Dumais and Gillian Hampden-Thompson, "The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies, National Endowment for the Arts, March 2012. <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

^{xxv} For student statistics in Trudeau Elementary (proposed closure) and Moberly Elementary (receiver school) see BC Public School Reports. <https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/school.php>

^{xxvi} There are many studies on optimal school sizes. The VSB is consistent with research in identifying the optimal size of an elementary school between 200-400 students. For VSB recommendations see <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/school-closures/frequently-asked-questions-SC> and <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/specialty/alt/keepkids.pdf> See also "Are Smaller Schools Better Schools?" *Education World: Connecting Educators to What Works*, 2000; Wasley, P.A., Fine, M., Gladden, M., Holland, N.E., King, S.P., Mosak, E., and Powell, L.C., "Small Schools: Great strides a study of new small schools in Chicago", The Bank Street College of Education, 2000 and Howley, Craig B.; Bickel, Robert, "When It Comes to Schooling...Small Works: School Size, Poverty, and Student Achievement", Rural School and Community Trust, 2000..

^{xxvii} "Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Vancouver Board of Education Seismic Mitigation Project Office." August 20, 2014. [https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/Signed MOU re VBE Seismic Mitigation Project Office.pdf](https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/Signed%20MOU%20re%20VBE%20Seismic%20Mitigation%20Project%20Office.pdf)

^{xxviii} These programs are school developed and not transferable. The provincial government is creating conditions that are actually shutting down the kind of vibrant innovative student learning it purports to encourage through the new curriculum rather than supporting and augmenting these programs through adequate funding. For information on Gladstone's international reputation see VSB website at <http://www.vsb.bc.ca/district-news/gladstone-secondary-robotics-teams-place-first-and-second-year's-regional-championship-and-the-RoboSavages> website at <http://robosavages.com>. All these schools can be found within the *Strategic Report: Potential School Closures*, Sept 15, 2016. <http://engage.vsb.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Strategic-Report.pdf>

^{xxix} The 2012 study by Coriolis Corp for the Vancouver School Board showed that replacing Vancouver's aging facilities (the average age of schools is 73 years and many are far below minimum health and safety standards) would actually be CHEAPER when considering the mounting deferred maintenance costs of schools that have long exceeded their life span. "Capital Plan 2013/14", Interoffice Memorandum. VSB, September 2013.

http://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/13Sept18_op_comml1_item2_-_revised.pdf The current deferred maintenance costs for Vancouver schools is \$708 million.

^{xxx} Student distribution in schools in Vancouver is distorted in part as a result of choice legislation, introduced by the provincial government in 2002, which allows students to register at any school outside their catchment if space allows. A consumer model of education has shown to benefit those with economic means and disadvantage those whose mobility is limited due to socio-economic factors. Gerald Fallon and Jerald Paquette, "Devolution, Choice and Accountability in the Provision of Public Education in BC: A Critical Analysis of the School Amendment Act of 2002.", *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 75.6 (2008)

<https://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/fallonpaquette.html> and In Vancouver, about 41% of elementary students attend schools outside their local catchment, with 22.5% of those in specialized district programs. Amongst secondary students, 49% attend cross-boundary, with 30% attending district programs. (This is a significant increase since the VSB's sectorial review released in 2012 that cited minimal cross boundary movement for elementary schools and 35% mobility rate for secondary.

<https://www.placespeak.com/uploads/assets/sectoral-review-mar30.pdf>

Choice legislation, combined with surplus capacity and structural underfunding, has created a highly competitive situation between schools. Rob MacMahon, "Student Exodus threatens East Side Schools", *Georgia Straight*, Feb 14, 2007. <http://www.straight.com/article-70975/student-exodus-threatens-east-side-schools>. This has resulted in a net migration of students away from schools in lower income areas, where housing is most affordable and families are most densely located. For information on where students are actually located versus where schools have low utilization see Villagomez, Erick. "Schooling Vancouver". *Spacing Vancouver* June 29, 2015.

<http://spacing.ca/vancouver/2015/06/29/schooling-vancouver/>

As lower capacity schools are less likely to be seismically upgraded, this creates further incentive for parents who are able to look elsewhere, reinforcing a downward spiral of enrolment and segregation.

^{xxxii} In the VSB report Re-visioning Inner City and CommunityLINK Resources in Vancouver Schools, Val Odegard points to the importance of place based supports and services "as close as possible to the individuals and communities that the services are intended to benefit" and links early learning, family and parent groups, and after school programming as particularly important. VSB, February 2014. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/Final_IC_Revisioning_Report_February_2014_with_Appendices.pdf- supports that are being pushed out of areas where they are desperately needed because of lack of affordability. For more information on Neighbourhoods of learning see "Alternatives to school closure" PAN Vancouver, 2016. <http://www.panvancouver.ca/alternatives-to-school-closure.html> For a report on how community services like early childhood education are being pushed out of Vancouver and communities who most need them due to affordability and lack of available space see the 2013 report from Central City Foundation entitled, "Unaffordable Spaces: How rising real estate prices are squeezing out non-profit organizations and the people they help." <https://www.centralcityfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CCF-Community-Report- low-res.pdf>

^{xxxiii} Poverty is the single most persistent barrier to academic success and positive life outcomes for children. Education not jobs (given the growing percentage of working poor) is key to lifting children out of poverty. Also, Economists agree that a strong public education system is foundational to economic prosperity. Neil H. Buchanan, "An Educated Population is Essential to a Nation's Prosperity," Verdict: Legal Analysis and Commentary from Justia, 29 March 2012 <https://verdict.justia.com/2012/03/29/an-educated-population-is-essential-to-a-nations-prosperity-yet-some-politicians-are-demonizing-our-educational-system-for-political-advantage> See also Doug Saunders, "Finland's social climbers. How they're fighting inequality with education, and winning." Globe and Mail, April 23, 2016 . " <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/how-finland-is-fighting-inequality-with-education-andwinning/article29716845/>