



Vancouver School Board

For immediate release

Decision on Carleton's fire-damage building delayed

Vancouver, B.C. - (March 4, 2005) – Vancouver Board of Education trustees have deferred a decision about the future of a fire-damaged outbuilding at Sir Guy Carlton Elementary School in order to give community members time to identify alternate uses for the building and potential fundraising avenues to pay for needed repairs.

"We think the community needs time to look at options and opportunities," said Patti Bacchus, Board Chairperson. "We recognize this is a significant building in the community, having been built in 1896, and we had to let the community know we don't have need for this building or the funds to repair it. We would like to hear if the community has a use for the building and the money to repair it before we discuss the prospect of demolishing it."

Tuesday, the Board's Planning and Facilities committee (Committee II) received a staff report updating efforts to secure ministry funding to repair the wood frame building that was the scene of an arson fire March 2, 2008.

The report recommends trustees identify the fire-damaged building as surplus to district educational needs and request full-funding from the Ministry to demolish Building C and make the building site area safe. Maintenance and operations staff considers the building, in its current state, to be a safety hazard.

Fire damage was so extensive that the two-classroom building, originally constructed in 1896, can not be reoccupied until significant interior restorations, structural upgrades and roofing work are completed. The estimated cost to fully restore the building is \$625,000.

The Risk Management Branch of the Ministry of Finance, which self-insures district facilities through the School Protection Program, asked the school district to provide justification that the building is essential to maintaining educational programs before it will fund the restoration work.

A review of the 2009 enrolment for Carleton and surrounding schools revealed there are approximately 900 surplus spaces in the area. The VSB does not require the building to maintain existing educational programs, and instead proposed to develop an Early Learning Centre in the building.

However, the district has been told there will be no additional Strong Start BC early learning centre programs approved in 2009-10 and expansion in 2010-11 is unlikely.

The district has reviewed other educational programs in this zone of the district, but due to the surplus capacity in the area, relocating an existing educational program from another school into the building would not enhance the overall capacity utilization for the area.